



*Working to preserve,
enhance and advocate
for Denver's parks,
recreation resources,
open space and
urban tree canopy
for over 44 years.*

NEWS FROM THE PARK PEOPLE

THE PARK BENCH

The Fleming House: A Renewed Community Space

After more than five years of planning, fundraising, and construction, our most recent capital project is now complete! The third and final phase of the restoration and rehabilitation of the James Fleming House in Denver's Platt Park came to a close in July, and the results are stunning: the transformation of a derelict, underutilized space into a beautiful, functional, renewed public asset.

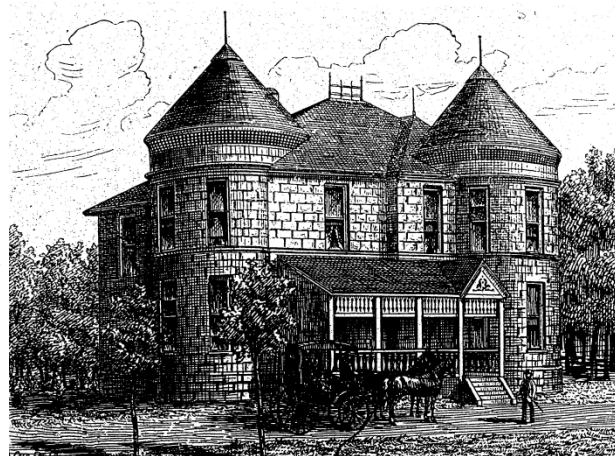
The Fleming House has a rich and diverse past as a private home, city hall, jail, women's clubhouse, public library, and senior recreation center. The building was designated a local historical landmark in 1997. It is the sole remnant of the Town of South Denver, which was established in 1886 as a legal maneuver to keep Denver's "liquor element" from expanding south before ultimately being annexed to the north. After the late 1970s, the Fleming House was used primarily for storage and fell into disrepair. As historian Tom 'Dr. Colorado' Noel notes, the building was "occupied mostly by pigeons and bats."

The renovation involved the rehabilitation of the entire interior: rebuilding the grand staircase connecting the first and second floors; refurbishing the windows, shutters, doors, and transoms; replacing unsalvageable doors, windows, and rhyolite stone that had been removed; refinishing the original wood floors; updating the electrical and plumbing; installing period-appropriate fixtures and finishes; and making adjustments for ADA accessibility on the first floor. The exterior received freshly painted trim, cleaned and restored rhyolite stone, and re-pointed and stenciled mortar.

Since completing the second floor renovations nearly two years ago, the Fleming House has served as The Park People's new home. Last fall, Denver Parks and Recreation began scheduling the first floor for public meetings, community activities, private events, and classes for our neighbors at the Platt Park Senior Center. Not only are we pleased to have a wonderful new headquarters that better meets the needs of our many activities, but we are proud to return this historic building to an asset for the community.

Our warm thanks to all those who supported the restoration and rehabilitation of the Fleming House (see page 5). Your generosity made this project in adaptive reuse a reality, revitalizing a historic building to a higher public use and providing for the stewardship of an important park building.

With the closing of this project, we now shift gears, moving forward to identify the next project The Park People will undertake.



*Above, an artistic rendering of Fleming House in the early 1900s.
Below, the Fleming House today.*



A Denver Digs Trees Success Story

More than 20 years ago, Nickey Montoya hauled her two young children to a nearby park to pick up a young hackberry tree to plant in the tree lawn next to her home in the Cole neighborhood of north Denver. She requested this free tree from our *Denver Digs Trees* program, which, for over two decades, has distributed more than 45,000 affordable and free trees to Denver residents. Now she enjoys watching neighborhood kids play under the lush canopy of her 45-foot tree from her front porch where her grandchildren color with sidewalk chalk.

Over the years, Nickey has helped neighbors plant trees through *Denver Digs Trees*, including a two year-old oak tree next door. Having lived in the neighborhood her whole life, Nickey has seen a lot of change. She has watched

different people move into and out of the neighborhood and has seen cycles of gang activity. But she has been a powerful constant, caring for her space and working to improve the neighborhood.

“Trees give the neighborhood a lived-in feel. They make it feel like home, and they show people that you care.”

Nickey speaks clearly about the value trees bring. “Trees give the neighborhood a lived-in feel,” she says. “They make it feel like home, and they show people that you care. The trees also add to the property value and help advance the whole neighborhood.”

Nickey speaks poignantly and accurately. A wealth of research indicates that trees significantly enhance property value – by more than \$95 million in Denver. By planting and caring for trees, residents like Nickey demonstrate to others that they care about and watch over their

neighborhoods, which can deter crime and other negative activity. Neighbors organizing to plant trees build relationships and networks, strengthening the social fabric of our communities.

