

PRIORITY RELEAF

A program of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri

Priority ReLeaf provides trees at no cost to underserved communities and schools in St. Louis City and County. The program is generously funded by corporate grants and private foundations.

In 2008, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri distributed 345 trees for 22 planting projects at financially-underserved schools, parks, municipalities, and not-for-profit properties. Since the program began in 1995, Forest ReLeaf has awarded over 5,000 trees through Priority ReLeaf for community plantings.

HISTORY

The Priority ReLeaf program was founded in 1996 to increase local community involvement in urban reforestation. The initial effort was called “Six for St. Louis,” and provided additional trees for six parks with planting needs in north, central, and south St. Louis. The Missouri Department of Conservation provided a challenge grant of \$24,000 for the effort, and the program overmatched the challenge by obtaining corporate donations and aldermanic allocations.



Volunteers dig in during a tree planting by the Friends of O'Fallon Park.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Forest ReLeaf's forestry programs manager works with eligible groups to recommend appropriate tree species and quantities of trees for particular planting sites. The program helps grant recipients assure quality control, the right kind of trees, and the assistance to get the tree planting off to a good start.

Grant recipients are required to file an application that includes a planting and maintenance plan, and they provide labor and supplies for the project as a “match” for the trees funded by donations. When corporations and foundations donate to the program, they have a visible, tangible record of their contribution to the community. Working together, this program fosters local pride, local management, and ownership of community trees.

