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*"It's our neighborhood.
Let's build a community."*

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August 5, 2016

From: West Hills Neighborhood Council

To: West Valley Garden Club Blue Star Committee

Re: WHNC's support for Blue Star By-Way plaque at Orcutt Ranch in West Hills

Dear Members of the West Valley Garden Club:

At its regular meeting on Aug. 4, 2016, the Board of Directors of the West Hills Neighborhood Council voted unanimously to endorse the West Valley Garden Club's efforts to install a Blue Star By-Way marker on the grounds of the Orcutt Ranch Horticulture Center in West Hills.

The motion of support was introduced by the WHNC's Beautification Committee, which voted unanimously in favor of the marker at its meeting on June 28 after hearing a presentation by members of the West Valley Garden Club.

Established by the National Garden Club in 1945, the Blue Star By-Way project honors all who serve in America's Armed Forces. The marker at Orcutt Ranch will be located at the end of a handicapped-accessible path leading to an oak glen.

Orcutt Ranch is named after William W. Orcutt (1869-1942), who built a summer home on the site in the 1920s. Mr. Orcutt served in the National Guard (1895-1897) and was a Army Reserve engineer during the First World War. He also served on the local draft board (1940-1942). As chief geologist for the Union Oil Company, he was known for his discoveries of oil fields and for identifying and preserving the remains of prehistoric animals found in the La Brea Tar Pits.

The West Hills Neighborhood Council is proud to support the West Valley Garden Club, a 501(c)(3) organization that has met at Orcutt Ranch since 1967. The group's 69 members have served their community in many ways through the following projects and more:

- The club prunes more than 400 rose bushes at Orcutt Ranch every January. This year, the club donated a tiller for the ranch's rose garden.
- On Arbor Day in 2015, the group planted three carrotwood trees at Fire Station



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106 on Roscoe Boulevard at Lena Avenue in West Hills. This year, the club planted two Chinese fringe trees in Orcutt Ranch in memory of Ernesto Cornejo, who maintained the grounds for 53 years.

- The club planted two “honor” rose bushes at the Chatsworth Transportation Center near a Blue Star By-Way marker that was installed in 2000.
- Each year, the West Valley Garden Club sponsors three \$1,000 scholarships for students of horticulture at CSUN, Pierce College and West Valley Occupational Center. The scholarships are presented at a luncheon at Sylmar High School during its annual horticulture competition.
- In May 2016, the club presented its Civic Business Beautification Award to Retail Opportunity Investments Corporation (ROIC), owner of Fallbrook Center in West Hills. In turn, Mike Seymour, CEO of ROIC, presented \$5,000 to the club’s scholarship program.
- The West Valley Garden Club participates in the annual reenactment of the signing of the Articles of Capitulation at Campo de Cahuenga in Studio City. A Blue Star memorial is located at the historic site’s entrance.
- The club has made donations to the CSUN Botanical Gardens, the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Association, the California Garden Clubs Inc. President’s Project, the Conejo Valley Botanical Garden, the Ojai Raptor Center, the Theodore Payne Foundation and the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers.

The West Hills Neighborhood Council greatly appreciates the good work of the West Valley Garden Club in beautifying our Orcutt Ranch Horticulture Center and the surrounding community. We are proud to endorse your effort to install a Blue Star By-Way marker at Orcutt Ranch, where the public will be able to enjoy this beautiful tribute to America’s veterans for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Brin

President and Co-Chair
West Hills Neighborhood Council