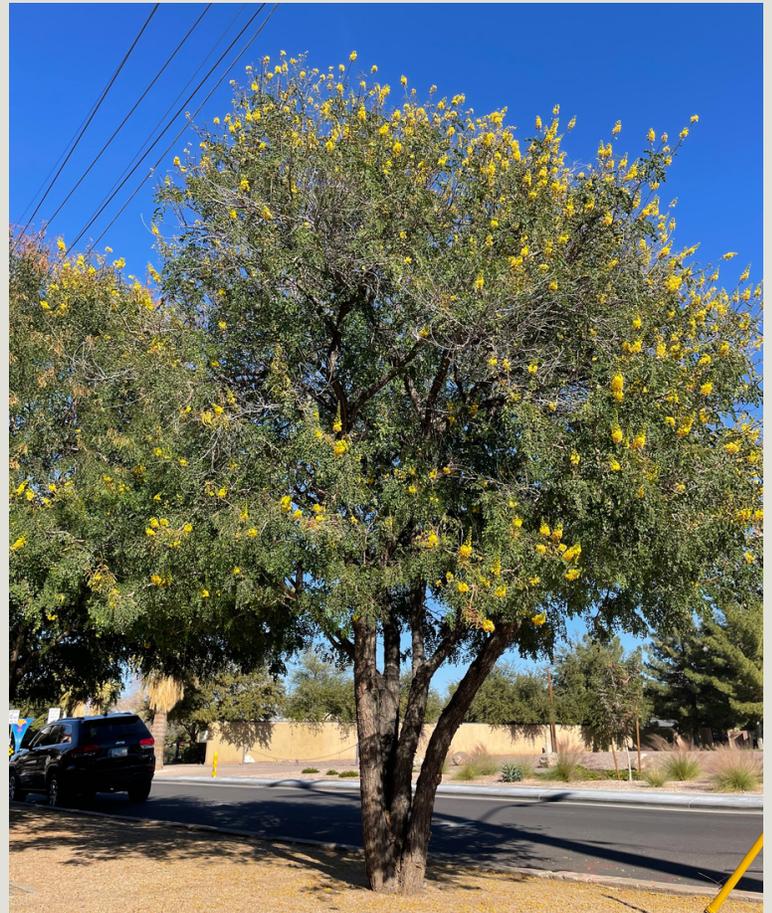


# ANNUAL REPORT



## Fiscal Year 2023



The McKinley Club Office:  
734 W. Polk St. Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 689-2896

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 2648  
Phoenix, AZ 85002



# OUR MISSION



## Who We Are

Trees Matter is a Phoenix-based 501 (c)(3) environmental education nonprofit. We see a need to provide resources to the public so they can properly choose, plant, care for, and advocate for trees. We hope to encourage a culture of tree advocates and stewards. Our mission, is to inspire and promote an increased tree canopy in the Valley. Our vision, is a Valley where for now and the future, all generations have lifelong access to the benefits of trees.

## What We Do & What We Believe

Trees offer many critical functions such as shade, pollution reduction, dust reduction, food, increased property value, carbon sequestration, increase in mental and physical health, and more. The Valley has an immediate need for an increased tree canopy; Trees Matter works to alleviate this need by educating the public on tree knowledge, and distributing and planting trees to residents and schools across the Valley.

For more information, visit our website: [www.treesmatter.org](http://www.treesmatter.org)

Special thanks to our Outreach Manager, Ariel Stone, and our intern, Emily Mitchell, for creating this Annual Report

# MEET THE BOARD



“Growth. A single word with significant impact. As people, physical growth is obvious. We also grow intellectually and emotionally, although this growth may not be quite so obvious. We must allow this growth to occur, so we become more balanced individuals able to reach our potential.

This same concept applies to trees. Trees must grow to reach their full potential. Trees provide shade, a home for wildlife, and they clean our air by reducing pollution. Our physical and mental health also benefits from trees and their greenery.

That is why it was so important for the team at Trees Matter to experience growth. The Board understood that the organization needed to add staff members to increase the potential it could achieve. Trees Matter helps all of us by promoting and increasing the tree canopy. Planting trees side-by-side with students and school staff, educating residents about tree care, as well as distributing trees.

We could not do it without our community. Donating time, money, or both ensures Trees Matter will continue to grow. Thank you for your support.”



