

# ANNUAL REPORT

F  
Y  
2  
0  
2  
1



# 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](http://www.treesmatter.org)

*Special thanks to our intern, Bridget Abraham, for the dedication, skill, and time she put into creating this Annual Report.*

# MEET THE BOARD



E.J. COCHRUM

VICE CHAIR



ERIC HENDERSON

TREASURER



MICHELE SPEAR

SECRETARY



JOE BARBA

MEMBER



MARK HUTFLESZ

MEMBER



ERIC MCINTOSH

MEMBER



GARY WILLIAMS

MEMBER



TABITHA MYERS

MEMBER



JUSTIN KATZ

MEMBER

## Note from the Board Chair:



*A year ago, we were in the throes of a worldwide deadly pandemic. Calls for social justice could be heard around the world. The economy was in tatters. We did not know what the future held. We did not know if Trees Matter would continue to exist.*

*Our first thought was, how can we help? And thus, the Resiliency Project was born. The 100 trees we are planting at Spaces of Opportunity, in collaboration with Tiger Mountain Foundation, will be a living memorial to Arizona residents affected by Covid-19. They will also provide much needed shade and fresh fruit for the Spaces Community. We are enormously proud of this project. You can read more about it in the paragraphs below.*

*We were determined to advance our mission despite the pandemic. Staff worked remotely and spent much of their time “Zooming” with each other and outside organizations. We re-engineered our SRP tree distribution events in order to safely protect folks arriving to pick up their free trees. Employees from SRP, many of them arborists, volunteered to help us plant trees for our Trees for Schools program, providing more tree shaded playgrounds to greet the kids when they returned to school after a year of remote learning. And most amazingly, donors gave generously from their hearts, allowing us to be more productive than ever before during a time when the community needed us the most.*

*I am grateful for our tremendous Board, staff, volunteers and donors who redoubled their efforts throughout this eventful year. We could not have accomplished what we did without every single one of you*

*-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



**OLIVIA DIAZ**

HANDSON  
AMERICORPS  
VISTA

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

**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 2648  
Phoenix, AZ 85002



# COMMUNITY BUILDING

## COLLABORATORS

AmeriCorps  
Arizona Community  
Tree Council  
Arizona Faith Network  
Arizona Public Service  
Arizona Sustainability  
Alliance  
ASU Sustainable Cities  
Network

## COLLABORATORS

Chispa AZ  
City of Phoenix  
City of Tempe  
Creighton Community  
Foundation  
HandsOn Greater  
Phoenix  
Keep Phoenix Beautiful

## COLLABORATORS

Phoenix ToolBank  
Salt River Project  
The Nature  
Conservancy  
TigerMountain  
Foundation  
Treeland Nurseries  
West Coast Arborists

## SCHOOL PARTNERS

Cartwright School District  
Murphy School District  
Glendale School District  
Paideia Academy  
Tempe Unified School District

## GRANT MAKERS

Arbor Day Foundation  
AT & T  
Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire  
Management  
Arizona Game & Fish  
Vitalyst Health Foundation

## Collaborator Quotes:

"Trees Matter and the Department of Forestry and Fire Management have partnered on a multitude of urban forestry projects over the years. From working together on lesson plans for teachers to the Trees for Schools program and creating a Community Forester program, this partnership is bringing a wealth of tree benefits to the Phoenix Metro area. We are very excited to continue working with Trees Matter to increase awareness and value of community forests."

- Cori Dolan, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management

"SRP is proud to be a partner with Trees Matter for our Shade Tree Program. We have collaborated for over 9 years with Trees Matter to get low-water-use trees out to our customers to provide shade, save energy and improve air quality in the Valley. It is a pleasure to work with Trees Matter, as the SRP Shade Tree Program Manager, to help educate our customers on the benefits of trees, how to properly plant and care for their trees and how to choose the best tree for their home. SRP customers not only receive free shade trees, but a valuable education from our tree events, and none of this would be possible without our partnership with Trees Matter."

- Lori Gonzalez, SRP

"From shovels, to post drivers and everything in between needed to plant a tree we are honored to support Trees Matter's amazing work and mission with #ToolsForChange! But we don't just provide tools, Trees Matter is a true partner as we continue to look at ways that we both can grow our impact and support each other's work. Aimee and the whole Trees Matter team is amazing to work with and are so passionate about their mission!"

- Jana Smith, Phoenix ToolBank

# PROGRAMS

## FY2021 at a glance:



"2020-2021 was a year that really showed what we are capable of as a team. Going from a suddenly canceled spring workshop season, to a full webinar series in less than 4 months, pivoting our entire process remotely in the middle of an intense health crisis. We are able to educate thousands of Arizonans about the importance of trees and distributed over 5000 trees to SRP customers across the Valley. Then in early 2021, we did it again, and were able to begin offering our programming with Spanish translation, which really expanded our impact. We did it all safely, effectively, and we did it well. We even managed to have a good time! I am so proud to be a part of Trees Matter!"

