

Customer Spotlight

The Nueva School, Hillside Learning Complex

gachina
landscape management



Installation and Ongoing Maintenance: Gachina Landscape Management

Years: 2001 – present

Location: Hillsborough, California

LEED Certification: Gold

Access: Inaccessible, Private

Ecological & Greenroof Design: Rana Creek Living Architecture

Gachina Landscape Management Awards for project:

- 2008 NATIONAL AWARD - Grand Award by PLANET
- 2008 LOCAL AWARD - Sustainable Landscape SF BAY Area, CLCA
- 2008 LOCAL AWARD - First Place SF Bay Area, CLCA

Green Living Rooftops

Saves energy, cools air and reduces maintenance

In September 2007, The Nueva School in Hillsborough, California opened their newly constructed Hillside Learning Complex. This green project replaced an 18,000 sq. ft parking lot with new structures designed to protect and enhance the native ecosystem. The Gachina project team carefully preserved majestic native oak trees and non-native cypress trees. The new landscaped open space covers 123% as much area as the building footprint.

The Gachina team derived building materials and plant colors from the materials of the site, reinforcing a visceral connection to the land. Nueva School's green innovations include a 30 kW solar system and two living roofs. Designed by ecological design firm Rana Creek, the school's roofs are planted with native grasses and wild flowers that not only preserve the area's natural ecosystem, but also help to insulate the buildings, reduce the energy required to heat and cool them, mitigate storm water runoff and minimize the heat-island effect.



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The Nueva School's new landscaping was installed by Gachina Landscape Management as part of the 2007 Hillside Learning Complex expansion. The property's landscape has been maintained by Gachina since 2001. The library's green roof features a range of species and the student-center roof replicates a native California grassland; together, they provide 10,000 square feet of habitat for native birds and insects. Specifically, The Nueva School green roofs also provide a natural habitat for the endangered Bay Silverspot Butterfly. The site's native drought tolerant landscaping and drip irrigation system combined with the irrigation water use was optimized in the design by accommodating weather based "smart" irrigation controllers, hydrozones and climate exposure.

Today, a monitoring system tracks everything from solar electricity production and energy use to the temperature, humidity and soil moisture of the green roofs. Students are able to monitor the data in real time. Diane Rosenberg, executive director Nueva School says that green design was always a priority for the project. "It's the right message for the kids," she says. "Schools can really be a seed planted in the minds of the young—and also of their parents and the faculty—to start thinking differently about how we engage the world."

The Nueva School, Hillside Learning Complex earned a spot on the AIA Committee on the Environment's 2008 Top Ten Projects and recently earned a LEED Gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. "The Nueva School is committed to teaching our students about human impact on the environment, so we are thrilled with the deployment of this unique innovation," adds Rosenberg, "The Resource Monitor gives Nueva School a way to measure the impact of our proactive environmental initiatives and our students a state-of-the-art pedagogic tool for learning about how we can mitigate climate change. Additionally, it will be a vital tool for the facilities managers to monitor the conditions and efficacy of the living roof to maintain the roof's health."

