



# NEW JERSEY TREE FOUNDATION

## Annual Report

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



The New Jersey Tree Foundation is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in New Jersey's most underserved neighborhoods, where the need is greatest. Through tree planting, volunteerism and partnerships, we assist communities in improving their environment and quality of life.

## Urban Airshed Reforestation Program (UARP)

Our community-based, volunteer tree planting program for Camden & other South Jersey cities

### Arbor Day Comes to Camden!

Camden was the proud host of New Jersey's official 2024 Arbor Day celebration! Partnering with the City of Camden and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Forest Service, we held a tree planting and giveaway event in Farnham Park alongside speakers from local and state government. We planted 16 trees in the park to help replace mature trees that were recently lost and add beauty to the park's entrance.



Volunteers pause for a photo during the Arbor Day planting

We distributed 134 fruit trees to residents and community gardens, helping improve access to healthy food by giving residents a chance to grow fresh fruit in their own backyard. This is critical in cities such as Camden, with only one full-service grocery store in the entire city. The NJ Tree Foundation was honored to receive an Arbor Day proclamation from the City of Camden, commending the program for its "enduring and valuable contributions to the city." Planting trees in Camden for over two decades has been a delight, and we hope to continue working in the city for years to come!



Fruit trees waiting to go to their new homes

### Urban Airshed Reforestation Program FY 23-24

Planted 271 trees with 530 volunteers who contributed 1,176 hours of service, \$38,348 in volunteer labor, and \$8,350 of in-kind support

## Trees in East Trenton

We wrapped up our Fall 2023 season with an ambitious two-day planting on North Clinton and North Olden Avenue in Trenton. We planted 46 trees along the streets and inside a pocket park. The blocks were devoid of shade, with no grass strips or empty tree pits to speak of. Not to be dissuaded we simply created our own tree pits, removing a whopping 921 square feet of concrete. We chose large shade trees to create a gorgeous, full canopy in the decades to come. A project this big was no solo endeavor, and we worked closely with the City of Trenton and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation to fund and organize the planting. The planting kicked off a grant we have with Delaware Riverkeeper to plant 50 trees in East Trenton to help with flooding and water quality. We were joined by 20 Tree Ambassadors - these are high school students who have dedicated their Saturday mornings to learning about trees, and we loved giving them hands-on tree planting experience.



A lacebark elm going into a new tree pit on North Olden Ave.

## Return to Waterfront South

Working with the Heart of Camden in April, we planted 23 trees in front of homes and businesses on Webster Street and Carl Miller Boulevard. We removed 216 square feet of concrete to create new tree pits which, along with the trees themselves, will help to absorb stormwater and reduce flooding. As the trees grow they will create a beautiful canopy, helping to cool the area and provide shade to relax under - a necessity during those summer heat waves!



Volunteers celebrate new trees for Waterfront South!

# Renaissance Trees Program (RTP)

Our community-based, volunteer tree planting program for Newark & other North Jersey cities

## Promoting Pollinators in the Ironbound

In October 2023 we planted 13 trees outside of Down Bottom Farms in the Ironbound neighborhood of Newark. Down Bottom Farms is part of the Ironbound Community Corporation's Urban Agriculture Program. They grow fruits and vegetables to sell to the community at their farmers' markets. We planted flowering trees along St. Charles Street to promote pollinators at the farm. The street previously had very few trees which is not uncommon as the Ironbound has one of the lowest tree canopy cover percentages in Newark. Along with the street trees, we provided the farm with six fruit trees to expand their orchard and offer more fresh fruit to the community.



Street trees planted outside of Down Bottom Farms

## Return to Pomona Avenue

Later that fall we revisited the Weequahic neighborhood of Newark and planted 23 native trees. On Pomona Avenue, we planted American hornbeams along the sidewalks which will accompany the red maples and red oaks we planted in the median in the spring of 2019. Having trees in both the median and along the sidewalk will fill out the canopy and provide much needed shade to this block of Pomona Avenue.



