working to preserve, enhance and advocate for Denver's parks, recreation resources, open space and urban tree canopy since 1969

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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

What a privilege to celebrate 50 years!

Walk around Denver and you'll see a legacy of great places that have been touched by The Park People. Preserving historic landmarks, constructing new playgrounds and facilities, supporting public art, protecting community treasures, greening neighborhoods... our work runs the gamut. We have completed more than 50 projects – in the great, notable Denver parks (City, Washington, Cheesman) to be sure, but also in the lesser known – in some cases even unnamed – parks. Explore Denver's neighborhoods, and you'll be hard pressed to find one that isn't home to stands of trees planted through our Denver Digs Trees program – some 2 years old, some 30.

Our 50th year has been one of reflection and celebration. We explored our roots, reaching out to Park People Board Trustees from the past five decades. We learned more about the history behind our forbearers' work - the great organizing and mobilization around projects and initiatives. We saw the similarities of challenges faced in past and in present. We heard from experience that became organizational wisdom. We discovered some of the same motivations and hopes behind our work. We also collected stories from residents who have participated in our programs, hearing from Denver Digs Trees whose blocks and neighborhoods transformed by the program. This story collecting effort has been rewarding and has reaffirmed the need for our continued work serving our community.

Visit our YouTube Channel to hear some of these stories. And please consider sharing your Park People stories with us! Contact Diana@TheParkPeople.org. Cont. page 8



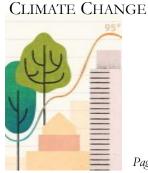
Four-year-old Wondi loves his Denver Digs tree. His mother looks forward to the cooling shade it will provide to their home in the East Colfax neighborhood.

Why is The Park People's work important to you?

The future livability of our fast-growing city.

> - Daniel J. Havekost Board Trustee 1970

Trees – the #1 SOLUTION TO



BEST TREES FOR DENVER





Page 7

Trees in the News: Climate Change Solution #1

Climate change has reached a new level of prominence in the public discourse. The World Health Organization has identified global warming as the greatest threat to human health in the 21st century. Medical professionals have begun reporting local impacts that they attribute to climate change. Private sector companies, like Xcel Energy, are setting bold goals for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. The insurance industry is raising warnings about the high exposure risk to insurers and policyholders. And the youth voice has brought new energy to global dialogues in recent months.

The large body of research related to the environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees continues to grow. During the past six months, trees have received substantial media coverage related to climate change, in their dual role of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a warmer climate. A few samples of trees' presence in the public discourse:



The Associated Press reports on Swiss scientists who highlighted planting trees as one of, if not the most important way to fight climate change in combination with reducing emissions in a recent issue of Science magazine. The scientists conducted broad scale modeling to estimate that one trillion newly planted trees could absorb and store "nearly 830 billion tons... of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from atmosphere... about as much carbon pollution as humans have [generated] in the past 25 years."



During a public radio interview, a Nature Conservancy scientist highlights trees as a critical resource in adapting to climate change. By 2050, 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas, where paved surfaces and structures absorb and retain heat and where traffic congestion concentrates air pollution. Trees and parks will be an important tool to protect people in the face of rising heat. A row of trees can cool temperatures by 2°F to 4°F - an important reduction in the urban heat island which studies show can save the lives of vulnerable members of our communities, such as the elderly.



Curbed article illuminates planting as the "most effective, efficient, and immediate form of urban climate action," critical in its role reducing urban heat. Urban heat kills more people than all other extreme weather events combined. Because urban heat - and its deadly byproduct: air pollution - have the greatest impacts on the health of lowincome and other vulnerable populations, the author highlights the importance of focusing plantings in places where they are needed most. "Adding tree cover anywhere is a good long-term investment in carbon removal... [Planting] forests near the places people are could start saving energy, money, and lives right away."

Growin' Knowledge & Relationships

Our last couple of years have brought rich learning and teaching opportunities in our field. Most recently, thanks to a scholarship from Arbor Day Foundation, Program Manager Leah Jean Shafer visited Los Angeles for a multi-day Mentorship Exchange to learn from a cohort of organizations doing powerful urban forestry work. LA is a hot bed of cross-organizational partnerships and collaboration, and Leah came back with all kinds of great tips, insights, and inspiration. Thanks

to scholarship support from Colorado Tree Coalition, Leah was able to attend this fall's Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Ohio where she shared these and other lessons:

Gold Nugget Take-Aways:

Don't re-invent the wheel. Recognize strengths both inside and outside of your organization. Capitalize on the things you do best, and identify other groups with complementary niches.