Nickey also values the shade that her hackberry provides. “The house used to get so hot. Having the tree shade the house makes a big difference.” Shade and natural cooling are among the most popular reasons why residents choose to participate in *Denver Digs Trees*. The trees we plant also provide a wide array of other environmental, social, and economic services that improve quality of life in Denver. They manage storm water, improve air and water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, support our mental and physical health, beautify our neighborhoods, enhance walkability, and foster thriving business districts by encouraging shoppers and tourists to spend more time and money in areas with tree-lined streets. Investing in our city trees is investing in our communities. Every Denver neighborhood deserves to have a resident champion of trees, like Nickey, who understands that.

Since our last newsletter, we have distributed 2,265 new free and low-cost trees to Denver residents thanks to program sponsors Xcel Energy, Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc., the City & County of Denver, Noble Energy, and individuals like you.

Nickey Montoya stands next to her hackberry tree – one of tens of thousands of Denver Digs trees throughout the city working to make our community a great place to live, work, and play. Next to the 45-foot tall hackberry is a young oak tree that Nickey helped her neighbor plant two years ago.



Denver Named One of the 10 Best Cities for Urban Forests

In a city better known for its brews than its broad-leaves, we're excited about American Forests' selection of Denver among the top 10 best cities for urban forests – not too shabby for a city in the arid west! Earlier this year, the national nonprofit organization made the selection considering several criteria that distinguish the urban forests in the nation's 50 most populous cities. Their case study of Denver highlights Partnership as a key feature of our community's success and notes the importance of cooperation between citizenry, government, businesses, and nonprofits. The report details The Park People's primary activities that serve to enhance and maintain the city forest. Our *Denver Digs Trees* program works with residents to increase our city's tree canopy and reduce barriers to accessing trees, particularly in low-tree canopy neighborhoods. Our *Mile High Tree Champions* program engages businesses in sponsoring and staffing tree planting events. The *Community Forester* program trains skilled volunteers to help care for our city trees.



We are proud to partner directly with residents, businesses, Denver Parks and Recreation, and many nonprofit organizations and neighborhood groups to cultivate a healthy and vibrant urban forest. Trees offer more than just environmental value, they provide our communities with many social and economic benefits. Each year thousands of Denver residents participate in our programs. Hundreds of volunteers support our activities with thousands of hours – tens of thousands of dollars – in volunteer-time. Businesses support Denver's forest through tree planting events and sponsorship of *Denver Digs Trees* and the *Community Forester* program. Dozens of organizations and groups spread the word about our programs. Our close partnership with Denver Parks and Recreation, and specifically Denver Forestry Division, is the envy of tree planting groups across the country. In short, we are proud to be a part of the important work making Denver's city forest one of the best in the nation and to have a role at the heart of the community to ensure a great green legacy for Denver.

Companies Making a Difference

Their impact is measured in football fields, nearly four of them. When the 230 trees planted by our eight most recent Mile High Tree Champion organizations fully mature, their collective canopy coverage would encompass nearly four football fields – that's a huge impact for only eight planting days! Through our *Mile High Tree Champions* program, local businesses



support the environment and our community by sponsoring and staffing planting projects at locations around the city. Our most recent Tree Champions include Kaiser Permanente, American Forests, Redwood Creek Winery, Newmont Mining, Chase Bank, Bona, and PCL Construction. The 230 new trees are happily situated at Bluff Lake Nature Center, the Dumb Friends League, West Bar-Val-Wood Park, Bible Park, Cook Park, and Cheesman Park. These sites provide for a wide variety of uses and users and annually serve tens of thousands of people (and wildlife and furry companions!). Our thanks to all of our participating companies – champions of the urban forest and our community.

Have a suggestion for a prospective partner company to sponsor and staff a planting? Or perhaps a potential planting site – a park, natural area, affordable housing site, nonprofit organization, or other location in need of 20 or more trees? Contact our staff!

Our New Executive Director

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The Park People's Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Kim Yuan-Farrell as Executive Director of The Park People. Kim has served as our Program Manager, overseeing our urban forestry programs during the past four years – an exciting period of growth. Since Kim came on staff in May of 2009, we've expanded *Denver Digs Trees* to distribute shade trees for private property planting, revamped the *Community Forester* program from a single-day training to a 5-workshop series, and started the *Mile High Tree Champions* program. In addition to her passion for urban forestry, Kim cares deeply about parks, the environment, civic engagement, and our communities. She has a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from Yale University's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and has worked for nonprofit organizations in Colorado, California, and Connecticut. Kim is also an alum of the 2010 Denver Community Leadership Forum. Now as Executive Director, Kim will focus on raising funds for our programs and capital projects, overseeing the management of the Gates Tennis Center, and working with our board on strategic organizational development. Kim's experience and background fits perfectly into our work to enhance the environment and quality of life in Denver, and we feel fortunate to have her at the helm of our organization.