Volunteers pose next to a newly planted tree



A tree recipient poses with her new fruit tree

## Fruit Tree Giveaway in Newark

We kicked off our Spring 2024 planting season with a tree planting and fruit tree giveaway at Boylan Street Recreation Center in Newark. We gave away 150 fruit trees to Newark residents, who got to choose from apple, pear, peach, plum and nectarine trees to bring home and plant. With proper care, these trees will allow residents to grow fresh fruit right in their own backyard! During the giveaway we also planted nine trees around the Rec Center. We planted Japanese tree lilacs and Skyline honey locusts in existing tree pits which we expanded, removing 160 square feet of concrete. The trees will shade the sidewalk and the frequently used basketball courts outside the rec center and help intercept stormwater.

## Earth Day in Orange

To celebrate Earth Day this year we partnered with the Friends of Metcalf Park and the City of Orange DPW to plant trees in Metcalf Park in Orange. We planted little-leaf lindens, blackgums, Okame cherries, a willow oak, and a Sweetbay magnolia. We strategically placed the trees around the park to provide shade where needed like the bleachers, the playground, and along the sidewalk.



New trees for Metcalf Park!

### Renaissance Trees Program FY 23-24

Planted 179 trees with 401 volunteers who contributed 959 hours of service, \$30,976 in volunteer labor, and \$4,095 of in-kind support

## Education Program

Our brand new Education Program focuses on promoting tree care and fun environmental lessons to students of all ages.

### Connecting Two Communities to Plant Trees

The new Education Program started off its first spring season with a collaborative effort with our Renaissance Trees Program in Newark. On April 30th, the NJ Tree Foundation presented to students at Bayberry Elementary about the importance of trees and different tree species planted in cities. Students were invited to attend two upcoming tree planting projects: the May 11th planting at Richelieu Pace and the May 18th Vassar Ave. project. Students learned about why trees are important for urban communities, common tree species we plant, and what to expect on tree planting day. Elena and Meredith had the young tree friends draw their favorite tree they learned about during the presentation. Fantastic artistic depictions of Eastern redbuds, serviceberry, and oak could be seen throughout the cafeteria. A total of eight students attended the May 11th and 18th plantings, connecting two communities together to plant trees.



Bayberry Elementary School students learn about trees

### Summer School in Camden

This summer was a busy time for the Education Program as we worked closely with friends old and new to provide learning opportunities for Camden youth. Starting in May, the NJ Tree Foundation presented at Kipp Cooper Norcross Elementary and Mastery McGraw Elementary. We partnered with Social Responsibility Through Me, a Camden-based nonprofit focused on youth empowerment and education, to present to the students during their summer school program conducting fun, hands-on activities centered around trees.

A total of 235 students participated between the two schools, and this summer project turned into a long term partnership between the two nonprofits. We plan to present again at Social Responsibility Through Me's after school program at Mastery Schools in seasons to come.



Summer school students learn about tree rings

### Mapping Urban Trees

The Education Program spent Summer 2024 working with students of all ages in Trenton, Newark, and Camden. In June, we had the opportunity to work with Center for Aquatic Sciences interns, who are learning about local watersheds in the city of Camden. The NJ Tree Foundation taught the interns how to use i-Tree, a free software program designed to measure the long term benefits of street trees. Over the course of two presentations, the interns took data from the trees adjacent to the Center for Aquatic Sciences building, then entered the number and species of trees into i-Tree to calculate the current, 20-year and 50-year benefits. The interns now have data projections showing improvements to stormwater management, air quality, and energy savings that trees provide in their community now and into the future!



Center for Aquatic Sciences interns learn about i-Tree

### Education Program FY 23-24

Conducted 16 presentations to 417 participants in 4 different communities, accruing 291 participant hours.

## Green Streets

Our re-entry job training program for hire

Maintenance matters, which is why our Green Streets crew spent weeks watering, mulching, pruning and monitoring newly planted trees in Liberty State Park and elsewhere during the summer months. Rain garden maintenance is also important for a functioning and beautiful garden. Our Green Streets crew weeded, mulched and pruned five curbside rain gardens in Highland Park and continued annual maintenance on Rahway's large rain garden.

