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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **BAYSHORE CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES RECEIVES CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION FOR ITS RENOVATED FIELD OF HOPE**

East Palo Alto Councilmember Antonio López  
Calls BCM's Field of Hope an "Oasis" and Example of the City's Resilience

**EAST PALO ALTO, Calif., Nov. 12, 2021** — Following the unveiling of its Field of Hope, Bayshore Christian Ministries (BCM), a non-profit anchor in the East-of-Bayshore community for 37 years, received a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Senate celebrating its renovated outdoor space. The history of the field's renovation includes such important names as basketball star [Jeremy Lin](#), David Muffly, now the [head arborist](#) for the Apple headquarters in Cupertino, and the Palo Alto non-profit [Canopy](#).

[Antonio López](#), an East Palo Alto Councilmember who attended BCM's Field of Hope Expo on the afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 10, 2021, described the impact this outdoor space will have on the community in a presentation to over 230 guests. "BCM's Field of Hope is an example of East Palo Alto's resilience. It's an oasis," said Lopez. "The beauty of this outdoor space offers hope and inspiration to the community. As someone who grew up here and has seen the city transform, my heart warms knowing that this space is going to inspire countless students who are coming to these facilities. Here they will be mentored, inspired and empowered."

### **Beginnings**

BCM has called East Palo Alto home since 1984, and, for 21 of those years, the field next to its headquarters at 1001 Beech St. has been part of its mission to equip east-of-Bayshore youth to grow spiritually, gain life skills and develop as leaders so that they have hope and a future.

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“BCM has served as a pillar of the community,” continued López. “For over 30 years, they’ve changed the lives of children who’ve come through their doors, as well as their families, providing a safe refuge for education to those who otherwise might lack it. They’ve invested so much in the future of East Palo Alto.”

In 2000, when BCM opened the doors of its then new facility, the field next to the building had fresh grass and was widely enjoyed by students. When Rolando Zeledon, BCM’s executive director from 2008-2020, joined BCM in 2006, he recalls the green grass. However, a series of setbacks impacted the health of the field.

First, was drought. During the three years from 2007–2009, California experienced the 12th worst drought period in the state's history. It was so bad that for the first time a statewide emergency proclamation was issued. BCM had to conserve water, in solidarity with its neighbors; thus the once green grass began to fade.

Ironically, at the very same time, we were *all* hit with the Great Recession (December 2007-June 2009). Things got *very* tight financially at BCM as they did most everywhere. Up until that point, BCM had gardeners keeping the field in reasonably good shape. But, when hard decisions had to be made, the external gardening support was eliminated. Zeledon recalls that the leadership team had to do the best with what they had at the time.

### **Weekend Volunteer Projects**

While 2007-2009 brought many discouragements, encouragement came from Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (MPPC – renamed Menlo Church in 2015). MPPC encouraged BCM to launch a form of volunteer project that is now a cornerstone of BCM’s connection to local church partners – weekend work projects. Over time, many projects were done both by MPPC and others. Notably, during one of MPPC’s Compassion Weekends, a team of MPPC members renovated the edge of BCM’s property into a citrus orchard with dwarf citrus trees, donating both the trees and their time. This effort was led by David Muffly, a Stanford graduate who had an insatiable desire to [plant trees in East Palo Alto](#) and the hills around Stanford. He became so successful as an arborist that he was selected as the [head arborist](#) for the Apple headquarters in Cupertino where he was responsible for choosing 9,000 trees to create an urban oasis.

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### **Enter Palo Alto Non-Profit Canopy**

In 2018, BCM began sharing space at its headquarters with [Oxford Day Academy](#) (ODA), a charter high school, for daytime classes. As part of the agreement, ODA hoped that its project-based approach to learning might offer unique opportunities for high school students to partner with BCM. That came to fruition as the vision for the renovation of the Field of Hope formed.

Through ODA, BCM met [Canopy](#), a Palo Alto non-profit whose mission is to grow an urban tree canopy in Midpeninsula communities for the benefit of all. With the motto “Canopy plants and cares for trees where people need them the most,” BCM’s now time-worn field was the perfect project. It didn’t hurt that BCM already had a Canopy connection through David Muffly’s orchard planting some 10 years earlier.

