



Finding the Faces of Urban Forestry

TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN

No. **86**

Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio • \$3.00



“People who need people” was a catchy line from a tune sung by Barbra Streisand in the Broadway hit, “Funny Girl.” Community forestry needs people, too, and fortunately they are there. Men and women of all ages and from all walks of life benefit from our nation’s well-managed urban and community forests, and many stand ready to testify to how these trees have a positive impact on their lives.

The Arbor Day Foundation, with the support of the U.S. Forest Service, undertook an ambitious new project known as Faces of Urban Forestry in 2012. The idea was — and continues to be — to gather personal stories from every state that serve as examples of how urban and community forestry contributes to the health and happiness of residents and business owners. It was a way to show the value of trees in a unique and important light.

Another benefit of the Faces of Urban Forestry project is to demonstrate how municipal dollars, as well as state and federal grants, are leveraged far

The popularity of trees in our communities needs to be highlighted in order to help gain even greater support and funding for the urban forest.

beyond the dollar amounts provided. It shows that these investments are working and provides additional evidence for funding requests.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the Faces of Urban Forestry project, which could also be recreated locally, is to highlight the support — both active and potential — that exists among residents and businesses for urban forestry. Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, “With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed.” The Faces of Urban Forestry project is one way to illustrate the public sentiment and diverse support for urban forestry.

The collection of testimonials resulting from this project is impressive and inspiring. It also continues to grow, and you are invited to contribute stories from your community.



Arbor Day Foundation
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

A Bounty of Benefits

Here is a small cross section of people from around the nation who enjoy the benefits of urban forestry. Many more can be found at arborday.org/faces — and in your community.



Paul Weckman & Emily Wolff

COVINGTON, KENTUCKY



TREES BRING PEOPLE DOWNTOWN TO SHOP AND DINE

When Paul Weckman and Emily Wolff opened Otto's restaurant, they selected downtown Covington because they valued the historical significance of its 1850s structures. But something was missing.

"The neighborhood didn't seem complete without trees," Paul says. To do their part in restoring trees to the business district, the owners of Otto's and a neighboring restaurant entered into a partnership with the city. The resulting project transformed four parking spaces into a new outdoor dining area with trees.

The cost of the project was split evenly between the city and the businesses, and the newly designed spaces provided seating for 25 additional customers and improved the ambiance of the street. City officials worked with business owners to enhance the customer experience throughout the area.

"These trees created a desirable outdoor dining area and increased overall traffic," Paul says. "Significantly more people are visiting the area for dining, shopping, and strolling."

Were it not for this innovative private/public partnership, this historic business district would have missed out on increased vibrancy and people.

"We tell our staff that our restaurant should look like a beautiful painting," Paul adds. "Trees make that possible."



Andy Masterpole

ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA



TREES STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOOD BONDS

Street trees are "an integral part of good neighborhood design," landscape architect Andy Masterpole says with confidence. Andy speaks from personal experience as well as technical expertise.

He lives in the Kutzky Park area of Rochester, where trees form a solid canopy from streets through side yards and into the backs of houses. In a recent survey, Andy and his neighbors listed "tree canopy" as the second most important reason they live in this part of the city. "We value our street trees," Andy says. "They provide a sense of community and an opportunity to bring people together." The neighborhood trees also bring people out to their porches and front yards, contributing to safety and security. "When something unusual happens in this neighborhood, you notice it because you know your neighbors," Andy adds.

Rochester City Forestry has carefully maintained a green canopy in Andy's neighborhood through regular pruning, treatments, and removal as needed, as well as active replanting. The department cares for 160,000 public trees citywide and works with RNeighbors, Rochester Public Utilities, and others to engage and educate residents about tree planting and care. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has also provided grants to support the planting of more than 5,000 new trees in the past few years.

Were it not for the support of state and local officials, Andy's neighborhood would not be thriving as a safe and livable community. "Trees make all the difference," Andy says.



FROM DAN LAMBE, ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

Trees are important. The trees in our cities and towns conserve energy, boost the local economy, clean our air and water, reduce noise, and improve our health and well-being. But they do much more. They frame our neighborhoods and provide a natural beauty that silently and elegantly improves the quality of our lives every day.

These stories illustrate, in a powerful way, the tremendous impact of urban forestry programs across the United States.



Jane Croeker
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA



Barrie Schuster
RENO, NEVADA



TREES FOSTER OUTDOOR RECREATION

The prairie city of Grand Forks, North Dakota, is known for its harsh climate. Not surprisingly, this has led to residents spending a large amount of time indoors. But that is changing thanks to the city's 2,200-acre Greenway, which contains 20 miles of trails and ample tree canopy.

