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Chesapeake Bay Trust and Baltimore Tree Trust Empower Baltimore City Students to Plant Trees

Today, the Baltimore Tree Trust, with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust-administered Urban Trees Program, planted new trees at Fallstaff Elementary/Middle School to expand Baltimore City's tree canopy, build climate resilience, and engage students in urban forestry. The Urban Trees Program, a statewide effort to green urban, historically underserved areas, is primarily funded by the State of Maryland as part of the Five Million Trees Initiative, with additional key support from BGE. The Program empowers local, community-based groups, like the Baltimore Tree Trust, to improve air and water quality, reduce urban heat island effect, restore habitat, and strengthen neighborhood resilience.

"The thousands of new trees planted are ensuring a more beautiful and healthy Baltimore City," said **District 41 State Delegate Sean Stinnett**. "This program enables more City residents every year to participate in this critical local work to strengthen our neighborhoods."

Since the program was established four years ago by the Maryland General Assembly's Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021, \$34.4 million has supported 147 community-led projects to plant 92,377 new native trees in areas where greenery and resources are scarce.

"The Urban Trees Program acknowledges the real need to address our changing climate and the carbon emissions severely impacting our local communities," said **Former State Senator and Director of the Maryland Energy Administration, Paul Pinsky**, who was a sponsor of the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 when he served in the Senate. "This program provides resources to enable historically underserved communities to green their own neighborhoods."

Through this year's round of funding, 26 community organizations received awards to plant more than 28,000 new trees. Starting this fall, the Baltimore Tree Trust will plant 1,456 trees, bringing them to a total of over 9,000 tree plantings in Baltimore City made possible through their multiple grants through the Urban Trees Program.

"It's important that the community have ways to connect with and be stewards of their environment and neighborhood. Tree plantings are meaningful ways to take action," said **Regina T. Boyce, District 43A Delegate**.

More than expanding tree canopy, Baltimore Tree Trust is also expanding access to green careers. Their site preparation, tree planting, and tree maintenance work is completed by members of their career pathways program, the Neighborhood Forestry Initiative. Through this Initiative, they hire interested Baltimore City residents, regardless of experience, and provide full-time paid training in urban forestry.

“We know environmental initiatives like this have an impact on the economy as well, creating new jobs and expanding workforce opportunities,” said **District 11B Delegate Dana Stein**. “All of Maryland benefits when we enable more residents to get involved in the health of their own communities.”

From stimulating local green jobs to reducing energy consumption (and therefore energy bills) to improving physical and mental health, many urban communities have adopted urban tree canopy goals due to these significant benefits, including Baltimore City, which has set a goal of 40% canopy by 2037.

“We know that greener communities are healthier communities—and the Urban Trees Program helps all of us participate in making our neighborhoods greener,” said **Mayor Brandon M. Scott**. “Starting at Fallstaff Elementary/Middle, we're planting thousands of trees across our city, working with partner organizations, residents, and especially our young people, to give back to our neighborhoods and our environment. Together, we're building a safer, greener, healthier Baltimore.”

Fallstaff Elementary/Middle School is one of the Baltimore Tree Trust’s tree planting sites this fall where they will plant native trees and engage community members to support neighborhood health. In addition to all the significant benefits urban trees provide, the new trees planted today will also support student learning and promote a new generation of environmental stewards.

“We are pleased to partner with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the Baltimore Tree Trust, to give our students and families something that will keep growing with them—healthier air, cooler spaces, and a more beautiful place to learn, all items that show the importance of the environment. These trees will stand as a reminder of how much we can accomplish when our community comes together,” said **Dr. Lynette K. Washington, Chief Operating Officer for Baltimore City Public Schools**.

The new trees at Fallstaff Elementary/Middle School will provide critical shade for the community, an outdoor place for students to learn, and expand tree canopy to help create a more resilient City for future generations.

“Since 2016, the Baltimore Tree Trust has partnered with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and has been an Urban Trees grant recipient since 2022. Thanks to the Urban Trees Program, we've planted over 9,000 trees that help provide clean air, manage stormwater runoff, and lower temperatures, all of which benefit our neighborhoods. Continued support of the Urban Trees program will ensure all Baltimore residents benefit from a robust and equitable tree canopy and have access to green spaces, while creating pathways to careers in forestry for Baltimore residents,” said **Bryant Smith, CEO of the Baltimore Tree Trust**.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust has long empowered local urban communities and engaged students in environmental education through grant-making. “We see tremendous benefit when we empower people closest to the problems to lead their own local solutions,” said **Chesapeake Bay Trust president, Dr. Jana Davis**. “Planting trees is one of many ways our communities can ensure the future health of their neighborhoods, and engaging students means the next green leaders are already on their journey to protecting these trees and their communities.”

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About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) envisions a restored and protected Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. We empower local community-based groups on the ground with the resources they need to take on a meaningful and measurable role in restoring forests, streams, rivers, bays, wildlife, and more in their own communities. Every year, the Bay Trust empowers about 400 groups by providing grants and technical assistance to accomplish environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration projects. The Bay Trust is supported by the sale of the Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays license plate; donations to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund on the Maryland State income tax form; donations made by hunters, fishers, and boaters in the Maryland online natural resource licensing system; donations from individuals and corporations; and partnerships with private foundations and federal, state, and local governments. The Bay Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades. On average, 90 cents of every dollar are directed to the Trust's restoration and education programs.