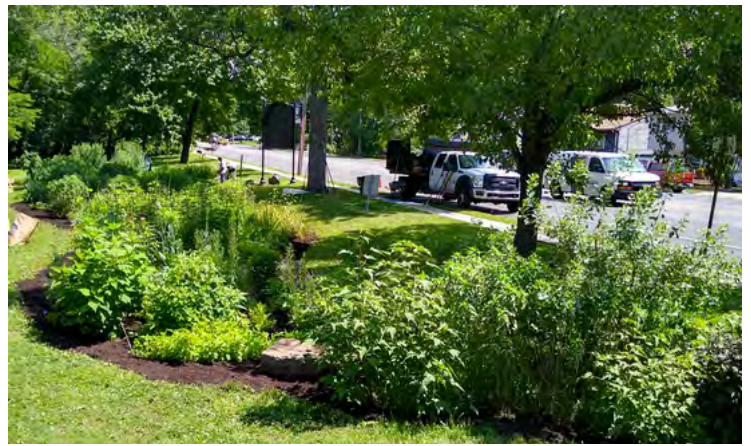


**Assistant Crew Supervisor Jarvis in training**

After a summer of maintenance, our Green Streets crew began the fall season by planting 26 trees to shade the walkways in Liberty State Park. Each season, new crewmen learn how to properly plant, mulch and stake trees in the park. In Sayerville, the crew planted 76 native trees on Blue Acres properties along MacArthur Avenue. This planting is part of a larger reforestation project in partnership with the town and Rutgers Wildlife Conservation and Management Program, and will help reduce flooding in the community. In Madison, the crew planted 52 trees as part of a 100-tree planting to commemorate Madison Rotary Club's 100th anniversary. The crew wrapped up the tree planting season in Woodbridge, planting shade trees at several schools and parks. In total, James, Kamille, John, Lavarr, Howard, Anthony, Robert and Jarvis planted 526 trees in 12 towns over the fall season.



**Hawthorns planted in Asbury Park in 2014, ten years later!**



**Rahway rain garden after being maintained by Green Streets**

Big growth came in our Spring season. We trained and then hired an assistant crew supervisor, and purchased a second truck for the crew. Tree planting just got a whole lot smoother! Our Green Streets crew - Supervisor James, Assistant Supervisor Jarvis, Miguel, Quicson and Marcelo planted 413 trees in eight towns during the spring season. A highlight of the spring included planting 70 trees at two schools in River Edge, creating beautiful shade for the playgrounds and ball fields. The Green Streets crew also joined community volunteers at Cadwalader Park in Trenton, planting and mulching 100 trees in this beautiful Olmstead park. The final planting of the spring season occurred with the Philip's Academy Charter School in Newark where 45 street trees were planted in extended tree pits to create a shaded greenway from students' homes to their school.



**Green Streets crew showing off a beautiful redbud in River Edge**

### Green Streets FY 23-24

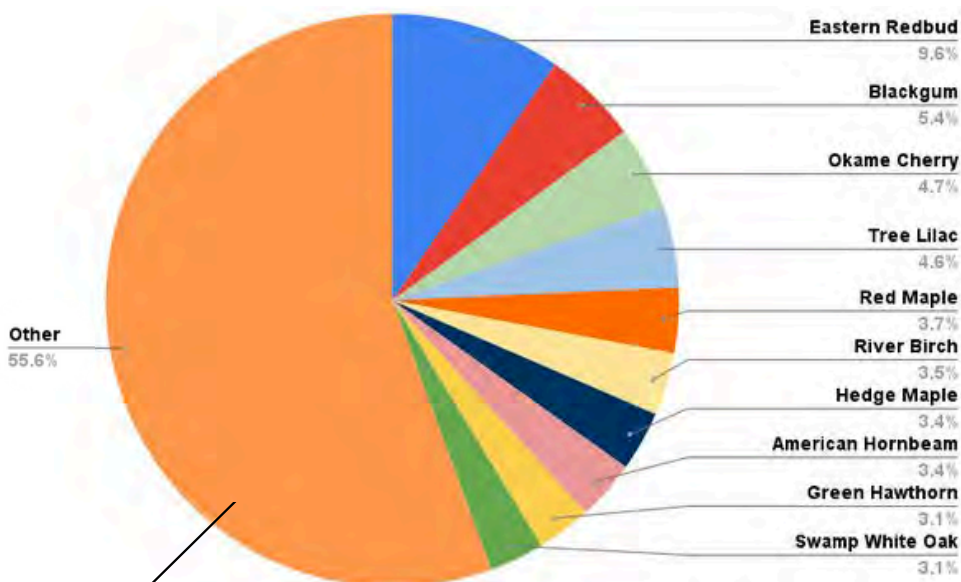
Planted 939 trees generating \$271,273 in revenue from planting and maintenance contracts.