**Michele Spear**  
Board Chair



**Michael Pfister**  
Board Vice Chair



**Eric Henderson**  
Board Treasurer



**Tabitha Myers**  
Board Secretary



**Evan Roberts**  
Board Member



**Eric McIntosh**  
Board Member



**Justin Katz**  
Board Member

# MEET THE BOARD CONT.



**Nicole Rodriguez**  
Board Member



**Angelica Zamora**  
Board Member



**Coby Bruckner**  
Board Member



**Lindsay Hahn**  
Board Member



**Ryan Knowlton -**  
Board Member



**Bonnie Anderson**  
Board Member



**Adolfo Maldonado**  
Board Member



# MEET THE TEAM



**Aimee Esposito**  
Executive Director



**Ariel Stone**  
Outreach Manager



**Brittany Rinear**  
Utility Shade Tree  
Program Manager



**Ali Guttenberg**  
Plantings Program  
Manager



**Estrella Gonzalez Saldana**  
Utility Shade Tree Program  
Coordinator



**Oscar Valencia**  
Community Outreach  
Coordinator



**Mira Turner**  
Program Events  
Lead



**Thomas Touti**  
Program Events  
Lead



**Flor Chávez**  
Customer Communications  
Coordinator

# PROGRAMS: Utility Shade Tree Program



4,069

Households  
Educated on  
Tree Care

5,327

Trees  
Distributed!

Working in conjunction with the Salt River Project (SRP) utility company, we distribute thousands of free desert-adapted shade trees to SRP customers across the Valley every year. This is our largest program, and also our longest running program, as well. Participants can receive up to two free trees after attending a virtual workshop where they learn how to plant and care for their new shade trees. We conduct the tree distribution events in different parts of the Valley each time, to reach as many residents as possible. By the end of each year, we distribute approximately **5,000 trees** and educate over **4,000 Valley** residents.



"This has been a great year for our SRP Shade Tree program, reaching into communities, in person and online, to educate homeowners on the benefits of shading their homes, and expanding our tree pick up events throughout the Valley. We experienced some of our largest pick ups to date and worked closely as a team to ensure excellence for the SRP customers we engage with! Seeing the impact this program has on their lives and neighborhoods really makes me proud to be a part of facilitating this program and helping it grow!"

- Brittany Rinear, Utility Shade Tree Program Manager



# PROGRAMS: Trees for Schools



"It is amazing to see the growth Trees Matter has shown over the last year.

My favorite part continues to be working with students at plantings and giving them new hands-on learning experiences. I am excited to see how we continue to grow and improve as we move into the next year." - Ali Guttenberg, Planting Programs Manager

Trees for Schools advocates to provide more tree infrastructure into schools while teaching staff and students on the importance of trees and tree care. It goes beyond simply planting the tree--the maintenance and care of the tree that follows is critical to the success of the tree. We are determined to educate schools on this by having the students, staff, and maintenance crews be an integral part of not only the planting itself, but also the knowledge on how to care for their new trees in the long term. We are happy to collaborate with school districts within the Valley to get more trees into schools! We've begun to branch out into plantings in neighborhoods and city parks, as indicated in our data below.



**Trees  
Planted**



**Students  
Involved**



**Schools  
Worked With**



**Parks**



**Residential**



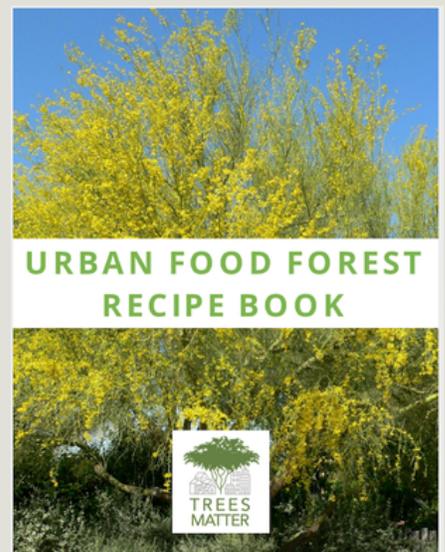
# PROGRAMS: Urban Food Forest



The Urban Food Forest program is devoted to demonstrating the important function of community engagement that trees provide by showing how different trees can be harvested, processed, and prepared as a means of food. This is a resource-based program, with online free educational content available to help educate the public on the function of trees as a means of food. All Urban Food Forest resources can be found on our website, [www.treesmatter.org](http://www.treesmatter.org), or on our social media platforms, @TreesMatterAZ, on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and cooking videos on our YouTube channel.



