

ANNUAL REPORT

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ABOUT US



Who we are:

Trees Matter is a phoenix-based 501 (c)(3) environmental educational 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

Special thank you to our Events Intern, Will Woolery, for the dedication, skill, and time he put into creating this Annual Report.

MEET THE BOARD



E.J. COCHRUM

BOARD VICE CHAIR



GARY WILLIAMS

BOARD TREASURER



EVAN ROBERTS

BOARD SECRETARY



JOE BARBA

BOARD MEMBER



MARK HUTFLESZ

BOARD MEMBER



**KRISTA HICKS
O'BRIEN**

BOARD MEMBER



MICHELE SPEAR

BOARD MEMBER



ERIC MCINTOSH

BOARD MEMBER

Note from the Board Chair:



On behalf of all the “branches” of Trees Matter, I am pleased to present the first ever Trees Matter Annual Report. This report offers you a window into the many wonderful activities undertaken by our board, staff, and volunteers during the 2020 fiscal year. It is an honor to serve with a group of professionals who are so passionate about what they do.

I joined the board of Trees Matter because, like you, I care about our environment. It is important to me that my children and grandchildren and your children and grandchildren, enjoy the benefits of environmental stewardship. A tree planted today, enhances our environment for generations. Trees lower temperatures, clean our air, prevent erosion and make us feel better. The joy on the faces of school children as they join with us to plant trees, confirms my belief that we all thrive when more trees are alive.

Trees represent life, hope and strength. In these difficult times, their deep roots and strong branches remind us that, though we are battered by terrible winds, we will emerge sturdier than before. We hope this report inspires you to become a volunteer, a monthly donor, or both. With your support we can achieve our vision of “A Valley where for now and the future, all generations have lifelong access to the benefits of trees”.

-Nancy Bennett, Board Chair

MEET THE STAFF



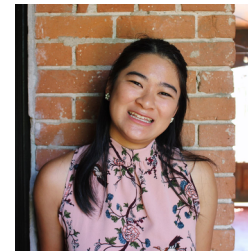
AIMEE ESPOSITO

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR



ARIEL STONE

VOLUNTEER &
OUTREACH
MANAGER



PAULINA VU

PROGRAM
MANAGER



BRITTANY RINEAR

REMOTE
COMMUNICATIONS
ASSISTANT

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Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 689-2896

Mailing Address:
PO Box 2648
Phoenix, AZ 85002



PARTNERSHIPS

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 Graceful fundraising
 Hazel and Violet
 Dark Hall Coffee
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 Stevenson CPA LLC
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 Phoenix Center for the Arts

SPONSORS

Cha Chas Tea Lounge
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 Songbird Coffee and Tea House
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PARTNERS

Alliance for Community Trees
 Arizona Community Tree Council
 Arizona Sustainability Alliance

PARTNERS

Audobon Arizona
 Cartwright School District
 City of Glendale
 City of Mesa
 City of Phoenix
 Keep Phoenix Beautiful
 Phoenix Community Toolbank
 Palabras Bilingual Bookstore
 Phoenix Union
 Tempe Unified School District
 Town of Queen Creek

GRANT MAKERS

Arbor Day Foundation
 Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
 CarMax
 Vitalist

Mesquite Pancake Breakfast



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.

This past fiscal year, we tried a new twist on the fundraiser, calling it the Mesquite Pancake Breakfast or DINNER! We held our annual breakfast in the evening, at Snooze an A.M. Eatery, a local chain in Phoenix, AZ. With delicious food and over one hundred people in attendance, it was—and always is—a highlight of our year every time! **A special thank you to Snooze, an A.M. Eatery for providing both the venue and food, that enriched the community's experience at the Breakfast!**

Many of the partners listed above have participated in our annual Mesquite Pancake Breakfast as well!

PROGRAMS

FY2020 at a glance:



Shade Tree Program

Working in conjunction with the Salt River Project (SRP) utilities company, we distribute thousands of free desert-adapted shade trees to SRP customers across the Valley. Participants can receive up to two free trees after attending a workshop where they learn how to plant and care for their new shade trees. By the end of each year, we distribute approximately **5,000 trees** and educate over **4,000 Valley residents**.