# Species Diversity

## 2021-2023 Top 10 Species Planted

Spring 2021-Fall 2023

The NJ Tree Foundation aims to plant a wide variety of species in our community-based programs, working to create an urban forest that is more resilient to pests and disease. We use our inventory to track species composition across our plantings and adjust to improve diversity. The charts show that at the end of 2023, redbuds were coming close to exceeding 10% of our plantings. We used this information to plan our future seasons, and by the end of 2024, we have decreased the percentage of redbuds across our plantings, improving our overall diversity!



No species in the 'other' category was greater than 3% of the total

## 2021-2024 Top 10 Species Planted

Spring 2021-Fall 2024

### Fall 2023-Spring 2024

**Trees planted: 450**

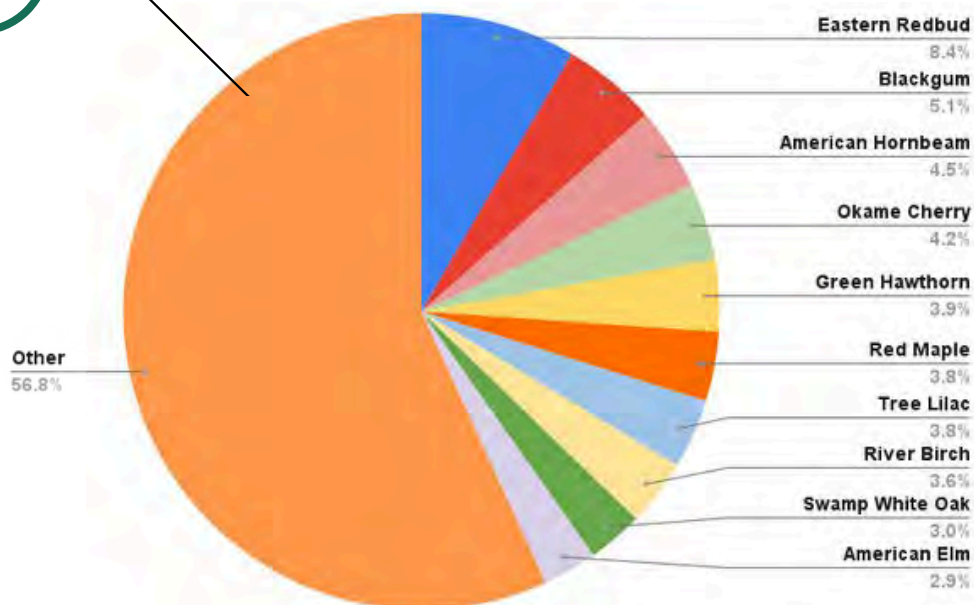
**Species planted: 54**

**Genera planted: 29**

**Families planted: 20**

Most common species: American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)

Over 10% this year, but only 3.4% overall



We strive to achieve the 10-20-30 rule across our community-based programs. This means that our plantings should consist of no more than 10% of one species, 20% of one genus, and 30% of one family. We track this both within and across seasons. The charts above show our species diversity from 2021-2023, and then from 2021-2024. You can see that we were able to reduce the percentage of our most planted species and bring some new species into our top ten. No individual species makes up more than 10% of our plantings, no genus exceeded 20% and no family exceeded 30%. Keeping track of our cumulative species diversity helps inform our species choices for future seasons and keeps our forests healthy and diverse!

