

Denver Digs Trees 19th Season

The 2010 Spring Street Tree Distribution and Yard Tree Sale was a big success! Fourteen hundred young trees have found new homes in Denver, where they'll grow to make our communities healthier, more livable places. Most of the new trees - about 68% - went to our target neighborhoods, where canopy cover is lowest and trees are especially needed.

This spring's tree program was made possible by Esurance, Xcel Energy Foundation, Noble Energy and the City & County of Denver. Thank you!

Our spring distribution was a success because of more than 300 volunteers: neighborhood canvassers, site inspectors, distribution day volunteers, and tree planters. Our heartfelt gratitude for their tireless work.



Volunteer Site Coordinator Steve Kinney and the Sloan Lake team staffed one of this spring's five tree distribution sites where young trees were handed off to their new caretakers.

The Park People's Spring Planting: Columbine Homes

On May 15th, The Park People partnered with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC) to plant 175 trees at west Denver's Columbine Homes, one of Denver Housing Authority's largest affordable housing complexes. Councilman Paul Lopez and DHA Executive Director Ismael Guerrero came out to thank the day's 200+ volunteers.

Getting 175 trees in the ground is no small feat and requires months of planning. It was exciting to work with VOC on a project of this scale.

The involvement of the Columbine Homes residents was even more rewarding than the number of trees planted or the beauty that will emerge in the coming years. From the moment volunteers showed up to unload trees, so did neighborhood residents.

Residents helped distribute t-shirts and served food and coffee to volunteers. Some even got their hands dirty helping to plant the trees.

The value of these trees must be measured in more than dollars, but without our sponsors this planting would not have been possible.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Alliance for Community Trees, The Home Depot Foundation, and Esurance, for enabling us to provide the trees for this project. Last fall, Alliance for Community Trees also provided a conference travel scholarship to Kim Yuan-Farrell, the Program Manager for Denver Digs Trees.



The Rehabilitation of the James Fleming House in Platt Park is starting to take off!

The Park People is extremely pleased to announce that we received a \$250,000 grant from the State Historical Fund to help us finance the first phase of the rehabilitation and restoration of the grand James Fleming House. Our existing and past board members donated an additional \$150,000. One of the founders of The Park People, Sue Cannon, and an early board member, Gene Koebel, contributed \$25,000 and \$15,000 respectively towards the project. We also received generous grants from the J.K. Mullen Foundation, the Edmund and Eleanor Quick Foundation and the Gates Family Foundation. All told, we are over half way to our goal of \$750,000.

In the first phase of construction we will rebuild the grand staircase that connected the first and second floors, which was removed decades ago to make room for recreation functions; refurbish the windows and shutters throughout the house thereby reintroducing natural ventilation to the building; update the electrical in the entire house including light fixtures; and replace doors that cannot be salvaged with period replicas. We anticipate that within the next six weeks we will have a general contractor in place and be ready to roll.

We have great admiration for the colorful history of the James Fleming House, and we are planning a thoughtful and respectful restoration effort guided by experts in this field. The final product will be the preservation of an important piece of Denver's history, a new headquarters for The Park People, and a lovely and useful community space for the citizens of Denver.

We are actively raising funds and welcome your support!



The western façade of the Fleming House



The Fleming House was designated a local historical landmark in 1997.

When the going gets tough... Our staff and volunteers roll Viking style.



In an effort to prepare for the mayhem that occurs as we get ready for spring and fall tree distributions, this year we acquired the appropriate headgear to transform us into peaceful but steadfast warriors. Come on, you know you want to borrow one....

Our Newest Endeavor: The Mile High Tree Champions

We are launching a new initiative that encourages Denver-area businesses of all sizes to become Mile High Tree Champions. Mile High Tree Champions are companies that invest a small amount of funding and some good old sweat equity to help enhance Denver's urban tree canopy and improve the city's green infrastructure.

The Park People will plan an action-packed half-day tree planting experience for local businesses. Crew sizes can range from 15 to 50 volunteers, and the planting event can be scheduled morning or afternoon, Monday-Friday or weekends.

Mile High Tree Champion investments not only benefit the city's green efforts, but also are a tremendous experience. Participants in the Mile High Tree Champions program walk away from the experience knowing they have had a direct impact on their local environment and feel empowered by a unique day of team building with their coworkers.

Through this program we hope to highlight companies who are environmentally responsible and involved in our local community. Mile High Tree Champions will be featured prominently in outreach and media materials seen by thousands of Denver residents. Recognition will also be in our bi-annual newsletter which goes to volunteers and donors, as well as on our website on the soon to be launched "Mile High Tree Champions" page. If you know of a business who might be interested in participating, tell them to give us a call @ 303.722.6262.



The Community Forester Program Retooled

This spring, we launched the retooled Community Forester Program. Established in 2003, the program has trained over 200 knowledgeable and skilled volunteer citizen foresters who support the work of The Park People and undertake forestry projects in their neighborhoods.

Based on feedback from some of these Community Foresters, we expanded the program to provide more classroom time and field experience for each topic. Now participants can attend 5 separate workshops: Trees 101, Planting & Health, Pruning, Identification & Inventory, and Volunteer Leadership & Management.

The new workshop series has been very popular, with 78 individuals participating, a significant increase over prior years.