We also have a recipe book that highlights various trees that can grow here in the Valley (including native trees!), that also produce food through the fruit, pods, or seeds they produce! The book is organized by harvest season and features over 20 trees, with multiple unique recipe options for each tree. This book is available for purchase on our website at [www.treesmatter.org/Store](http://www.treesmatter.org/Store)



# SPECIAL PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS:



## Resiliency Project



For those who risked and lost their lives to COVID-19, Trees Matter is paying tribute to them by planting and dedicating 100 trees in their honor. The Resiliency Project was born to commemorate those affected most from COVID-19, while also acknowledging communities of color that have been affected at disproportionate rates and providing greenery to their communities. Additionally, Trees Matter partners with the Tiger Mountain Foundation, an organization which provides opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to learn practical life skills while improving their communities. In partnership with Tiger Mountain Foundation, Spaces of Opportunity, and Marked by Covid, we've created a memorial site in South Phoenix of 100 trees planted for those we've lost or who have been greatly impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We've also asked the community to join us in submitting forms about their loved one, and we will inscribe their names on individual wooden tags that will hang from the 100 trees we planted for the memorial site. In addition, a memorial page was added to our website to honor them, and it includes beautiful stories and memories their loved ones submitted. We ask that you take a moment to look through the site, and read the touching stories written about each of them.

If you would like to honor a loved one through our Resiliency Project, we encourage our community to submit tree tag/memorial page submissions at [treesmatter.org/Resiliency-Project](https://treesmatter.org/Resiliency-Project)

Thank you to our Spring 2022 intern, Bridget Abraham, for the hard work, dedication, and passion she put into creating this memorial page for our community.

To view the memorial page, visit [treesmatter.org/rpmemorial](https://treesmatter.org/rpmemorial) We also have a recognition page for those impacted, but have not passed away. To view the recognition page, visit [treesmatter.org/Recognition-Page](https://treesmatter.org/Recognition-Page)

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Every year, Trees Matter holds its annual fundraiser, the Mesquite Pancake Breakfast. At this event, our community joins us to taste the delicious flavor of mesquite through mesquite flour pancakes, which includes a full breakfast alongside. This fundraiser serves to support Trees Matter, and all ticket sales go to aid our mission to inspire and promote an increased tree canopy in the Valley. It's an opportunity for staff and board members to speak to our community, and it's also a chance for our community members to make an investment in us, as an organization.

## Mesquite Pancake Breakfast for Dinner



## McPherson Award Winners

"The McPherson Award honors individuals who inspire and promote and increased tree canopy Valley-wide. This year our winners are **Sean Sweat and Stacey Champion**.

Sean and Stacey worked to gather data and encourage the city of Phoenix to create the Urban Heat Island/ Tree and Shade Subcommittee and act on other climate change issues!

"Because there is always work to be done to provide more trees and shade in the Valley, Sean and Stacey lit a spark to push the City forward to implement the goals in the original 2010 Tree and Shade Master Plan and keep the issue in the public eye." - Tabitha Myers, Trees Matter Board Member



# VOLUNTEERS: Engagement & Numbers at a Glance



## A NOTE FROM OUR OUTREACH MANAGER



"One of the first things people notice about Trees Matter is that our volunteers are a core part of our organization, at the forefront along with staff. We rely heavily on our volunteers! Our amazing volunteer community ranges from event volunteers supporting in large numbers, to interns working closely with staff, to arborists/Master Gardeners/etc. offering their expertise in tree knowledge to the community. **It's especially exciting for me to see from our data that we had so many new volunteers this past fiscal year.** Hopefully they grow into recurring volunteers as so many of our other volunteers have. As someone who works closely with our volunteers guiding them, working alongside them, and ultimately building lasting relationships with them, it truly is a highlight for me to see that we have such a dedicated group of volunteers every year. I'm honored to work with these individuals ever year, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside them!"

-Ariel Stone, Outreach Manager



### Shade Tree Workshops & Distributions

These volunteers distribute hundreds of free shade trees to residents across the Valley, and help educate the community on tree care. These are large scale, fun events and we could not run them without volunteers!

### Tree Planting Volunteer Cohort

These volunteers plant trees throughout the year with Trees Matter. We need folks to help plant trees at schools through our Trees for Schools Program, and other plantings! New to planting trees? No problem, we will train you!

### Internships

Every semester Trees Matter recruits college students to join the team! Interns help coordinate and execute events, gain hands-on experience in a growing nonprofit, and learn about community engagement all while working alongside staff.