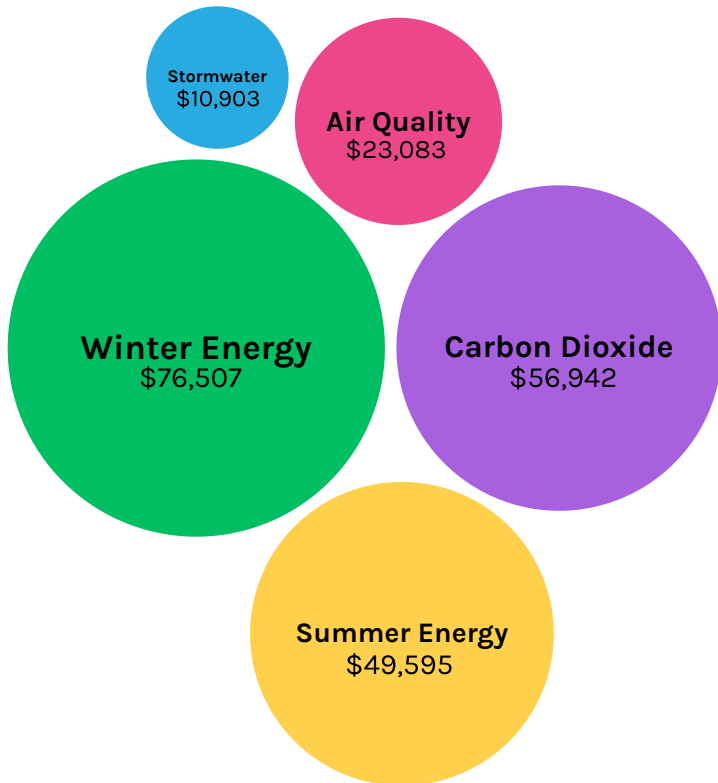
### How do you choose which species to plant?

Because our plantings are community-based, it is critical for us to take into account the wishes of the community members who live where we are planting. Our Program Directors work closely with residents to discuss what types of trees they would like to see in their neighborhood, and we balance what residents want with what trees would do best in that particular area. We often have to contend with issues such as overhead wires, small planting spaces, pollution, and road salt - all of which limit the species we can choose from.

# The Difference A Tree Makes

There are countless reasons we love to plant trees - they provide shade, wildlife habitat, stormwater removal, energy savings, and beauty- just to name a few. While all of these are great reasons to plant a tree, some benefits are easier for us to measure than others. At the end of each season our program directors use i-Tree Design, a free software developed by the U.S. Forest Service, to estimate some of the benefits our trees will bring both this year and over the next 30 years. The tool uses average species growth equations and localized climate and pollution data to determine the impact each tree has in a particular location, so the same tree may have a different impact in Newark than in Camden! While these are estimates and can vary depending on factors such as tree health, i-Tree helps us talk about tree benefits in a measurable way.

## 30 Year Benefits of Trees Planted FY23- 24





The total cost savings over the next 30 years for trees planted in 2023-24 is **\$217,030!**




## Stormwater Removal

Trees help manage stormwater by intercepting rainfall before it hits the ground, helping to reduce stormwater runoff and mitigate flooding. When we remove concrete to create tree pits, like in the photo above, this benefit is even greater. Over the next 30 years our trees will help to:

-  Intercept **6,212,105** gallons of rainfall
-  Avoid **1,224,771** gallons of stormwater runoff

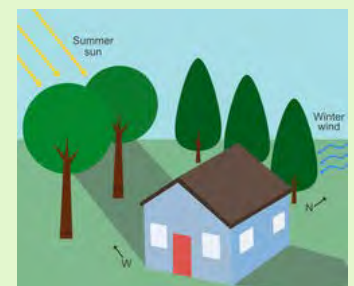
## Improved Air Quality

Trees improve air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and trap particulate matter. Over the next 30 years our trees will help to:

-  Remove **2,448,453** lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere

## Energy Savings

Since we don't pay bills directly for stormwater and air quality, the cost savings for these benefits can be difficult to grasp. One cost we can all relate to, however, is energy bills! Trees provide shade that can reduce air conditioning use in the summer and provide insulation from wind in the winter to reduce heating bills. The location of trees makes a difference - planting large deciduous trees to the east, west, and northwest of a house is best to reduce summer energy costs, and planting evergreens to the north and northwest can help insulate the house in winter while not blocking the sun.