Events occur once every month, between March-November.

"Trees Matter is a vital link to communities across the Valley. We reach hundreds of homeowners and residents through our various programs, educate people of all ages, and distribute trees to enthusiastic and committed individuals. Our work aims to share with others the inherent value trees have, ultimately instilling a sense of pride and ownership over the trees in our communities.

My particular work with Trees Matter brings me a lot of joy, as Communications Assistant primarily for our SRP Shade Tree program, I have the privilege of speaking with customers on a daily basis who are passionate and excited about increasing their tree canopy at home. All of our programs are vital to the health and continued growth and success of our cities, and I am honored to be a part of Trees Matter!"

Brittany Rinear, Remote Communications Assistant

PROGRAMS

Trees for Schools

Our newest program, Trees for Schools, aims to get more tree infrastructure into schools alongside 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 education that informs them 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!



FY2020 at a glance:

3
Schools
Visited

28
Trees
Planted at
Schools!

Approximately
800+
Students
Involved!



"Trees for Schools is such a precious program because of the impact it has on the students, teachers, and the entire school community. Trees are so important for the community not only because they provide things like shade and purified air, but because they create connection. Kids can gather under trees to take a break or to eat, and even the act of planting a tree brings students, teachers, and staff, and nature closer to one another. The students always have such a sense of pride and ownership over the trees they planted, and start to think about their responsibility to the planet. It's always my hope that Trees Matter can be a place of connection as well, bridging the next generation to the world around them."

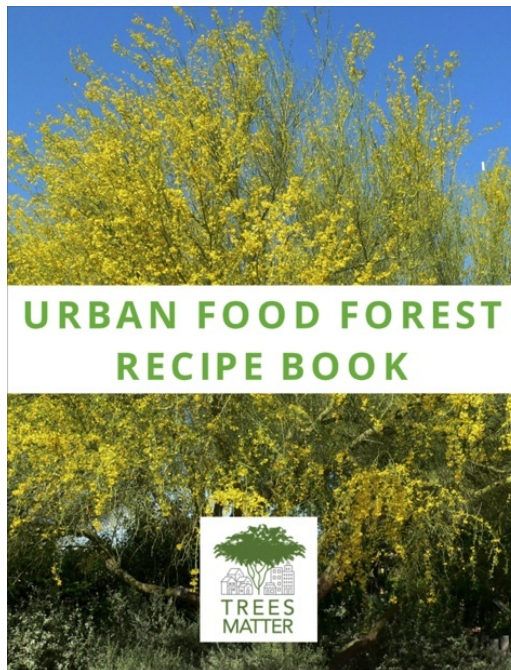
Paulina Vu, Program Manager

This program is on a funded project-by-project basis and, therefore, school plantings happen throughout the year. Refer to our partnership and financial pages for more information to support this program!

PROGRAMS

Urban Food Forest

Trees provide many functions and benefits. 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. Events in the series are designed as a community building program with opportunities to attend potlucks, happy hours, workshops, go on harvesting events, and volunteer to help educate the public on the free food that trees provide. Events occur quarterly and at varying locations throughout the Valley.



This recipe book is a collaborative effort uniquely created by our staff, board members, interns, and various local people who live in the Valley.

The book highlights various trees that can grow here in the Valley (including native trees), and 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.

Recipes are provided by herbalists, nutritionists, foragers, and those who have an overall appreciation and passion for edible trees that grow well in the desert southwest, specifically here in the Valley.

A special thank you to Randallyn Kojima, who was an intern with Trees Matter. She began the framework for this book, with support from Trees Matter staff and board. Using the recipes and photos she collected from others, along with her own contributions, Randallyn has put together an informative and easy to use recipe book that can be enjoyed by cooking experts and novices alike.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



A Note From the Volunteer & Outreach Manager

"If there's one thing you notice about Trees Matter from the start, you know that our volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. We are a small staff of four, so we rely heavily on our hundreds of volunteers to make magic happen. None of our programming and events would be possible without their hard work. **Our organization is truly volunteer-powered!!** It is an honor for me to lead—and work alongside—these amazing individuals who choose to make a difference in their community through Trees Matter. Our volunteers range from students to retirees, arborists to those with general sustainability interest, and more. I couldn't write this message without giving a BIG shout-out to our amazing volunteers; so with that being said...Volunteers: We appreciate you more than you know!!!"