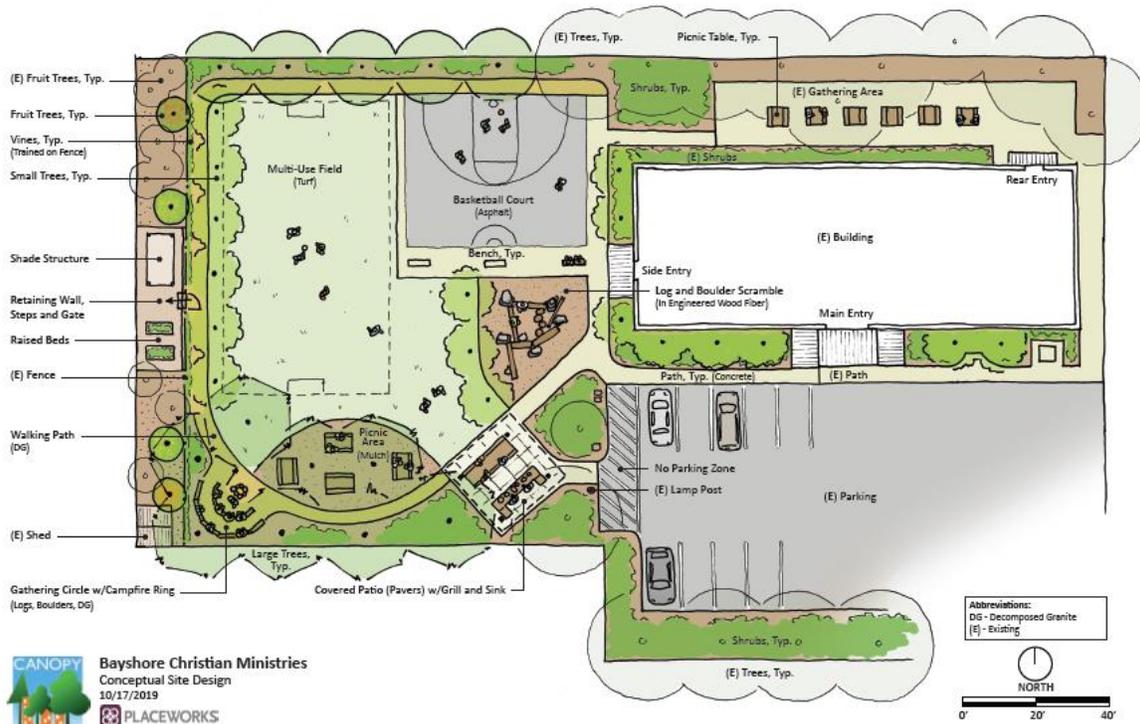
Canopy responded to BCM’s request for help to revitalize its field by applying for funding from the Kaiser Permanente CAMPOS grant which, at that time, provided resources to engage community in the use of shared public spaces outdoors. Kaiser awarded the grant to Canopy and monies were received in early 2019. This led to collaborative efforts between 1) BCM, 2) ODA students, 3) Canopy and its Teen Urban Foresters (TUFs) high school program, and 4) [PlaceWorks](#) -- a planning and urban design firm specializing in community engagement.

Many fine fruits came from this rich collaboration. During Phase I, PlaceWorks trained a team of ODA students who, as part of their high school coursework, lead a design charrette, an intense period of design and planning activity. The students solicited feedback via surveys amongst their school and BCM constituents and presented findings to ODA in May 2019.

Then, a team of Canopy TUFs (some of whom were also ODA students) took over, holding a live dream building and ideation session at BCM’s summer showcase in August 2019. BCM, its students and families, and ODA representative participated in the conversation. The back-and-forth conversation continued until all parties had settled not only on the ideal features that should be included in the Field of Hope, but also the location of each feature.