# Acknowledgements

## Donors

Adrienne Terpak  
Amy Kaban  
Amy Rubin  
Anonymous  
Barbara Bour  
Barbara Patrizzi  
Barry Emens  
Bill Comery  
Bonnie Simms  
Brendan Perlee  
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Noam Fishman

## Donors (continued)

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Thomas Williams  
Vanessa Fenton  
Victoria Crocitto  
William Haskins  
William Matulewicz  
Yolanda Lorenz  
Yvonne Favaro

***In June 2024, the NJ tree community lost a special friend in Laura Chisholm.***

***The following donors made tributes in her memory:***

Bill Brash  
Bill & Mary Jo Hammer  
Chris Mueller  
David Biringer  
George Burdge  
Gregory Hanley  
Heather & Jeff Picher  
J and J Campers (The Mueller Family)  
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Sabrina Tirpak  
Sharon Gantt  
SingleOps, LLC  
Tree Care Industry Association (David White)  
Theresa Soderberg  
Thom Ritchie  
V Kay Shaw

## Tributes in Memory

Anthony Bassile *in memory of Kathleen Turzilli*  
Chloe Bowers *in memory of Francesca Biancardi*  
Christina Solak *in memory of Dr. Tae Byung Whang*  
Cindy Barbera-Brelle *in memory of Wayne Simms and William Brelle*  
Eleanor Liscio *in memory of Jim Higgins*  
James Salerno *in memory of Thomas Salerno*  
NJ Transit (Jackie Kanc) *in memory of Susan Gesualdo*

## Tributes in Honor

Candace DeLeon *in honor of Mia Sologashivli*  
Carolyn Jacoby *in honor of the NJ Tree Foundation Staff*  
Michael and Ariel Silver *in honor of Robert Norkin's 90th Birthday*  
Robert Jonas *in honor of Lisa Simms*  
Temple Beth-El (Amy Rubin) *in honor of Tu Bishvat, the New Year of Trees*  
The Castillo Family *in honor of Baby Pichini*

## Grantors and Corporate Gifts

Accenture  
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Lisa Simms  
Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya  
Mastery East Camden Middle School  
Mastery McGraw Elementary  
Mi Casa Summer Program  
Minority Assoc. of Pre-Health Students (M.A.P.S.) R.U. -Newark  
Montclair Library  
Montclair State University Fraternity  
Morristown DPW  
Mt. Pleasant Cemetery  
Neighborhood Collaborative Community Gardens (NCCG)  
Newark Basilica  
Newark DPW  
NFI Industries  
NJ Conservation Foundation  
NJ DEP Community Collaborative Initiative  
NJ DEP Forest Service  
NJ DEP Urban & Community Forestry  
NJ Arborists, Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture  
NJ Shade Tree Federation  
Northern New Jersey Mensa  
Orange DPW  
Orange Public Schools  
Outdoor Equity Alliance  
Port Authority of NY & NJ  
Paul VI High School  
Pennsylvania Horticultural Society  
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Pomona Ave. Block Association  
Princeton Conservation Society  
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United Energy Advisors  
U.S.D.A. Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry  
Universalist Unitarian Church  
Upward Bound Tree Ambassadors  
Ware Malcomb  
West Side High School  
Xaragua X-Men

# Planting Environmental Justice One Tree at a Time (2024-2029)

**NJTF earned a multi-year grant under the Inflation Reduction Act.**

With funding by the Inflation Reduction Act and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Urban & Community Forestry Program, we launched Planting Environmental Justice One Tree at a Time in early 2024. This initiative will allow us to expand partnerships with residents of economically and environmentally vulnerable communities across the state to continue our mission and apply our proven methods of community-driven urban forestry to reach the people and places that need it most.