Think outside the box. Seek alliances across disciplines. Ties between municipalities, nonprofits, utilities, and other groups build momentum, efficiency, and leverage economies of scale.

Don't be afraid to dream BIG. By coalescing around a unifying purpose, people become inspired to their highest potential. By setting challenging goals, you can achieve dreams that may have seemed unattainable.



THE PARK BENCH Page 3

A Tree-rific Denver Digs Trees Season!



Following months of outreach, application review, tree siting, and logistics prep, 1,285 free & affordable baby trees have found homes at 650 households! More than half of the trees were planted in low-canopy 'target' neighborhoods. We provided 100+ trees free of charge for those with financial hardship. We added 100 new fruit trees to the edible landscape. Volunteers delivered and planted 100+ trees for 60 residents with physical limitations. 500+ volunteers contributed 2,000+ hours to make this season a success!















These trees will grow a healthier, more sustainable Denver. They will cool our homes, beautify our neighborhoods, reduce flooding, decrease consumption, absorb CO2, filter air pollution, provide habitat for wildlife, property values, walkability, and hang hammocks. Over \$1.3 million in lifetime benefits!



Photos by Park People friends

Yesterday, we were the happy recipients of the nicest

little tree from the nicest crew, who planted it for us...

Many Thanks to our Volunteers and 2019 Sponsors:







HANK & CHERYL SAIPE









Thank you, The Park People, for this wonderful program and may you continue to hold this event successfully for many years to come. Thanks for helping make Denver a better place to be. ARCHITECTURE URBAN DESIGN

- Wayne and Paula S.

A Champion Year

2019 was a strong year for partnerships with corporate groups looking to engage teams of employees, students, faculty, and community members in planting trees. We held seven planting events for these newest partners.

2019 Mile High Tree Champions

Target & Arbor Day Foundation Stapleton Central Park

Agility Recovery City Park

RS&H Great Lawn Park

Metropolitan State University Aztlan Park

Enterprise Rent-A-Car & Arbor Day Foundation Sloan's Lake Park

Credera Great Lawn Park

Stapleton United Neighbors & First Western Trust Greenway Park

These projects added 217 new trees in Denver, in both new and old parks serving many tens of thousands of Denver residents each season. These teams planted some of Denver's low-canopy parks as well as supplied the next generation of forest in well-established parks with aging trees. Not only will these trees beautify and shade their immediate park surroundings, they will also grow to help cool the broader neighborhood, improve air quality, absorb carbon, and help reduce flooding during storms. Our warm thanks to all these wonderful champions, to our veteran volunteer crew leaders, and to this year's planting site partners at Denver Parks and Recreation.

Become a Mile High Tree Champion!

Our Mile High Tree Champions program engages companies in supporting our urban forest by sponsoring and staffing planting projects. These projects offer a turnkey team-building activity and an opportunity to make a tangible impact. Any excess sponsorship dollars support the costs of trees we plant throughout the city. Have a suggestion for a prospective partner company? Or a potential planting site? Please contact Kim@TheParkPeople.org!







Every day we help businesses impacted by climate change. The Mile High Tree Champions program aligns with our business strategy, and we are excited to partner with The Park People to support our community. - Jon Bahl, CEO of Agility Recovery













THE PARK BENCH Page 5

BEST TREES FOR DENVER

That's right! We've compiled our list of favorite trees to plant in Denver neighborhoods. These species are generally tough, resilient choices that tolerate Colorado's arid environment and Denver's urban conditions. We consulted with Denver's City Forester and other trusted tree experts and also base this list on our experience planting 60,000 trees in Denver over the past 50 years.

The Bur Oak (pictured at right) is one of our favorites that made the list. See the full list of species at www.TheParkPeople.org.

You'll also learn critical guidance on choosing and planting wisely, and as well as information on tree care. A sneak peak at some of the great tips and learning:

drought tolerance Right Tree Right Place forest diversity & resilience root flare planting permits Scarlet Honeylocust Driller (





BUR OAK Quercus Macrocarpa

The Treebrella Project: Artsy Trees Throw Shade Downtown

What do you get when you cross a tree and an umbrella? A Treebrella, of course!

