

LOCAL NEWS

How this deteriorating cottage was transformed into Redondo Union's charming new alumni house

By **MEGAN BARNES** | mbarnes@scng.com | Long Beach Press-Telegram
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If you never took much notice of an aging cottage that has been sitting vacant for decades on the Redondo Union High School campus, you will now.

With a fresh coat of deep red paint, full renovations inside and out, and the commitment of volunteers and donors, the small house and one-time janitorial space across from the school auditorium has been [transformed into a charming new home](#) for generations of Sea Hawks to gather and reminisce.

The Redondo Union High School Alumni House is just about complete, according to volunteers. It will be unveiled to the public with a grand opening bash appropriately scheduled for homecoming, Oct. 6.



The school idea came about three years ago, said Carl Deisher, a board

“We thought, we have all this memorabilia from 113 years of Redondo High, wouldn’t it be great if we could turn that vacant house into an alumni house?” said Dreizler, board president of the nonprofit later formed to maintain it.

The project stalled when an initial quote for repairs came in at \$180,000, said Principal Jens Brandt.

But, seeing the enthusiasm among Redondo alumni, he decided to form a committee to jump-start the effort.

‘Long and unique history’

“I can’t imagine there are many public high school campuses that have an alumni house,” Brandt said. “Because we do have this long and unique history here at Redondo, we really want to celebrate it and create this connection with our alumni.”

Redondo Unified Superintendent Steven Keller contacted Sharefest, a San Pedro nonprofit that works on community projects, and the organization brought in The Morgan Group, a Torrance real estate company specializing in remodeling craftsman homes.

With their help, the project’s price tag and time line were cut in half. The nonprofit Redondo Union Alumni House began fundraising last year and [construction began](#) in June.

The house will host events coinciding with homecomings and class reunions set against a backdrop of displays filled with yearbooks, letterman jackets, copies of the High Tide student newspaper and other pieces of Sea Hawks nostalgia, Dreizler said.

School officials are still trying to track down city records to discover the history of the house itself. They estimate it is at least 80 years old.

“Essentially the campus was built around the house,” Brandt said. “We have these great black and white aerial photos where you can watch the progress as we moved from Diamond and PCH toward Prospect as the campus grew larger and larger.”

Although repairs are nearly finished, the Alumni House nonprofit — which is separate from the Redondo Union High School Alumni Association — is accepting donations for ongoing maintenance. Only private funds can be used for the house's upkeep.

Dreizler thanked all of the players and volunteers who made the project a reality, especially Redondo's particularly proud alumni.

"I'm biased because I went to Redondo, but I think Redondo probably has the strongest alumni community," he said. "When you go to a Redondo football game, there's a whole section of alumni from the 1940s, '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s."

For more information or to support the Redondo Union High School Alumni House, visit facebook.com/ruhsalumnihouse.

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Megan Barnes covers crime and public safety for the Press-Telegram. She was previously a city reporter at the Daily Breeze, where she covered the South Bay beach cities and the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Before that, she was a freelancer writing about LGBT news and her hometown of San Pedro, where she probably made your latte at Starbucks. She loves iced Americanos and Radiohead and finally got to see them live on the A Moon Shaped Pool tour. It was magical.

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