"I see people of all ages enjoying the trees and open space in a variety of ways," says Jane Croeker, an active trail user. This valuable recreation resource began as a flood-control project following the high water of 1997. However, officials in the city of Grand Forks and other local agencies quickly developed a broader vision that included outdoor recreation and open space. An integral part of the development was an inventory of trees, followed by a planting program that continues today with funding from individual donations, memorial trees, the area's utility provider, and the Grand Forks Park District.

Were it not for the combined support of local officials, this critical public resource would not be transforming lives and improving public health. "It has become obvious that the trees are helping people make healthy lifestyle choices," Jane says.

TREES HELP MAKE NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE

"Eight and a half years ago when I moved to West of Wells (Neighborhood), it was a 'slum' where you'd be mugged if you parked and walked down the street. Now homeowners are fixing up their homes and yards, and new families are moving into the neighborhood, where they fix up old Victorian homes and raise their families," says Barrie Schuster.

This renaissance is due to a number of factors, but tree planting by a grassroots neighborhood organization, Roots for Wells, has played a major role. The goal of this group is to bring residents together for cleanup, property enhancement, and tree planting. To date, 150 trees have been planted along this neighborhood's streets, and more are planned. Barrie says, "Trees have made a big impact through beautification, but the greatest impact has come from homeowners meeting each other and working together."

The annual tree planting is funded by a community pride grant from the neighborhood advisory board with technical assistance from the Reno Parks and Urban Forestry Division. But it's the residents, like Barrie, who are making this effort a success at bringing good people together and reclaiming the neighborhood from crime.

Residents living in the West of Wells neighborhood of Reno, Nevada, receive instruction about the right way to plant their new trees.



A Bounty of Benefits (continued)



Jeanne Kavinsky
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY



MEMORIAL TREES HELP PEOPLE COPE WITH LOSS

September 11, 2001, left an indelible mark on our nation's soul. Of the many lives lost that day — with more than 2,600 in the collapse of the Twin Towers — 631 were from New Jersey.

The New Jersey Community Forestry Program (NJCFP) quickly saw a need to help the many families and friends who lost loved ones find hope and healing in the wake of the tragedy. That's when the idea of a Grove of Remembrance came to life.

Together with the New Jersey Tree Foundation and with funding from the U.S. Forest Service, the NJCFP helped organize the planting of 631 trees in Liberty State Park, located just across the river from the National September 11 Memorial. Jeanne Kavinsky was asked to represent the families of 9/11 during the entire project. Her sister, Carol Ann LaPlante, was one of the Twin Towers victims.

“At the time, I didn't realize how important this would be,” Jeanne recalls. During the dedication ceremony, Jeanne was asked to speak. She chose to read from a poem her sister had written titled “The Withered Tree.”

“Whenever I come to Liberty State Park, I go outside and look at the site, cry, and use the grove to get my mind around it,” Jeanne says. “The whole project was really a very healing step. It has given me a foothold to get myself back on track.”



Doug Roberts
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA



TREES REDUCE HIGH ENERGY BILLS

Sacramento, near the northern end of California's Central Valley, is known for its hot and dry summers. As resident Doug Roberts put it, “Cooling is a major thing here.”

Like his neighbors, Doug was looking for ways to get through those hot summer days on his own property. He got in touch with the Sacramento Tree Foundation, which offers free trees through a partnership with the area's utility provider.

Launched in 1982, the Sacramento Tree Foundation is spearheading local efforts to plant 5 million trees and reduce energy consumption in the region. The Foundation works closely with city officials in Sacramento who have made leadership in urban forest management a priority.

Were it not for the city of Sacramento's professional and well-funded system for tree care, the Foundation would not have been able to offer residents like Doug such an opportunity.

With help from a Foundation arborist, Doug planted three valley oaks alongside his house and crapemyrtles on the median strip of his street, reducing the heat island effect of hot pavement. “This is a fabulous deal,” Doug said, adding that the trees are saving him hundreds of dollars per year. “Trees do a lot of good.”





Kathy Thornton
DALTON, GEORGIA



Don Kerr
KAMAS VALLEY, UTAH



TREES PROVIDE COMFORT AND HEALING FOR CHILDREN RECOVERING FROM ABUSE

“Trees are central to the healing process for children recovering from domestic violence,” says Kathy Thornton, who oversees a temporary home for more than 20 children.

