

# Keeping Durham beautiful, 1,000 trees at a time



Planting trees in Durham Central Park, Oscar Guerra volunteers at Keep Durham Beautiful's Arbor Day event on March 2 (Photo by Caroline Bowyer).

## Caroline Bowyer

Not only are trees visually appealing, they are important for quality of life. That's why Keep Durham Beautiful decided to plant 1,000 trees across Durham.

An affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, the organization has been around since 2004, holding strong partnerships with the City of Durham and Durham County.

Tania Dautlick has been the executive director at Keep Durham Beautiful for six years. Dautlick said aside from the joy of seeing trees, there are health and environmental benefits to planting them.

"Trees lower temperatures on streets, sidewalks and homes," she said. "Trees buffer noise from roads, improve roadside appearance and also provide crucial habitat and food for wildlife. Trees filter particulates from the air and convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. They filter stormwater and reduce erosion into creeks."

According to Dautlick, Keep Durham Beautiful chose the number 1,000 because "This is approximately the number of trees we need to plant each year in order to keep up with the trees our city is losing due to natural aging and competition from urban infrastructure."

It took about three months for Keep Durham Beautiful to reach its goal. The 1,000<sup>th</sup> tree was planted on Feb. 24 in Walltown. Dautlick said Keep Durham Beautiful was able to reach its goal with

the help of donors and volunteers.

"Volunteers were the main resource in planting the trees," she said. "We also had a wonderful core group of 'Tree Keepers' who learned the nuances of tree planting and took leadership at each volunteer event to help other volunteers learn to plant trees."

## Assistance from the community

Leaf and Limb is an organization in Raleigh that volunteers with many community organizations, including Keep Durham Beautiful. Marketing Manager Anna Campbell said Leaf and Limb's Project Pando allows them to do this.

"All of our employees volunteer the first Friday of every month as part of our Project Pando program," said Campbell. "Each employee also shares their champion cause with us, and that helps guide us in selecting organizations to support throughout the year."

Leaf and Limb employee Katie Rose chose Keep Durham Beautiful as her champion cause.

"Keep Durham Beautiful is an outstanding organization to work with, and we have really enjoyed being a part of giving back to Durham, a community we love," Rose said.

In an effort to support Keep Durham Beautiful's goal, Leaf and Limb helped plant trees and donated mulch.

"We volunteered for many events,

including their Arbor Day event where we planted over 30 large trees in Durham's Central Park," Rose said, adding that Leaf and Limb feels "absolutely amazing" about helping Keep Durham Beautiful accomplish this goal.

"Like many places in North Carolina, Durham is rapidly losing its tree canopy due to development and trees that were planted in the 1930s naturally aging out," she said. "Also, like many major cities in the United States, Durham has a socially inequitable distribution of trees, where low resource neighborhoods do not have trees and high-income neighborhoods do. Planting 1,000 trees is the first step in ensuring that all Durham's citizens get to enjoy the health, wealth and happiness trees bring now and into the future."

## Future goals

Dautlick said she hopes Keep Durham Beautiful will have a similar initiative in the future.

"We may not always plant the same number of trees, but we will always share our resources and our goals in working with partners and volunteers to green the Durham community," Dautlick said.

Keep Durham Beautiful plans to increase its network of supporters and volunteers in order to continue making a positive impact on the Durham community.