Board of Trustee Transitions

Our Board of Trustees has undergone significant transition during the past two years. We are excited to welcome a number of new trustees with fresh ideas, perspectives, and energy for The Park People's governing body. These new board members include Ward Phelps, Scott Robson, Andy Shopneck, Catherine Stanton, and John L. Wiberg. Alongside our other board members, we are pleased to have a strong team of individuals guiding and nurturing our organization. We want to thank the following board members for their years of dedicated service to The Park People: John Abramson, Jennifer Burstein, KK Ciruli, John Hereford, Nancy Luther, Patrick McMichael, Jude O'Connor, Merrill Shields, Andy Spielman, and Suzanne White. We also warmly remember trustee Carole Harrison, who passed away this year. Each of these individuals has been a member of The Park People "family" – some for decades. We value their leadership and many contributions to our organization.

New **Kids ONLY** Tennis Court

Last September at the Gates Tennis Center, The Park People was pleased to unveil Tom's Court, a new USTA sanctioned kids' zone for children age 10 and under. Thanks to funding from the Gates Family Foundation, Tom Kaesemeyer, the United States Tennis Association (USTA), and Denver Parks & Recreation, four new micro-courts were constructed at the Gates Tennis Center, a public facility overseen by The Park People. Dedicated to former Gates Family Foundation president Tom Kaesemeyer, the kids' zone provides a special space designed and designated especially for the youngest players and for programming that serves them. This special space will welcome children to tennis and, from sheer sense of enjoyment and belonging, encourage them to continue toward a life-long love of the game. We are proud of this special addition to the tennis center, a wonderful public facility that hosts major tennis events, robust adult and youth programming, and community outreach.





Contributors to the Fleming House

If we inadvertently omitted your name, please contact us.

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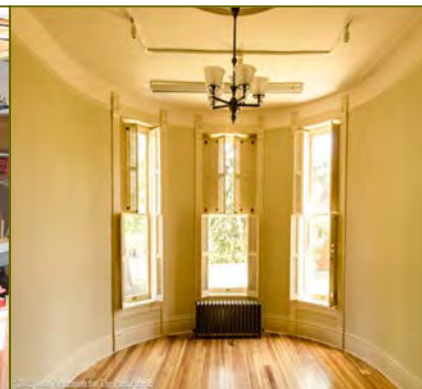
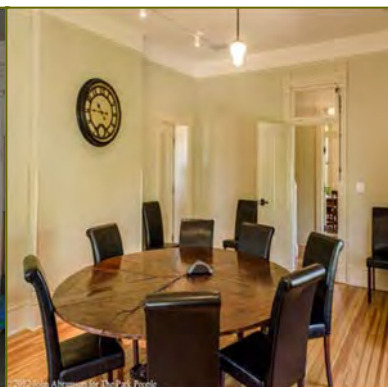
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Warm thanks to our wonderful past programs staff members Brenda Whetstone, Haley Sammen, and Chad Reischl for bringing their passion and talents to our mission.

Our continued gratitude to our dedicated team of volunteers who make our work possible and contributed more than \$51,500 in volunteer-time in 2012.



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

September 2013

I am honored and excited to enter into my new role as Executive Director. Our Board of Trustees honored me with this position upon my return from maternity leave in mid-March. While I had dearly enjoyed the days of my leave with my new little one, I found the transition back to work to be easier than I had expected. I have loved working for The Park People for four years as Program Manager and feel lucky to work in service of Denver’s parks, recreation resources, open spaces, and urban forest. I see our work as enhancing quality of life for all members of our community, as having positive environmental impacts on the local and global scales, and as keeping Denver a wonderful place to live, work, and play. I see my work at The Park People as helping to create the community and the world that I want for my son.

This is an exciting transitional time – a time of ending one capital project and of looking forward to our next big effort. All the while, we continue with our impactful, tried-and-true programs.

If, like me, you admire the work of our organization and want to support our public spaces, recreation resources, and city trees, please consider making a donation to The Park People today. Your contribution is an investment in our community. We are grateful to receive donations via our website www.TheParkPeople.org, in the mail, and over the phone. We also welcome contributions through two organizations working to increase philanthropic giving in Colorado: the Community First Foundation’s Colorado Gives program, a user-friendly donation site (www.ColoradoGives.org), and Community Shares, facilitating workplace giving throughout the state (www.CShares.org). We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Kim Yuan-Farrell
Executive Director