We were delighted to partner with our friends at the Denver Theatre District to bring a special art installation to the downtown mall. Treebrella celebrates trees and green spaces and the important role they play in our urban communities. This unique project was held in conjunction with the Greater & Greener international urban parks conference. Five local artists produced five creative canopies, each with their own special style and perspective. Mall pedestrians were delighted by these lively shady structures and learned ways to get involved in creating greener neighborhoods throughout our city. Hats off to the participating artists: Victor Escobedo, Barbara Froula, Marsha Mack, Jesse Van Horne, and Katie Vuletich.





Caroline and Jordan's family at their newly planted Tulip Tree in Washington Park.

A Tribute of Gratitude & Love

For three years, Caroline Calabrese nannied a young girl named Jordan who lives with special needs and serious medical complications. Caroline took Jordan on walks to Washington Park almost every day. The two would picnic under the trees, and Jordan loved to look up at their leafy canopies. Inspired by her incredible journey with Jordan, Caroline decided to return to school to become a special educator. At one point Jordan was hospitalized for a month, and Caroline spent a night with her so that Jordan's parents could have time together before the birth of their second baby. That night Jordan's parents decided to put Caroline through her Master's program and created a scholarship for special education teachers in Jordan's name. To thank Jordan's parents for this remarkable gift, Caroline contacted The Park People to have a Tribute Tree planted in their honor. She wrote "Planting a tree in honor of Jordan's family is the absolute best way I can think of to repay these incredibly generous people for enriching my life and being so dedicated to advocating for those with special needs." In December 2018, Caroline graduated with her Early Childhood Special Education degree from UC-Denver.

Visit www.TheParkPeople.org to learn more about our *Park Legacy* program, through which Denverites can honor, celebrate, and remember the special people and moments in their lives though the planting of a Tribute Tree in a Denver park.

Community Foresters – Learning. Doing. Greening.

Fifty-one students participated in the 2019 *Community Forester* training program, learning about tree biology, health, planting, pruning, and identification. They also learned myths about trees, benefits provided by urban trees, as well as how to effectively lead other volunteers and work across different communities. Twenty-three of these students earned their status as full-fledged Community Foresters, and many have already put their new knowledge and skills to work supporting our local trees.

Big thanks to all the Community Foresters and Tree Stewards who pruned 140+ trees in the Platt Park and Rosedale neighborhoods this summer. With guidance from staff from the Denver City Forester's Office, these skilled volunteers cleared stop sign obstructions and low-hanging branches over sidewalks to improve walkability and safety. Special thanks to Super-CF Mike Haaf for overseeing these workdays.

2020 Workshops

Each year The Park People and the City Forester's Office team up to train the next class of skilled and knowledgeable Community Foresters and Tree Stewards. Registration for the 2020 Community Forester workshop series will open in late January. But we will have loads of volunteer opportunities in early January, so consider joining our volunteer pool now! Learn more: www.TheParkPeople.org.



TOP REASONS VOLUNTEERS LOVE THE PROGRAM:

Making a tangible difference.

Meeting others who care about the environment.

Impacting change.

Getting to know different neighborhoods in Denver.

The sense of community.

Making Denver more sustainable.

Getting to know other people with similar interests.

THE PARK BENCH Page 7

Plantin' Partnership: Globeville Elyria-Swansea

Building off of our exciting pilot project last year, we worked with residents and partners again this autumn to plant trees in the Globeville Elyria-Swansea (GES) neighborhoods. This planting continues on-the-ground momentum as we advance behind-the-scenes planning dialogues about how to bring these neighborhoods from 5% tree canopy cover to the City Forester's 20% canopy goal. This is no small charge, and no simple task in what are arguably Denver's most historically underserved neighborhoods, frequently cited as the most polluted zip code in the U.S. But we are inspired by residents' dedication to improving their neighborhoods and their enthusiasm for trees. And we are filled with hope by the deep partnership we are developing with The Nature Conservancy, GES Coalition, and other community-based organizations working in GES. We are eager for the day when the seeds we've planted and the partnerships we've tended come to full fruition.



Park People Lauren Abram and John DeRungs lead a tree planting training at this autumn's planting day.

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We are proud to have a beautiful new organizational video "Meet The Park People" to introduce new friends and allies to our mission and work. Please check it out and share it with others who care about trees, parks, and the health and livability of our communities!

www.TheParkPeople.org

Also check out our YouTube Channel (TheParkPeopleDenver) to see video testimonials from residents who have planted trees through our *Denver Digs Trees* program.



