

Canadian Tree Fund Final Grant Report

CTF - Jack Kimmel Grant 2023	GV - Canopy for Community
Start Date: January 1, 2023	End Date: December 31, 2023

Overview

In 2023, Green Venture was awarded partial funding from the Jack Kimmel Grant through the Canadian Tree Fund to enhance the Canopy for Community program. The main goals of this project were to:

1. Learn: Promote understanding of urban forest challenges and potential solutions via educational initiatives and outreach programs, including the Youth Stewardship Program and YouthQuake, Communi-Tree Campaign, and Urban Forest Workshops at schools
2. Grow: Supply tools and support for individuals looking to contribute to the expansion of Hamilton's urban forest by offering free Native Tree Starting Kits.
3. Plant: Enhance Hamilton's urban tree coverage through innovative methods like Mini Forest Plantings, ensuring equitable access to nature with the Hamilton Tree Equity Project, and collaborating with City of Hamilton Forestry Section for additional planting and stewardship endeavors.

The outcomes of the Canopy for Community program for the year 2023 are as follows:

Project Activity	Audience	Participants	Project Goal(s)
Youth Stewardship and Professional Skills Program and YouthQuake	Grade 11/12	41	Learn
Tree Starting Kits	All ages	64	Grow
Mini Forest Installed (9)	All ages	110	Plant
Mini Forest at Home Program Webinar	All ages	11	Learn
Urban Forest Workshops at Schools	Youth (elementary and highschool schools)	159	Plant, Learn
School Tree Planting	Youth (elementary, highschool schools, and College)	239	Plant

CityHousing Tenant Tree Plantings	CityHousing Hamilton Tenants	10	Learn, Grow, and Plant
Tree Stewardship	Youth (high school students)	145	Plant
Communi-TREE and Invasive Species Awareness Campaign	All ages	550	Learn, Plant
Total Participants in Tree Programming at Green Venture (2023)			1329

The following will breakdown each project activity, the goals, outcomes and next steps under Green Venture's Canopy for Community program.

Youth Stewardship and Professional Skills Program

This past summer, 14 grade 11 and 12 students were enrolled in the Youth Stewardship and Professional Skills program to learn about Hamilton's ecosystem, with a focus on urban forestry. Over the course of several weeks, these students learned about urban forestry while gaining fundamental skills to develop and conduct their own stewardship projects. Students presented their stewardship projects at the end of the semester and earned community service hours for their efforts. This past fall, 27 grade 11 and 12 students enrolled in our bi-weekly YouthQuake program focused on invasive species removal and litter cleanup in local woodlands. Green Venture continues to provide this program to students in grades 11 / 12 for different environmental and sustainable subjects.

Tree Starting Kits

As part of the Hamilton Seedy Saturday event that took place on February 4, 2023, we distributed a total of 65 tree starting kits to interested community members and residents selected to install mini forests in urban backyards. These kits included acorns or seeds, soil, a growing pot, and detailed instructions for successful growth. Green Venture sent surveys and check-in emails to ensure the seedlings were potted and planted correctly. This collaborative effort helped our community learn about native trees and growing trees from seeds.

Mini Forest Installs

Over the course of this year, six new mini forests were planted in Dundas as part of the Mini Forest Kit Program and three new mini forests were planted at Windermere Basin Park as a community tree planting event. Mini forests will help sequester carbon, manage stormwater and improve the air quality of the locale where they are planted. Over 115 volunteers from the local community participated in both the mini forest kit plantings and community tree planting with 1141 native trees and shrubs planted across Hamilton.

Mini Forest at Home Program Guidebook and Webinar

During this past winter, our team developed an educational webinar and guidebook for participants selected for the mini forest at home pilot program, extending our outreach to involve the broader community through a series of informative workshops, social media updates, and blog posts dedicated to the concept of mini forests. These workshops served as educational opportunities, allowing participants to deepen their knowledge and understanding of mini forest planting techniques and urban forestry.

Urban Forest Workshops at Schools

Green Venture also visited four different schools and engaged with 159 students from elementary, highschool, and college. Teaching youth about urban forestry in schools is essential to engage students in learning about the crucial role these green spaces play in mitigating climate change, improving air and water quality, and providing habitat for wildlife. Equipping the next generation with knowledge about urban forestry empowers them to actively participate in creating and sustaining healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable cities.

School Tree Plantings

Planting native trees in schools is a valuable endeavor with multiple benefits. It not only contributes to the aesthetic appeal of the school grounds but also serves as an engaging educational tool. Students can learn about local ecosystems, biodiversity, and the importance of native species in supporting regional wildlife. Planting native trees instills a sense of environmental responsibility and connection to nature in students. It fosters a sense of pride in contributing to a sustainable future and empowers the younger generation to be stewards of the environment. Overall, the act of planting native trees in schools is an investment in both a healthier environment and well-rounded, environmentally conscious individuals. 343 native trees and shrubs were planted between May and October of this year, with a total of 239 students engaged and helping plant these native trees.

CityHousing Tenant Tree Plantings

This past fall, the summary of the Hamilton Tree Equity Report was released, providing an extensive overview of the community-centered tree inventory conducted during the summer and fall of 2022, presenting findings from CityHousing Hamilton tenant surveys, and offering recommendations for tree planting locations. Subsequently, three CityHousing Hamilton properties were chosen as designated planting sites, where a total of 10 native caliper-sized trees were planted across these properties. To promote the longevity of these trees, Tree Care Teams have been formed at each location, comprising volunteers from each property who are committed to sustaining and caring for these trees over time.

Tree Stewardship

In support of the ongoing expansion of Hamilton's urban forest, our teams revisited four former tree planting locations, nurturing a total of 2050 trees with the assistance of 145 volunteers, contributing more than 290 hours. Stewardship activities encompassed weeding and mulching to facilitate the optimal growth of existing trees. In certain areas, we introduced new trees to replace those that didn't thrive. These initiatives were promoted through Green Venture's social media platforms, while outreach was targeted towards high school students in collaboration with

school boards and Hamilton youth organizations, offering them an opportunity to accumulate community service hours.

Communi-TREE + Invasive Species Awareness Week

To celebrate Invasive Species Awareness Week in February and National Forest Week in September, Green Venture hosted two week-long social media campaigns including stewardship opportunities, contests and educational resources. Topics and themes ranged from the benefits of trees, tree equity, invasive plants and insects, and innovative forestry. Over the course of the campaign, 550 participants were engaged online and in person. On National Forest Day, we hosted one of our stewardship events at Morton Park, with over 8 volunteer hours dedicated to removing 10 bags worth of invasive plant species.

Summary

The following links showcase some of the work completed under this project:

- [Canopy for Community](#)
- [Tree Starting Kits](#)
- [Mini Forest at Home Webinar](#)
- [How to Transplant Your Seedlings](#)
- [Hamilton Tree Equity 2023 Summary Report](#)