- *Brittany Rinear, Remote Communications Assistant*

## 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. In 2020 and 2021, Trees Matter adapted with COVID-19 by moving the workshop online, and doubled involvement. By the end of each year, we distribute approximately **5,000 trees** and educate over **4,000 Valley** residents, but far surpassed that amount (see figures on left).



*Events occur once every month, between March-November.*

# PROGRAMS

## Trees for Schools

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!



FY2021 at a glance:

**5**  
Schools  
Visited

**51**  
Trees  
Planted!

**1292**  
Students  
Involved!



"Despite how COVID-19 affected our programs and kept us physically apart, Trees Matter thrived with our community this year! We've planted more trees than we ever have in one year, and engaged more students through virtual plantings and online Q&A's. This year we proved that our community is resilient, resourceful, and creative!"

*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

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.



## URBAN FOOD FOREST RECIPE BOOK



This recipe book Highlights various trees that both grow and produce food in the Valley! The book is organized by harvest season and features over 20 trees.

"Being an Intern for the Urban Food Forest Project with Trees Matter truly helped me to expand my knowledge of our desert trees. The food forest project fills a much-needed knowledge gap in the valley by educating people of all walks of life in a simple, usable format. Understanding that the Sonoran desert provides a bounty of food sources is the basis for equitable conversations in our communities. During my time interning, I was able to speak with leaders of the community, corporations, and hundreds of residents. I learned valuable volunteer coordination and outreach skills. I will carry that with me into my career and beyond. "

*-Crystal Lloyd, Spring 2021 Intern*

# PROGRAMS

## 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.



*Trees Matter created name tags for those who wanted to dedicate and honor the lives of those lost from COVID-19*

"I and Team Tiger Mountain Foundation want to sincerely thank the Resiliency Project, Trees Matter, and our incredible partners for their support for the communities we serve during the COVID-19 pandemic. TMF has been unfortunately dramatically affected by this dreadful virus and its ongoing toll on people. Your assistance in being able to plant trees is conscientious and much appreciated for recognition of a new life and revitalization during these trying times."

*- Darren Chapman, Tiger Mountain Foundation, (pictured above)*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As one of its core values, Trees Matter has remained diligent in reaching out to the community. One of the newest projects is the **virtual book and film club**, which was created in response to COVID-19. The intent was to stay in touch with active members and continue to educate about desert life. *(Pictured at the bottom left)*

The innovative culture at Trees Matter has provided a variety of **new limited T-shirt designs** to share with the valley. Such as the Palo Verde design presented, the team finds various ways to bring awareness not only to the organization, but to also share their work and prioritization of local communities. *(Pictured at the top right)*

Lastly, **Tree Story Series** shines light on the emotional importance nature , and specifically trees have, upon people. The series reveals personal stories of special and memorable trees and the impact trees have had upon those in the community. The innovative culture at Trees Matter has provided a variety of new T-shirt designs to bring into the valley. Such as the Palo Verde design presented, the team finds various ways to bring awareness not only to the organization, but to also share their work and prioritization of local communities. *(Pictured at bottom right corner)*



# VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

FY2021 at a glance:



## *A Note From the Volunteer & Outreach Manager*

"As many of you know, our volunteers are a core pillar of our organization. As a small staff of five, we truly would not be able to carry out any of the programming or events we have without them! One of the biggest reasons I love my job is because I get to interact with these amazing folks who decide to dedicate their time to our organization. They are passionate, kind, and talented people who make my job fun when I get to form lasting relationships with them. We truly are a family of volunteers.

During the pandemic, our volunteers had to mold along with us, as our programming shifted and changed, as we navigated COVID safety procedures. Despite these abrupt changes, our volunteers continued to assist us, and adjusted easily to the new changes. Their dedication to us, despite whatever challenges we may face, is something I am forever grateful for. It's an honor for me to lead, and work alongside, these amazing individuals. With that being said, I think I can speak for our whole team when I say, 'Thank you SO much, volunteers!! We appreciate you more than you know!!'"

*Ariel Stone, Volunteer & Outreach Manager*

**1096**  
Volunteer  
Hours!

**102**  
Volunteers!

**55**  
Recurring  
Volunteers!

### **Shade Tree Workshop & 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!*

### **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.*

# VOLUNTEERS

## Volunteers in Action



# VOLUNTEERS

## A Word from Our 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, Reynolds, Certified Arborist*

"Why do I give to Trees Matter?"

Trees are the sentinels of life, infinitely generous with their shade, what would our city be like without them? Everywhere I see heartbreaking disregard for the importance of trees in our environment. But for me, they are my own family, my mother, sister, and child. That is how I care for them. I am an artist, a painter of trees, and at the root of my soul, I am a Druid."