1,358

Volunteer  
Hours

214

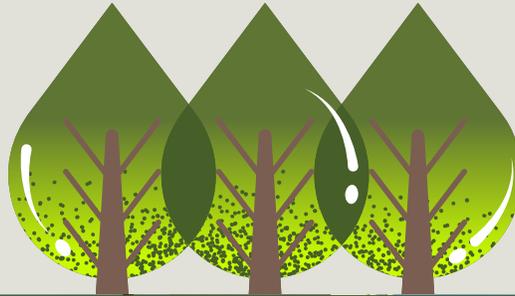
Total  
Volunteers

70

Recurring  
Volunteers



# Volunteers in action!



We celebrated our volunteers by holding a raffle throughout April, which is Volunteer Appreciation Month. We announced the winners on our social media stories. They each won a gift card to any of these local businesses of their choice! Cha Cha's Tea Lounge, First Place Coffee, Palabras Bookstore, Snooze AM Eatery, and Pueblo Plant Shop.



## Thank you volunteers!

Here are our winners/ recurring volunteers who we would like to highlight!

**Dlorah Conover** (top left): Dlorah volunteers at our shade tree events, distributing trees to the community!

**Marj Zulkoski** (top right): Marj volunteers at our shade tree events, helping distribute trees for years!

**Keith Quigley** (lower left): Keith volunteers with us at both Shade Tree Distributions and tree plantings!

**Michelle Taylor** (lower right): Michelle began volunteering with us this fiscal year, and supports us at shade tree events!

# FALL 2022 & SPRING 2023 INTERNS



**Keetra Bippus** - Journalism Major

Keetra's primary focus is in our social media and marketing efforts! She assists the Outreach Manager in creating content for all of Trees Matter social media platforms, and helps market events, volunteer opportunities, and more! Her favorite type of tree is the Ponderosa Pine.

"I love helping out my community and the environment is very important to me! It's a way to stay connected to the community I live in."

**Keetra has been interning with Trees Matter for 4 consecutive internships since January 2022.**



**Oscar Valencia** - Sustainability graduate '23

Oscar's primary focus was in our Trees for Schools Program assisting at planting events, and inventorying the health and growth rates of trees we've planted in previous seasons. His favorite tree is the Blue Palo Verde. "I decided to intern at Trees Matter because I believe we are completing essential work around the Valley, and I love the energy that everyone brings to the team!"

**After interning, Oscar started a staff position with TM as Community Outreach Coordinator.**



**Emily Mitchell** - Sustainability Major & Environmental Education Certificate

"This semester I worked on volunteer management with Ariel by helping guide new and recurring volunteer members during the shade tree distribution and tree planting events but also organizing, tracking, and logging volunteer data.

Trees Matter has inspired me to continue community outreach work."



**Jolie Cox** - Landscape Architecture, Conservation Biology, & Public Service Major

"The work I did for Trees Matter consisted of working tree plantings and tree distributions. I also did community outreach through booth events. I loved getting to work directly with the community as well as our partners. My favorite memory from this semester is planting a saguaro!"

# Finances 2023



## A Letter From our Executive Director:

“This year, our board approved a budget for about a \$30k loss to invest in new staffing and infrastructure for our programs. We also took on more program projects than the past year growing our Community Planting programs including Trees for Schools, planting trees in parks, and residential planting programming. We grew staff for events and outreach including adding more bilingual staff so we could better connect with our community who prefers to learn and communicate in Spanish. A net loss was expected and planned for this fiscal year but not for next fiscal year. I think it is important to highlight that we not only grew our revenue by over 100K this year but that we were strategic in investing in our organization in a time that it was safe so that we could grow in a healthy way. Sometimes in our culture, the expectation is to always grow and produce but I am proud our board recognized the need to invest in the organization, even with a slight cost, so that we could grow our impact. We safely invest in Certificate of Deposits, work to have cash on hand, and have a finance committee that is required to have an understanding of bookkeeping, financials, and accounting. Transparency is key to us, and we looking forward to bringing a new year of growth fiscally as well as exploring the opportunity to have an outside financial review. This year we spent more than we ever did on trees at \$115K which stimulates our local economy as we source all trees from local nurseries. The numbers show that when you donate or become a member of Trees Matter you truly are investing in our mission to inspire and promote an increased canopy!” -Aimee Esposito, Executive Director

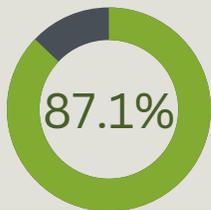
### Expenses:

