

Neighborhood Scrapbook

LOVING TREES ON THE U.W.S.



BY MELISSA ELSTEIN

A cross-section of the Upper West Side community gathered together earlier this month for the First Annual West 80s "Love Your Tree Day."

The group celebrated our urban street trees by removing litter, cultivating the soil, spreading mulch, planting, and adding "Pick Up the Dog Poop" signs in tree beds.

This first large-scale neighborhood tree cleanup and tree adoption outreach was preceded by a kick-off event at Goddard Riverside Community Center. Presentations on the importance, benefits and harms to urban street trees were made by Council Member Helen Rosenthal, Cheryl Blaylock (Trees NY), Caroline Bragdon (NYC Department of Health's rat expert), Jaclyn Shanley (NYC Parks Depart-

ment and 2015 NYC Trees Census), Elizabeth Ewell (Goddard Greenkeepers), Stephan Russo (Goddard Riverside), and myself.

The mayor's office, in conjunction with Million Trees, has been planting hundreds of thousands of trees in the five boroughs to increase the benefits to city communities that trees bring: cleaning the air, reducing asthma rates, cooling the city (combatting heat island effect), reducing energy costs, providing habitats for wildlife, enhancing neighborhood aesthetics, increasing property values and business sales, reducing crime, and reducing storm water run-off that adds untreated sewage and wastewater into our rivers during storms due to NYC's combined sewage system infrastructure.

Sponsors included CCM Helen Rosenthal, Community Board 7, Goddard Riverside Center/ Greenkeepers, NYC Department of Health, NYC Parks, The Doe Fund, Broadway Mall Association, Curb Allure tree guards, Trees NY, West 80s Neighborhood Association, West Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, 20th and 24th Precincts, NYPD Explorers, Beacon Paint & Hardware, Lowe's Home Improvement, Urban Garden Center, Georgia & Aliou's Café, Classic Business Designs, and 85 Copy Center.

Melissa Elstein is secretary and founding member of the West 80s Neighborhood Association - an all-volunteer, non-profit community group. www.west80s.org



Share your news and what's going on in your life.
Go to westsidespirit.com and click on submit a press release or announcement.