

North Hollywood, California

## Oakwood Elementary School "PlaySpace"

In 1951, a small group of parents teamed up to have a school constructed that would provide a warm and welcoming learning environment for their children. Oakwood School, a kindergarten through eighth-grade co-educational independent day facility, was the result of this vision.

Separated into two buildings, an elementary school and a secondary school, Oakwood has provided a wide variety of quality educational programs to its students for the past 57 years. However, the school's board of trustees recently determined that while Oakwood Elementary School

program for its kindergarten through sixth-grade students, constraints posed by the school's acs and size have greatly limited its blity to deliver the highest educational experience. ignizing a need for a larger facility, the trustees working with architect Kindly Eizenberg Architecture in develop plans for a massire abouild of the entire elementary echool campus. The firm first assessed both the school's current features and its future needs, implementing teacher, parent and community workshops for valuable input and providing project illustrations outlining each step in the process. Together with the

project's general contractor, Del

Amo Construction, Inc., and the

Koning Eizenberg implemented its master plan, which called for a continues to provide a reputable four-phased replacement of the campus without interrupting the school's current enrollment. The first phase of this project involved of the construction of the "PlaySpace," an approximately 12,000-square-for-building consisting of a gymn m/basketball court area, and multipurpose area designed for forming arts and various school emblies. The "PlaySpace" replay the building's original age multipurpose room and allows a wide variety of usages, according to Ron Northup, vice president for Del

> and outside. Many green-friendly features were used in the construction, including carpets made from recycled tires, a recycled glass

Amo Construction, while accom-

modating audiences both inside

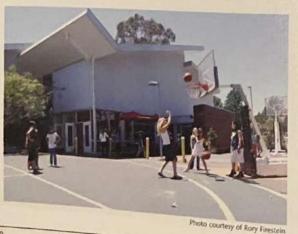
project's developer/construction

manager, The Freeman Group,

floor, a natural rubber floor for the gymnasium and bio-fiber wheat board, which was used instead of plywood. Even the trees removed during construction were recycled into outdoor furniture, reaffirming the team's commitment to the environment.

Other unique features of the project include a geothermal water source heat pump system, which was installed for conditioning the building in the summer and winter, and polycarbonate panels, which maximize daylighting and allow for weight savings, glare reduction and flexibility. Acoustic ceiling panels were installed in the gymnasium for optimal sound control.

The unique construction of the "PlaySpace" presented the team with a few unforeseen challenges. "The building has a variety of difficult materials that attach and join together," said Northup. According to him, close coordination with the architect



educational facilities

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and engineers was required to accomplish the water-tight details and alleviate any possibility for water intrusion. "Coordination with the geothermal grid system and integration with the water source heat pumps in the basement was also challenging and required many custom-built mechanical fittings," he said.

Despite the challenges, however, the team members pulled together and successfully completed the project four months ahead of schedule in January 2007. Sam Anker, COO for Oakwood School said, "Overall, the team functioned quite well and easily overcame differences and challenges."

- Sara E. Teller

