

Heartland Tree Alliance Bridging the Gap

Building Region-wide Partnerships for Urban Forestry

The Challenge

The citizens of the greater Kansas City region live within the canopy of a lush, mature forest, which covers most of the metropolitan area. However, this mature forest is in need of attention, especially the maintenance of young trees on public property and planting new trees to replace aging trees. Thousands of trees were lost in an ice storm in 2002. Financial resources to replace these trees, as well as funds for other urban forest management projects are sparse. In addition, there has been no one central resource in the Kansas City region for information about urban and community forestry.

The Solution

The Heartland Tree Alliance program was created through a partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Kansas Forest Service, local governments, businesses, volunteers and other non-profit agencies, and with financial assistance from the U.S. Forest Service Bridging the Gap. This program acts as a centralized resource for education and action to promote an integrated and sustainable approach to improving the region's urban forest.

Heartland Tree Alliance offers six-week Tree Keepers classes taught by foresters, arborists and extension agents from around the region. These experts train citizens in subjects from diagnosing tree problems and tree identification to proper planting and pruning techniques. These trained volunteers then contribute no-cost, high-quality work on trees along local streets, in parks and on other public property. Large public plantings, such as Arbor Day events, engage more citizens in hands-on educational opportunities. A brief "How to Plant a Tree" class is held at the beginning of each such event, to ensure that the trees will thrive for many years after.

"This was one of the best classes I have ever taken. The impact on the trees in my little corner of the world will be positive—like a ripple effect—spreading the word. More Tree Keepers please!" Janice Freise, Tree Keepers participant



Green Elvis makes an appearance at a Heartland Tree Alliance Arbor Day planting event in the Ivanhoe neighborhood of Kansas City, MO.

Resulting Benefits

- There are now nearly 70 graduates of the Tree Keepers program, and hundreds of others have participated in one of the plantings or other public tree care events hosted by Heartland Tree Alliance. More than 500 trees have been pruned or planted since the beginning of the program.
- In 2006 The Home Depot Foundation and The National Arbor Day Foundation selected the program to participate in the first "10-city" planting event campaign.
- "Trees 101," was developed with help from a local university student, the Heartland Tree Alliance board and other advisors. This fun and easy-to-understand presentation has been shown to neighborhood organizations, environmental groups and businesses.

Sharing Success

The program's web site, www.heartlandtreealliance.org, is chock-full of useful information about selecting, planting and caring for trees as well as many other resources, including champion tree lists, answers to frequently asked questions and links to other urban forestry groups.



USDA Forest Service
Northern Area
State and Private Forestry

For more information, contact:

Kathryn P. Maloney, Area Director
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
Phone: 610-557-4103
E-mail: kmaloney@fs.fed.us

Michael Prouty, Field Representative
1992 Folwell Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone: 651-649-5276
E-mail: mprouty@fs.fed.us