Growing Futures

Planting Trees, Changing Lives
With nearly 30 years of service to the state of Iowa and more than three million trees planted, Trees Forever has always focused on empowering people, building community, and promoting environmental stewardship.

As we look to the future, we know that engaging youth is critical. With environmental concerns more demanding every day, we must train and inspire the next generation to continue the work we have accomplished together. In an exciting step to achieve this goal, we are launching a youth leadership and employment program called Growing Futures.

Based upon successful programs in many cities, including Indianapolis, Atlanta and San Francisco, Growing Futures will address generational poverty and workforce development needs by providing a path to green careers. It will have a powerful social and environmental impact because the program will prioritize underserved neighborhoods – those areas that lack tree cover and are in need of dedicated resources.

A goal to raise $6 million by 2023 has been set for Growing Futures to help us fulfill our commitment to plant and care for community trees and provide young people with the skills needed to prepare them to be leaders in their community. To succeed, Trees Forever will rely heavily on support and partnerships with individuals, corporations, other nonprofits and municipalities. Will you consider helping?
**Growing Futures Goals**

**GROW more beautiful, greener communities and neighborhoods**

As trees grow and thrive because of the care they receive from *Growing Futures* youth, the trees will improve residents’ quality of life.

A single mature tree can provide $3,790 in value over its lifetime – a 250% return on investment.

**GROW more trees in underserved communities**

Research shows a large discrepancy in tree cover between high- and low-income neighborhoods.

An upscale neighborhood with lots of mature trees.

An underserved neighborhood with far less trees.

**GROW leaders by employing and training young people**

Young people and minorities experience the highest rates of unemployment with ages 16-19 experiencing unemployment at rates of 16.5%.

*2016 Iowa Workforce Development*

**Urban Forestry Careers Earning Potential**

- **Supervisory** $53,146
- **Non-Supervisory** $45,265
- **Entry-Level** $36,494 (1 year or less experience)

We must ensure there is equitable distribution of tree benefits to all neighborhoods in our community.

Young people who participate in employment programs show greater job readiness skills, higher academic aspirations, and more positive attitudes towards their communities.
We know that time outdoors and exposure to green careers can be a life changing experience for kids and young adults. As the Founder of Trees Forever, I’ve experienced countless magical moments with kids planting and caring for trees, exploring woods and natural areas and becoming advocates for a greener future. Research shows that kids have higher grades when they have views of trees, that more time outdoors lessens the effect of ADHD and nearby nature helps with overall health and well-being. I know this firsthand, as I practically grew up in a large oak tree myself, observing the birds and insects from my special spot.

Training and empowering youth with an emphasis on time outdoors is at the core of the Growing Futures program. I’m personally committed to bringing this program to as many kids and young adults as possible.

SHANNON RAMSAY
Founding President & CEO

“I’m confident Growing Futures will be a transformative program, and will aid in the building of young people who are searching for a sense of purpose.”

There are few things I enjoy more than helping young people learn about the world around them and the potential within them. Caring for the land and a commitment to future generations is what appeals to me about the Growing Futures program, and why I am proud to serve as the Program Chair of this initiative.

I bought a piece of property in Cedar Rapids which I’ve dedicated entirely to the mission of getting kids outside. At the Pathfinder Outdoor Education Center, young people improve their powers of observation and learn creative problem-solving skills as they plant trees and remove invasive species. In an era where children are spending more and more time on technological devices, it is more important than ever to teach them the skills needed to care for the land that we are leaving behind for them.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Growing Futures, and I hope we can count on your support.

DAVE BLANKENSHIP
Program Chair, Growing Futures
Vice-Chair, Trees Forever Board

“Let’s work together to grow a better future and build pride for our kids!”

SHANNON RAMSAY
Founding President & CEO
As we’ve lost more habitat, forests and urban trees, the demand is growing for more tree plantings and management of natural areas. Collaboration among community partners to train and employ teens and young adults adds value that will benefit the entire community.

**The Benefits Of Working Together**

- **Teens and Young Adults**
  - Develop life skills
  - Receive hands-on job training
  - Improve self-esteem
  - Ensure underserved neighborhoods have access to nature

- **Civic Partners**
  - Engage the future workforce
  - Improve streets and neighborhoods
  - Increase property values
  - Provide hands-on outdoor employment for young people

- **Nonprofits**
  - Develop life skills
  - Engage the future workforce
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Provide hands-on outdoor employment for young people
Grow With It

Enrich and Empower Your Community

Ten Weeks Full of Action!

Participants work weekends during the school year and weekdays during the summer.

- Tree planting
- Watering trees
- Tree pruning
- Mulching and staking trees
- Growing the urban forest
- Creating green infrastructure

Weekly Life-Skills Training!

- Resume building
- Financial literacy
- Job shadow green careers
- Public speaking
- Tree ID
- Conflict resolution
- First aid training

Program Calendar

Spring Crew
Applications due: October
Notified by: January
Training/Orientation: April
Graduation: June

Summer Crew
Applications due: February
Notified by: May
Training/Orientation: June
Graduation: August

Fall Crew
Applications due: February
Notified by: May
Training/Orientation: August
Graduation: November

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Grow With It

Join Us Now To Support

Growing Futures

**Growing Futures Team – $35,000**
Multiple teams are planned for each location (Cedar Rapids and Des Moines) per year. This generous sponsorship covers hourly wages for youth and team leaders.

**Passenger Van – $30,000**
Participants need transportation to planting locations throughout the community, to provide ongoing care for plantings and to take part in educational field trips. One van is needed per location.

**Trailer with Water Tank – $10,000**
Provides a system for watering newly planted trees. One trailer/tank is needed for each location.

**Team Uniforms and Gear – $5,000**
Participants will receive uniform t-shirts and safety vests to be worn when working in the field, plus a backpack and notebook for organization of educational materials.

**Skills Training Sponsor – $5,000**
Ten sessions providing youth enrichment and job readiness skills are held for each team. Each sponsorship covers expenses for these instructors.

**Meals – $5,000**
Participants are provided a lunch each day of the program. This generous sponsorship will cover lunches for all four teams for one year.

**Tool Packages – $2,500**
The tools used for planting and maintaining trees, such as shovels, spades, loppers and pruning saws.

**Trees (6-10) – $1,200**
Grant programs will provide some trees, but there is always a need for more.

$6 million
Fundraising goal needed by 2023
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dave Blankenship
Program Chair

J. C. “Buz” Brenton
Brenton Arboretum

Katie Cownie
Attorney, BrownWinick

Amy Croll
Executive Director, Community Youth Concepts

Nate Faris
Director of Community Forestry, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

Dan Flanagan
Executive Director, Friends of the Urban Forest – San Francisco

Jonathan Gano
Director, City of Des Moines Public Works

Beth Hicks
Community Connector, Urban Community Concepts

Dwight Jackson
Community & Business Relations Specialist, Evelyn K. Davis Center

David Jahn
City Forester, City of Des Moines Public Works

Robert “Bob” Riley
CEO, Feed Energy

Mike Simonson
President, Simonson & Associates Architects

Zach Steele
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Founding President & CEO

Leslie Berckes
Program Development & Innovation Director

Nancy Duncan
Executive VP and CFO