Students give OSU needed makeover

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The lot west of the Classroom Building and the eyesore where UTco was located are finally being put to good use.

Campus Beautification Day was held Wednesday in an effort to transform these locations into something more pleasing to the eye.

ECO-OSU, American Society of Landscape Architects and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. worked together to carry out the renovations. More than 50 volunteers assisted throughout the day.

The Environmental Defense Fund, a nonprofit environmental advocacy group, granted Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. $1,000 to carry out the initiative.

The area where UTco once stood will soon be the site for activities that currently take place on Library Lawn in order to keep the lawn’s scenic view intact.

But the main focus was the small lot that sits to the side of the classroom building.

Morgan Hopkins, president of ECO-OSU, helped with the transformation.

"It’s going to be a new social and green space on campus," Hopkins said. "We’ve been paving the area and planting trees and shrubbery and flowers. We will be placing benches as well."

A tree dedication ceremony was held in celebration of Arbor Day, a holiday where people throughout the country come together to plant and care for trees.

"It was also in honor of OSU’s Tree Campus USA status that we achieved last year," Hopkins said.

"To keep our certification, we need to respect and participate in Arbor Day, which is what we’re doing here today."

Tree Campus USA is a program that recognizes colleges that effectively manage their campus trees.

President Burns Hargis and his wife, Ann, spoke at the ceremony.

"So many good things around here have started with the students," Hargis said. "This concern for our beautiful campus and to have our students committed to it being as beautiful as it can possibly be is really special."

Hargis and his wife helped plant a nuttall oak tree that is expected to grow to 50 feet tall.

"When you come back with your kids to an OSU game or otherwise, this tree will be huge and will shade this whole plaza and just be fantastic," Hargis said.

Martin Smith, director of activities at Alpha Phi Alpha, said he feels proud to be a part of the beautification project.

"Rather than just being a student here and being complacent with just attending school and graduating, I want to leave a legacy," Smith said.