Park People Team Transitions

We are delighted to welcome new Board Trustees Susan Eslick, Wesley Hunt, and Mike Naes to our leadership team while we express deep gratitude to outgoing Trustees Jackie Burghardt, Johanna Kelly, and Scott Robson for their dedicated and generous service. Warm thanks to Lauren Abram who supported our urban forestry work for two years, including *Denver Digs Trees, Community Forester*, and our Cool Connected Westwood and Greener, Healthier Globeville Elyria Swansea greening projects. We were fortunate to have Lauren and wish her the best in her graduate program in Ecosystem Sustainability at Colorado State University. We thank Dan Staley for his years coordinating our *Mile High Tree Champions* program, which we are happy to now have in the capable hands of Mike Haaf.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

We celebrated our 50th anniversary milestone with a special event on September 5th. Tickets sold out within two short weeks over the summer, and we were thrilled to have roughly 300 friends, supporters, and partners – new and old – join us at the iconic City Park Pavilion. Guests enjoyed a beautiful evening and good company in Sopris Garden with nature-inspired cocktails, yard games, and Americana swing tunes from Odessa Rose West. During the dinner program, we recognized the 'mother of *Denver Digs Trees*,' Gertie Grant, for her outstanding leadership building on the forestry work of past Park People and seeding our flagship program. Our generous community raised their donation paddles in a moving show of celebration and support of The Park People as we charge into our next 50 years. We were honored to have national conservation leader Michael P. Dowling close the evening with powerful words of support and hope. Our warm thanks to all of our guests, to our event sponsors and supporters, to the volunteers who supported the event, and to our event planning committee.















Photo credits from top left to bottom right: Blacktie (1,3,4,6,7), Kassidy Benson (2,5). Enjoy more pictures on Blacktie, Facebook, or Instagram!

CELEBRATIONS OF HISTORY & LINEAGE



In a happenstance meeting during a vacation in Cortez, Park People Urban Forestry Program Manager Leah Shafer met David Temple, a Master Arborist whose mother Marjorie Temple was a founding Trustee of The Park People in 1969. Delighted to discover the connection and in celebration of our 50 year milestone, David donated a Washington Elm Tree planted in City Park in conjunction with our event. This young tree was grown from a cutting from the famed Washington Elm in Cambridge, MA. Lore has it that then-General George Washington took command of the American army under the elm. Our warm thanks to David for this special tree that now grows south of Ferril Lake near a grove of large elms and cherry trees.

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THANKS ALSO TO THE 50TH EVENT COMMITTEE, OUR EVENT VOLUNTEERS, AND OUR IN-KIND SUPPORTERS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!

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Our gratitude to CHUN for this honor and for being a wonderful longtime partner in creating great Denver neighborhoods.

Warm thanks to
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for donating a tree
for each closing.

Our appreciation to the Giving Back Group for including us as a nonprofit partner.

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The Park People's 50th Anniversary

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USTA Foundation

Anonymous



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Fall 2019

Our landscape shapes us. And we shape our landscape in return. It's a basic truth easy to forget in an age when our daily lives are distanced from nature. Our environment shapes us, and we shape our environment.

This knowledge has molded the work of The Park People during our 50 years serving Denver. Public places and green spaces play a powerful role in creating happy, healthy communities. Parks are our outdoor recreation centers, our free gyms, places to relax, and social gathering spaces. They are the natural sponges that help prevent flooding in our neighborhoods. Trees bring beauty and season to our lives. They are the filters cleaning the air we breathe. They are nature's air conditioners keeping our neighborhoods comfortable and protecting the vulnerable during extreme heat.

Over the past 50 years, The Park People has engaged with thousands of Denverites in shaping our community's landscape. Together, we've completed over 50 park, open space, landmark restoration, and preservation capital improvement projects. Through *Denver Digs Trees* and our other urban forestry programs, we've supported residents in planting more than 60,000 trees in neighborhoods and parks, providing more than \$60 million in community benefits.

As our community continues to grow and our climate changes, we at The Park People know we need to do even more to support the trees that shelter us and the parks that provide so much to the beauty of our city and the health of its residents.

Please support us as we step into the next 50 years of serving our communities. Please donate today. We welcome gifts made via www.TheParkPeople.org, by mail, and over the phone. We value gifts of all sizes, and each gift makes an impact. For example, providing a tree for a family in need costs us \$150.

Thank you for your support and partnership in creating a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable Denver.

Sincerely,



Kim Yuan-Farrell, Executive Director