Ariel Stone, Volunteer & Outreach Manager

FY2020 at a glance:

790+
Volunteer
Hours!

200+
Volunteers!

90+
Recurring
Volunteers!

Shade Tree Workshop And Distribution

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!

Administrative Behind the Scenes

These volunteers assist with increasing administrative demands behind the scenes in our office! They organize, track, and analyze data, prepare our event paperwork, and help file away important documents.

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-level 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 directly alongside staff.

VOLUNTEERS

A word from our volunteers



"Interning with Trees Matter has been an awesome experience for me. I learned a lot about nonprofit organizations in general as well as knowledge about trees that I didn't know before. Volunteering in their events have also made me realize how much people love trees and nature. The community involvement with the events was also fun, especially meeting new people. Seeing people smile after they get their tree is something I can never forget. Not to mention that Ariel, Aimee, Paulina and the others are amazing at what they do! My experience with Trees Matter has truly been a pleasure!"

- Kenny, Former Events Intern



"You have been an instrumental part of my nonprofit degree...I learned so much in my experience with your organization than I have anywhere else."

-Rachel, Former Events Intern



VOLUNTEERS



"Trees Matter holds a special place in my heart. This organization does so much good in the world...It is a blessing to be able to spend time with other like-minded individuals working toward a common goal. And truly, there's not a better group of people out there." -Katie, Recurring Volunteer & Certified Arborist



"Interning with Trees Matter was an invaluable experience that I'm glad I had. I enjoyed being an intern because I got to meet and work around great colleagues, supervisors, and the greater Phoenix community. I also learned how to be a better leader and listener to those around me. Interning has opened my eyes up about why trees are so vital to Arizona! I would never have known as much as I do now if it weren't for Trees Matter. I liked my time so much that I decided to continue to work on my internship project after my internship ended. I love contributing to and investing my time into something I care about and I'm glad I've gotten to do that with Trees Matter!" -Randallyn, Former Events Intern



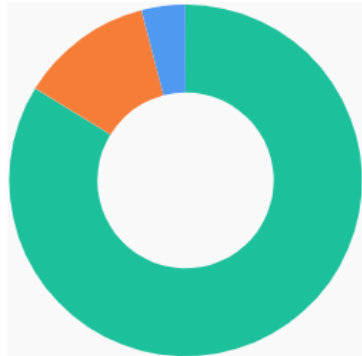
"I had the amazing opportunity to intern with Trees Matter during my Sophomore year at ASU. My time working with Trees Matter was unique and exciting because I was given the freedom to demonstrate my creativity while also given guidance to grow as a professional. During my time as an intern I was tasked with creating an Advocacy web page for the Trees Matter website and helping out with the Volunteer Events. While working on my web page project I had to reach out to numerous local governments, meet in person with different professionals, and research a plethora of topics to be successful. I felt that this project helped me grow as an individual and gave me insight into the Non-profit sector. It also allowed me to make a real impact, as I was able to see my project turn into reality. Ariel and Aimee provided great support for every aspect of my journey and always made sure that my time and needs were taken into consideration. I recommend this internship to anyone interested in nonprofits, sustainability, or even just trees!" -Ronnie, Former Events Intern



"My daughter and I have been volunteering with Trees Matter for 6 years. Trees Matter is a great organization with amazing vision and great staff! Every event is well planned, and lots of fun. My daughter and I love interacting with the staff, participants and fellow volunteers. We have learned a lot about the importance of water conservation and utilizing our natural resources (ie. trees) to help our environment thrive while saving energy. For me, it is also a great way to give back and spend some quality mother/daughter time. " -Joan, Recurring Volunteer

FY2020 FINANCES

EXPENSES



84% Programs & Services

12% Management & General

4% Development

Programs & Services: **\$256,662**
Management & General: **\$37,195**
Development: **\$12,289**