The training program is designed to empower Community Foresters and Tree Stewards (volunteers who have attended some but not all of the workshops) to lead and participate in tree planting and care projects in their neighborhoods. The Park People and our partners, Denver's Forestry Division and the Mile High Million tree planting initiative, are excited about the potential for this

outstanding program. We expect the next round of trainings to begin in March of 2011. If you would like to participate, please contact our office in January for more specifics.

Many thanks to our sponsors: Colorado Tree Coalition and the Mile High Million.



Learning the correct method for pruning trees.

Acknowledging Your Support (October 1, 2009– July 31st, 2010)

If we have inadvertently omitted your name and you have made a donation during this period, please let us know.

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Colorado State Historical Fund
Colorado Tree Coalition
City and County of Denver: Office of Economic Development
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Behind the Scenes...Our Unseen Support

The Park People is supported by a dedicated Board of Trustees.

Cappy Shopneck and Glenn Fee are two of our most self-effacing trustees. And then there's Maggie Morrissey....

Incidentally, they will not see this before it gets mailed out. Smile.....

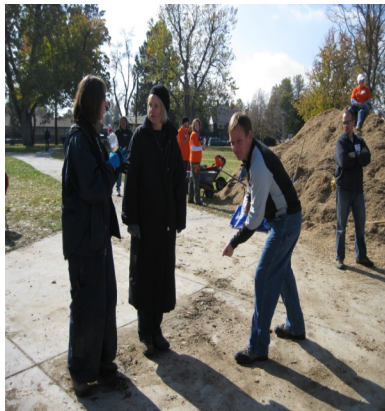
In the last Park Bench issue, we profiled people (and felines) whose behind-the-scenes support makes our work possible. This issue, the spotlight is on a couple of The Park People's extraordinary board members who go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that we make the greatest positive impact. Today The Park People's Board is 23 trustees strong. The methodology for selecting who to profile involved, at least at the onset, whose photos were the most embarrassing.

And so we start with an outstanding leader and force of nature, **Cappy Shopneck**. Cappy has been on The Park People board for more than 20 years. She has served in every role possi-

ble from President of the Board to Chair of countless committees. Currently she chairs the Gates Tennis Center Committee AND the Project Stewardship Committee, which is spearheading the fundraising and oversight of the Fleming House restoration. In this role, she has helped us to surpass the half way mark of \$750,000. If you don't know her and have a chance to meet her, tip your hat! She is one of the hardest working board members in the entire city. Maybe in the world. Plus, she was willing to wear the hat at left for a full day at one of our KaBOOM! builds in 2009.



Trustee Profile Numero Dos: Glenn Fee



Although not 100% certain, we suspect that in the photo to the left, **Glenn Fee** is taking an opportunity to quietly mock our Executive Director, Paige, for her temperature issues. Brenda, a long time volunteer, is wearing planting overalls at our October 2009 KaBOOM! Playground build. Paige, however, is fully insulated in down and wool.

Our organization values Glenn for his many contributions as a Board member. He is currently The Park People's Vice President, Secretary, and our representative on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He has served as President, chaired the Executive Search Committee and shows up at almost every event we have, often with baby in tow. His experience and wisdom have propelled The Park People forward and we are fortunate to have his expertise on our board.

Glenn understands that chilly weather is perfect for planting trees.

Ex-Officio Trustee and Secret Weapon of The Park People

Maggie Morrissey (in the cloak-and-dagger raincoat at left) is perhaps the most behind-the-scenes board member of all. In fact, she's not even on the Board anymore! But she was though, for two decades. Because of her past service and the wide-ranging skill set that she brings to philanthropy in Denver, she's not off the hook with us just yet.

Maggie and Cappy (feather boa hat above) are a phenomenal editing team and every significant grant we write goes through them. Maggie is particularly astute in helping The Park People navigate complex relationships, new and old, and is the on-call historian for all things Park People. She also helps, whenever asked, with less glamorous but essential activities like pulling together mailings, baking various dishes for events, bringing books to the office to entertain Paige's children on no school days, and serving cake on Frisbees for hours at a time. Who do you know that can do ALL THAT and be so super funny that you actually make up excuses to call her?



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Help The Park People green up our communications. The Park Bench is also available electronically.

To sign up for the e-Park Bench, simply send an email to paige@theparkpeople.org and type “Green me up” in the subject line.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Late Summer 2010

This year has kept us busier than ever. We had an extremely successful Spring Street Tree Program, distributing more than 1,400 trees. The majority of these trees were distributed in our target (read: under-canopied) neighborhoods. We also partnered with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado to plant 175 trees at Columbine Housing, a DHA site in West Denver. Today, 3 days before the deadline for shade tree applications, we ran out of trees. As far as I know, we’ve never had this happen before.

This spring, in partnership with Denver Forestry, we re-launched our Community Forester Program with 78 participants. We could not be more pleased with the response and interest in the revised program, which includes a new module on Volunteer Leadership and Management—led by trainers from Metro Volunteers—for those participants who want to become crew leaders on future planting and pruning projects.

And finally, the most significant project on our plate, is the kick-off of the restoration of the Fleming House in Platt Park, our future headquarters. We have more than half of the funding raised and have just selected a General Contractor for the project. Visit our website (under Capital Projects: Fleming House) to track our progress as we get underway.

Paige Heydon-McCrary, Executive Director