**Here's some of what we have accomplished so far:**

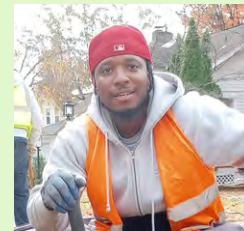
## Community-Based Tree Planting Programs

- 315 IRA-funded trees planted by volunteers and local residents!
- Paid apprenticeships through our Community Tree Stewards Program.
- Conducted Tree Giveaway events in Camden and Newark.



## Green Streets

- We hired a new full time member for our Green Streets team! Jarvis (pictured below) is our Assistant Crew Supervisor.
- We have expanded our reentry program to year-round service offerings, including watering, young tree developmental pruning, and maintenance in addition to tree planting.



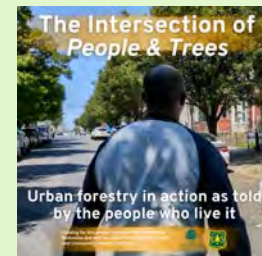
## Education

- We now have a dedicated Education Program, allowing us to expand our TreeKeepers training program into more (CEJST-identified) cities across New Jersey, and providing for school and community workshops to encourage learners of all ages to be stewards of trees in their communities!



## Communication

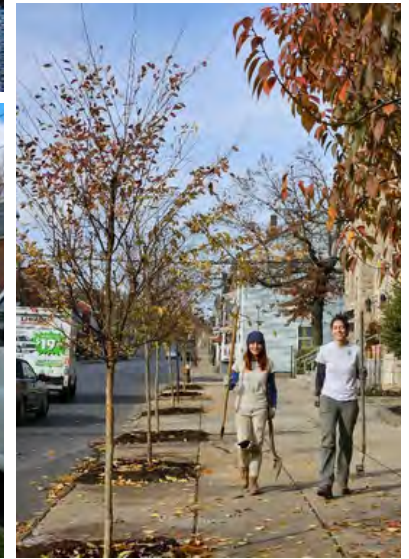
- Check out our new and improved NJ Tree Foundation website ([njtrees.org](http://njtrees.org)).
- Watch the premiere episode of our podcast *People & Trees*.



**The New Jersey Tree Foundation is an equal opportunity provider.  
Funding provided by the Inflation Reduction Act and the USDA  
Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program.**



# A Year in Pictures



# Thank you NJTF Volunteers!

For FY 23-24, the New Jersey Tree Foundation worked with 931 volunteers who contributed 2,135 hours of service- valued at \$69,324. With the help of our volunteers we also acquired \$12,445 worth of in-kind donations and services.

*We could not do what we do without the generous support of people like you!*

## Get Involved Today!

There are many ways to get involved in our work and we invite you to check out the following opportunities by visiting our website NJTrees.org:

### Community Tree Stewards

Tree Stewards assist our Program Directors with tasks related to our Community Tree Planting programs in the cities we work. We are seeking 2-3 Tree Stewards for each program year-round and applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

### Scholarships

Residents in the cities we serve are invited to apply for scholarships to attend the Garden State Tree Conference (February) and the NJ Shade Tree Federation Conference (October). Visit NJTrees.org for more information.

### Volunteer

Volunteers of all ages and abilities are welcome to help us during our spring and fall tree planting seasons. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and all volunteers must wear clothes and footwear they won't mind getting dirty. Planting dates are posted in early spring and late summer at NJTrees.org.

## NJ Tree Foundation...in the news!

We received lots of press this year along with our partners. Each profile and mention goes a long way in raising awareness of our work and the importance of urban forestry. Here are some of the high profile publications that featured our work.



## New Jersey Tree Foundation

108 Pine Cone Trail  
Medford, NJ 08055  
[www.njtrees.org](http://www.njtrees.org)  
Social media: @njtrees

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## NJTF Staff

Pam Zipse, *Executive Director*  
Lisa Simms, *Director of Green Streets*  
James Cunningham, *Green Streets Crew Supervisor*  
Jarvis Thompson, *GS Assistant Crew Supervisor*  
Crystal Wessel, *Program Director, UARP*  
Elena Messina, *Program Director, RTP*  
Meredith Pichini, *Education Program Director*  
Nicole Castillo, *Development Director*

To view our FY23-24 audit and 990,  
please visit our website:  
<https://www.njtrees.org/about-us/>

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