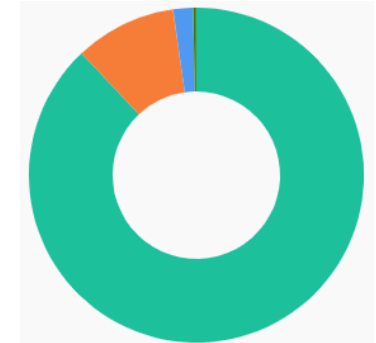
88% Earned Income

10% Contributions

2% Special Events & Other

0.29% Investment Income

REVENUE



Earned Income: **\$285,054**
Contributions & Grants: **\$31,738**
Special Events: **\$6,250**
Investment Income: **\$931**



Note from the Executive Director:

"As Executive Director of a small nonprofit, a key tenet of my responsibility relies on our ability to be financially sustainable and responsible so that our organization can continue to grow its programming amid unforeseen challenges. I am proud to say that as COVID-19 hit our community, we have been able to continue operations and keep all staff in full operation amid temporary funding cuts. Years of being conservative on revenue and generous on expenses for our budget has led to exceeding our expectations on funding leading to both more outputs in programming and the ability to save towards cash on hand. Thanks to our Board Treasurer, Gary Williams and our Finance Committee we have recently decided to safely invest a portion of our funds in Certificates of Deposit so we-

FY2020 FINANCES

can earn a small amount of interest that can go towards programming in the future. From a financial standpoint our goal is to spend on programming and have enough savings to be flexible to cover a "rainy day" or to add additional programs in the future. Another great indicator of our financial success is that we have seen an increase in the last few years in contributions and grants. Our bigger goal for the next few years is to diversify our funding streams so that we are not dependent on a single source of funding. Thanks to our individual donors, members, grant makers, and business partners we are more diverse than we ever have been. Your support in our work financially is showing and we hope in future annual reports you can continue to see financial sustainability, diversification in funding, and of course funding growth in program spending. "

Aimee Esposito, Executive Director

A Word From our Donors

"Everyone associated with them has got a huge, leaky green heart! I see it in their team through educating the community about the importance of the many functions of trees. Please give to your local NPOs. It is so important to our community!"

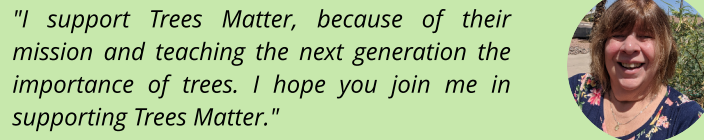


Tanya Hughes



Dora Vasquez

"I give to Trees Matter, because I remember a time in Phoenix where we had a canopy of trees and where we could find shade in the summer. I share Trees Matter's vision, not just for me, but for my grandchildren and for future generations to come."



Linda Williamson

"I support Trees Matter, because of their mission and teaching the next generation the importance of trees. I hope you join me in supporting Trees Matter."



Will Woolery

"I support Trees Matter, because I believe in what they do. This organization, from the volunteers to staff, are incredible people with huge hearts. They help make our community what it is through hard work, education, and caring. I am incredibly happy to support such a wonderful cause. "

Monthly Donors

*Aimee and Geoff Esposito
Andrew Bernier
Barry Nomann
Bill McLain
Brooklynne Sundseth
Christoper Coffman
Cynthia Mercado
E.J Cochrum
Eric McIntosh
Evan Roberts
Ian O'Gady
Jason Coghill
Joe Barba
Joel Edman and Marilyn Rodriguez
Kraig Tolliver
Linda and Larry Williamson
Lora Martens
Laura Zgoda
Greg and Michele Spear
Nancy Bennett
Nikki VanRy
Rebekah Sanders
Tanya Hughes
William Woolery*

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!



Advocacy

Many of you are interested in how you can advocate to protect, plan, 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!



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!



Ask the 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.



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



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



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

Treesmatter.org/Monthly



Subscribe!

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 Twitter to keep up with all the work we are doing around the Valley!

Treesmatter.org/subscribe



TREES
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