*-Jo-Ann Lowney (pictured top third photo)*

"I have been volunteering with Trees Matter for over two years. Trees Matter is a phenomenal organization that has an inspiring purpose and a passionate staff. Each event is well organized and fun. I enjoy interacting with the other volunteers and the folks who come to pick up their trees. I have learned a lot trees and how to take care of them. I look forward to the posts about urban food forests. Volunteering with Trees Matter feeds my soul, connects me to my community, and allows me to give back."

*- Dlorah Conover*

I support Trees Matter because I believe in their mission and what they do to support trees in this valley. Trees are one of our most important assets in so many ways. Thanks to everyone at Trees Matter for your dedication and heart!

*- Jason Coghill, Certified Arborist (pictured bottom right photo)*

"Almost 6 years ago when I first began volunteering, I was greeted with such amazing and passionate individuals who not only gave their time to the organization, but also their volunteers. Their passion to connect the environment and community is a true example of working together for a better future. Phoenix, and around the Valley would not be the same without all the hard work and dedication that the team does to inspire a more natural cooling system in the desert. I had the privilege of interning with them my senior year, I learned that even the smallest actions such as measuring the width of a tree trunk adds a significant impact to the goals of the organization. I've met amazing individuals and even met another volunteer who became a lifetime friend! I'm glad to be a part of the change Trees Matter is doing and I can't wait to see what's yet to come."

*-Itzajani Razo*

"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*

"I have lived in Phoenix since 1975, and have deep connections and care about the community. The more trees we have, the better it is for the environment and our emotional health. I want to see this community continue to be livable. Trees Matter is as an opportunity to work with enthusiastic folks to improve the life we have here in the valley. For me, it is an avenue to contribute to my community. I continue to be remain involved through personal gratification, teaching others about trees, and becoming involved with Trees Matter."

*-Cherie Howe*

# FY2021 FINANCES

## EXPENSES



Programs: **\$326,940**  
Management & General: **\$42,588**  
Development: **\$10,972**



86% Programs



11% Management & General



3% Development



95% Earned Income



12% Contributions



.07% Interest Income



0% Special Events

## REVENUE



Earned Income: **\$328,369**  
Contributions & Grants: **\$45,235**  
Interest Income: **\$270**  
Special Events: **\$0**



### Note from Executive Director, Aimee Esposito:

"As Executive Director of a small nonprofit, a key tenet of my responsibility is to maintain and grow Trees Matter's financials so our organization can continue to create impact through our mission to inspire and promote increased tree canopy. This year we not only grew our budget and revenue but we continued to slowly diversify our revenue streams. Our donor and grant funding increased thanks to generous donations from our monthly members, donors, and grant makers who trusted Trees Matter to utilize their investment to increase our programming. We did increase our programming, which you can see in increased programming expense, about 1.5 % percentage and a little over \$60,000 more than last fiscal year. One revenue stream we did not have this year is special events, this is due the pandemic and our priority for safety during this time. As we move into the future we hope to continue to increase our programming expenses, fundraising efforts, and diversity revenue streams. Thanks to our individual donors, members, grant makers, and business partners we are more diverse than we ever have been!"

# FY2021 FINANCES

## Monthly Donors

Stephanie Adams  
Mario Aniles  
Joe Barba  
Alex Benchimol  
Nancy Bennett  
Andrew Bernier  
Jane Burtnett  
Jason Coghill  
Kathy Coleman  
Bunny (Ruth) Davis  
Shirley Dieckerman  
Jocelyn Dustan  
Joel Edman  
Aimee & Geoff Esposito  
Heather Franek  
Lorena Gloria  
Tanya Hughes  
Andrew Knochel  
Jo-Ann Lowney  
Lora Martens  
Eric McIntosh  
Bill McLain

## 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. Giving back to your community is an important civic duty I take personally and seriously. The many things that Trees Matter do in and for the community is why I give and continue to support.



*Tanya Hughes*

"This planet is a gift. Trees make this planet better for everyone that lives on it. I'm for that."



*Kraig Tolliver*

"After spending time working with the Trees Matter team as their Intern my eyes were opened to the true nature of the nonprofit world. A small team is often responsible for huge events and programs that create awesome benefits in the community. While my time has passed as an Intern, I am able to continue to support financially and with my time."



*Tanya Rincon*

## Monthly Donors

Cynthia Mercado  
Tabitha Myers  
Barry Nomann  
Ian O'Grady  
Janice Palmer  
Joseph Palomino  
Jarid Perrin  
Ashley Prevallet & Guillermo Mont  
Tanya Rincon  
Evan Roberts  
Nicole Rodriguez  
Rebekah Sanders  
Melanie Searle  
Rebecca Smith-Gross  
Steven Snyder  
Michele & Greg Spear  
Kraig Tolliver  
Nikki VanRy  
Linda & Larry Williamson  
William Woolery  
Laura Zgoda

# 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](http://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](http://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](http://Treesmatter.org/One-Time-Donation)

[Treesmatter.org/Monthly](http://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](http://Treesmatter.org/subscribe)



TREES  
MATTER

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