Total: \$612,467.00

Programs: \$533,176.59

Management & General: \$59,685.97

Development: \$19,604.44



Programs

Management &  
General

Development

### Revenue:

Total: \$579,507.59

Contributions & Grants: \$235,629.29

Earned Income: \$339,452.80

Special Events & Other: \$2,955.50

Investment Income: \$1,470.00



Earned  
Income

Contributions  
& Grants

Special  
Events &  
Other

Investment  
Income

# Monthly Members



Stephanie Adams  
Mario Aniles  
Cypress Ashford  
Joe Barba  
Alex Benchimol  
Nancy Bennett  
Jason Coghill  
Kathy Coleman  
Devyn Diaz  
Shirley Dieckerman  
Jocelyn Dustan  
Aimee & Gaelle Esposito  
Joy Fichiera  
Lorena Gloria  
Lindsay Hahn  
Tanya Hughes  
Andrew Knochel  
Karen Loschiavo  
Jo-Ann Lowney  
Lora Martens  
Eric McIntosh  
Tabitha Myers

Barry Nomann  
Ian O' Grady  
Heather Okvat  
Janice Palmer  
Joseph Palomino  
Jess Patrick  
Annie Porn  
Bonnie Richardson  
Tanya Rincon  
Haley Ritter  
Nicole Rodriguez  
Lynn Rubicam  
Rebekah Sanders  
M Melanie Searle  
Nona Siegel  
Rebecca Smith-Gross  
Michele & Greg Spear  
Kraig Tolliver  
Guadalupe Valenzuela  
Nikki VanRy  
Linda & Larry Williamson  
William Woolery



**Thank you to our Monthly Members and their generous donations!**

Invest in Trees Matter, Invest in Our Future

Donating monthly and being a member helps us stay engaged with you while ensuring we have long term sustainable streams of donations.



# ACHIEVEMENTS & RESOURCES



## Tree Education Sheets

Trees Matter is dedicated to giving you access to as many resources as possible. Visit our website for PDF files containing information on how to plant and maintain trees, how trees impact different social, economic, and environmental factors, and figure out which desert-adapted shade tree type is right for your home. You can also learn about different food-producing trees in Phoenix's Urban Food Forest, plus learn recipes and harvesting information!



## Tree Database

Our Tree Database is new, and continues to grow and develop! We have compiled a list for you of commonly available trees in Arizona which are also suitable for planting in Maricopa County!

This is intended to give more information about the characteristics of the trees to help you decide which tree is suitable for you. Find out more information on our website!



## Advocacy

Many of you are interested in how you can advocate to protect and plant more trees.

We've created email alerts that will provide information on important meetings to show up to, who to call for potential tree related issues, updates on tree advocacy news, and other ways to use your agency to help speak for the trees! Sign up for our advocacy alerts [here](#).



## Ask an Arborist

Have a question about your tree? You can post your question to our Facebook forum, and our Arborist will give you an answer!

The purpose of this forum is to share information and provide a way for our volunteer certified Arborist to answer questions regarding trees. Our Ask the Arborist Forum exists on our Trees Matter Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/askanarborist>

# VISIT US



## Visit Our Website!

Our mission is to inspire and promote an increased tree canopy in the Valley. If you would like to learn more about our organization, our mission, volunteer and support opportunities, and upcoming events, please visit our website. There are also a lot of free resources we offer that you can utilize today!

[treesmatter.org](https://treesmatter.org)



## Donate!

Become a one time donor or a monthly donor. Trees Matter exists through the generosity of our supporters who donate time and funds. Through community support from folks like you, Trees Matter can continue our mission-based work and develop community-based programs to increase the tree canopy in the Valley

[treesmatter.org/One-Time-Donation](https://treesmatter.org/One-Time-Donation)

[treesmatter.org/Monthly](https://treesmatter.org/Monthly)



## Get Involved!

Sign up for an opportunity! Offer your time at SRP Shade Tree Workshop & Distribution Events, help Trees Matter behind the scenes through administrative support, join the Tree Planting Volunteer Cohort, internships, and More! We are always looking for new volunteers to help increase the tree canopy in the Valley!

[treesmatter.org/volunteer](https://treesmatter.org/volunteer)



## Subscribe & Follow Us!

Interested in receiving our monthly e-newsletter? Join our community and have secure access to our **e-newsletter**, updates on special events, volunteer opportunities, and access to certain resources. You can also follow us on **Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok** to keep up with all the work we are doing around the Valley!

[treesmatter.org/subscribe](https://treesmatter.org/subscribe)