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By early Fall 2019, PlaceWorks had create an agreed-upon conceptual design for the Field of Hope:



“The Field of Hope is a beautiful culmination of vision and action,” said Latrice Bennett, ODA Head of School. “At ODA, we believe in cultivating agency with intentionality, always encouraging students to find ways to make an impact in their community. We thank BCM for respecting their collaboration with our students by seeing this project through to completion; it is essential for our youth to witness their dreams materialize in such purposeful ways.”

### Prepping for Trees

Once the Field of Hope design phase was completed, it was time for the work to begin. BCM began to brainstorm with Canopy’s program manager about trees. Selecting trees and greenery that would be planted around the edges of the Field of Hope and in front of BCM’s building was a delightful process.

However, much field preparation work was required before the tree planting could begin. Not only had the field become extremely uneven due to gophers and a lack of greenery, but there were also drainage issues.

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During this phase, BCM discovered the source of a long-mysterious leak in the irrigation system that was creating large water bills even after sprinklers were turned off. Deep in the center of the field, the leak was *finally* located and tapped off.

Excellent survey work and field preparation was completed by [Girvin Peters Landscape](#). The field had to be graded, irrigation established, and the walking path installed with metal edging and a rock surface. Girvin's relationship with Canopy made the project run smoothly and reach completion at a great price point.

### **Tree Planting Day**

Finally, the big day arrived -- Nov. 16, 2019. With the help of over 100 volunteers and Canopy staff and TUFs, 32 trees and 125 plants became part of the Field of Hope. It was a joyous experience to take shovel to dirt and work together to plant large trees, transforming the flat barren space into something that began to look like the Field of Hope. Now it was time to begin installing the envisioned field features.

### **Jeremy Lin and BCM's Basketball Court**

Basketball superstar, [Jeremy Lin](#), an Asian-American professional basketball player who got his start in Palo Alto, played a major role in the installation of BCM's basketball half court. Because of its ongoing support of BCM, the [Jeremy Lin Foundation](#) was able to fund most of the cost of the court. Foundation staff were present for the ribbon cutting on Saturday, March 20, 2021. And, Jeremy Lin himself, who was playing basketball away from the Bay Area at that time, sent a [video](#) to BCM youth to express his support.

"Hopefully you are enjoying the newly renovated court," said Lin in the video. "To me, the court, sports and basketball are about unifying people. We come together, we do amazing things. We get to play ball, exercise, and enjoy each other's company. I hope that the court is a source of unification and that you continue to pursue your dreams and enjoy working out and enjoy exercising every day. I will continually be rooting for you guys, BCM youth. Keep doing what you're doing."

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Only a month later, on April 23, 2021, Lin was able to come to BCM in person to play ball and capture the flag with students and encourage a healthy lifestyle. He shared words of wisdom with the students about how to combat hate with love and even signed basketballs that students took home as a keepsake.

BCM hoped that the Basketball Court Ribbon Cutting ceremony would be an impactful launch for a fundraising effort to complete the field's renovation. To that end, a [video](#) was produced featuring the Jeremy Lin Foundation and the story behind the field. The fundraising effort was a great success! Over \$110,000 was raised by the summer of 2021. The field could be completed.

### **Funds Raised to complete the Field of Hope Renovation**

BCM Executive Director, Tiffany Hong, described each component that has since been completed on the Field of Hope. "The basketball court and soccer field will teach Godly lessons of courage and team -- how to persevere and celebrate," said Hong. "The firepit will give deep, intimate moments of sharing, worship and fellowship. The picnic area will allow families and community to gather to support, love and experience joy. The barbeque area will be where we commune and break bread. And finally, the garden will be the parallel of our lives and hope – as we nurture and care for seedlings, they will grow and become the beautiful creations God intended."

### **About Bayshore Christian Ministries**

Bayshore Christian Ministries (BCM), a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1984 and located in East Palo Alto, Calif., equips the youth of East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park to grow spiritually, gain life skills and develop as leaders so they have hope and a future. BCM offers after-school, evening, and summer programs, using a relational, wholistic and collaborative approach to empower the next generation of community leaders. Our vision is that our alumni are active in their faith, possess hope, purpose and marketable skills and give back to their communities. To learn more, visit [www.Bayshore.org](http://www.Bayshore.org).

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