A suggestion from a Family Crisis Center volunteer prompted Kathy to successfully apply for a grant from the Georgia Forestry Commission. She then received assistance from state and local staff with getting new trees planted. “They were great,” she said. “It really helped to have someone with knowledge of trees. The city donated time and equipment and made sure we had the right trees in the right place.” Most importantly, the red maple, lacebark elm, and zelkova trees give comfort to the children when they are outdoors by shading playground equipment and providing a calming space for play and activity. “I can tell you the playground is a really big deal for the kids,” Kathy said.

Bottom left: New Jersey’s Liberty State Park, across the river from the Manhattan skyline, provides a place of solace for families that lost friends and loved ones in the 9/11 tragedy.

Bottom right: Members of the Lions Club plant trees to make local parks and rodeo grounds more hospitable in northern Utah’s harsh climate.

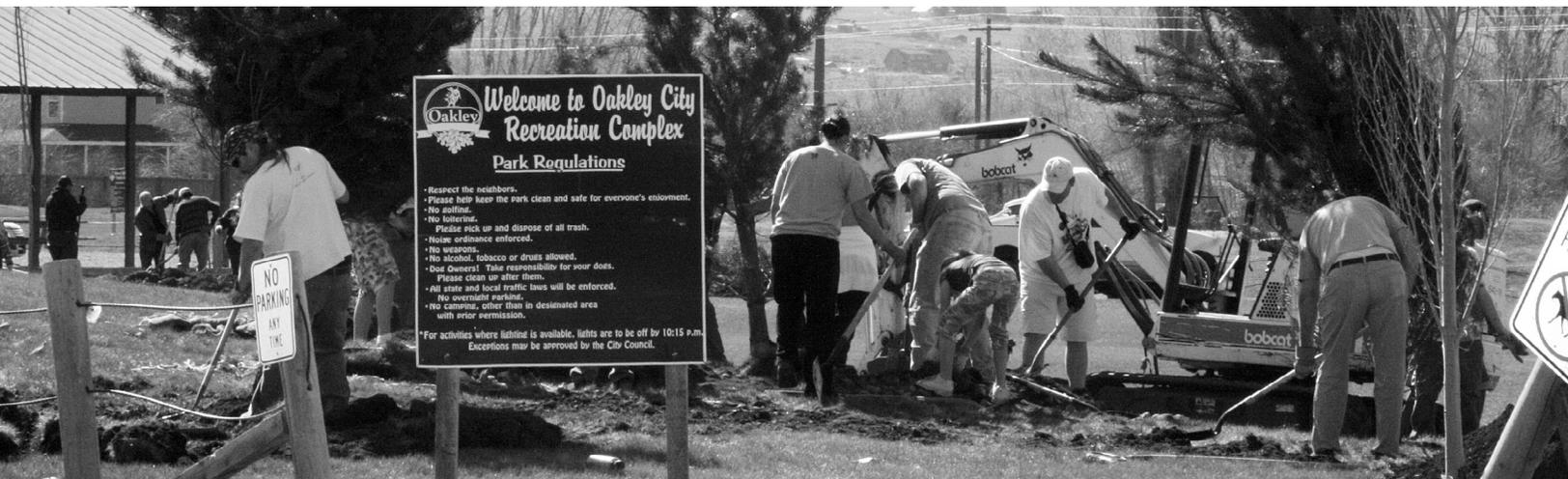
TREES ENGAGE RESIDENTS TO IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITIES

Don Kerr lives in the Kamas Valley of northern Utah. Situated at 6,700 feet above sea level, “it’s tough on trees, but they are important,” Don says.

The harsh climate does not deter Don and his Lions Club from spearheading the planting of shade trees throughout the valley. It began with 12 trees at a rodeo grounds that converted into a city park. Today, grants from the Utah Urban and Community Forestry Program administered by TreeUtah have allowed Don and the Lions Club to engage volunteer groups in annual planting projects. Rocky Mountain Power has helped with additional funding, and local mills have provided mulch and volunteer hours.

Hundreds of trees have been planted in city parks, school playgrounds, street rights-of-way, and even rodeo grounds. “Rodeo is a big deal up here, and people take care of their rodeo grounds,” Don says. He adds that in the community of Oakley, “the grounds aren’t just for rodeo. There’s a skate park, playground, soccer and baseball fields, too.”

Trees in the valley’s towns provide shade and a welcoming feeling to visitors. Thanks to the Lions Club and State Forestry and its cooperators, the new trees are providing an opportunity for both the engagement of area residents and the improvement of their communities.



Conduct a Faces of Urban Forestry Project in Your Community

There are men and women in every community who have personally benefited from trees and urban forestry. They appreciate trees for their beauty, their contributions to human health, and their ecoservices. Compiling the stories of these people and including them on the website of your tree board or other organization can help build support for your programs. Here are some lessons learned that will lead to the best interviews.

1. FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Create a list of potential people to interview. This might come as the result of an ideation session or from asking urban foresters, the state urban and community forestry coordinator, or others in the green industries for suggestions. Emphasize that you are searching for the ground-level perspective of residents, not necessarily urban forestry professionals or leaders.

In some cases, you may want the individual who nominates someone to be the first to make contact and explain the project. Otherwise, make the contact yourself and schedule a time for a phone or in-person interview.

2. PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Do your homework. Learn what you can about the person and any related, pertinent organizations. The nominator is a good source, as is online research. For example, if the person was involved with creating a healing garden at a local hospital, look at the hospital's website. If a grant was involved, find out what you can about the criteria and the award.

Next, make a list of questions you plan to ask. Start with some icebreaker questions that will help set the person at ease and get him/her talking. Be sure to include a space to write down the person's title, if appropriate, and correct spelling of the name. Here are some suggested questions:

- Tell me a little about yourself. (If retired, from doing what? If unemployed, to what organizations do you belong? Do you have any hobbies pertinent to the tree project?)
- How long have you lived in your community or neighborhood?
- How would you describe the setting of the project? (Of course, skip this if you are already familiar with the answer or if a specific project is not involved.)
- Tell me about the project and your involvement in it.
- What benefits have the trees (or their management) provided?
- How have you been personally affected?
- What changes have resulted?
- What might have been the alternative consequences?



Conducting a local or regional Faces of Urban Forestry project could qualify for points toward a Tree City USA Growth Award in the Education and Public Relations category. For more information, please visit arborday.org/growthawards.

3. CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW SKILLFULLY

Introduce yourself, reiterate the intent of the project, explain how the results will be used, and express gratitude to the person for being willing to tell his or her story. If you want to use a recording device — which is a good idea to ensure accuracy and capture good quotes — be sure to ask permission. Always take notes as a backup.

Go through your list of questions, but be flexible because interviews sometimes take a direction not planned that can be equally beneficial. However, if the person strays off topic, go back to the list to continue.

There are two important things to do as the interview is about to end: (1) Be sure to ask if there is anything else the person would like to add. Sometimes the best material comes when there is a perception that the interview has basically ended. (2) Thank the person for taking time to visit with you. Consider leaving a token of appreciation such as an Arbor Day cap. Another option is to later order a Give-a-Tree® card — a card sent by the Arbor Day Foundation acknowledging that a tree has been planted in honor of the interviewee. The greeting cards are conveniently found at arborday.org/giveatree.

PRACTICE GOOD LISTENING

Effective listening is as much of a skill as public speaking. Here are some basic tips:

- ✓ Be well-rested and alert.
- ✓ If you have control over the interview environment, find a quiet spot or remove distractions such as music, television, etc.
- ✓ Constantly pay close attention to the speaker. Maintaining eye contact helps.
- ✓ Nod in agreement or signal with facial expressions that you are, in fact, listening and empathizing with what is being said.
- ✓ Refrain from talking about yourself or debating the person's opinions.
- ✓ Occasionally paraphrase or repeat back an important point for clarification.
- ✓ Focus your attention on the speaker's words, not his or her appearance or mannerisms.



Join the Faces

Faces of Urban Forestry is an ongoing project, and you are invited to join in. So what's your story? How has a community tree project positively affected your life? Do you know someone who should have a place in the Arbor Day Foundation's online gallery of Faces? Here are the key considerations of the stories we want to share with others:

- A community tree project that occurred in your neighborhood or community.
- The key benefit(s) the project provided (energy savings, beautification, nature conservation, etc.).
- How the project was funded.
- Your involvement in the project.
- The impact this project has had on you.

To share your story, please visit arborday.org/faces. Encourage others to share their stories as well.

Street trees have had a powerful impact in historic downtown Covington, Kentucky, improving business at Otto's Restaurant and other establishments.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF: Andy Masterpole (cover), Barrie Schuster (page 3), Jeanne Kavinsky (page 4), Don Kerr (page 5), and Paul Weckman/Emily Wolff (page 8).

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