



# SPRUCE UP AUSTIN, Inc.

329 North Main Street • Suite 102 • Austin, MN 55912

www.spruceupaustin.org

507.437-4561

## Spruce Up Austin 2012 Activity Summary

Spruce Up Austin completed its 23rd year of existence in 2012. Due to the severe dry weather, projects were limited in size and numbers. A dedicated board, terrific support by other volunteers, an excellent working relationship with businesses and the Austin Parks and Forestry Department continue as strengths of Spruce Up Austin.

Spruce Up Austin was directly involved in projects where more than \$2104 was spent. When the volunteer time associated with these projects is taken into account, and the internal work of the Austin Parks and Forestry Department, the value to the community amounts to more than \$3226. During the 23 - year history of our organization, the total value to our community exceeds \$458,621. Fourteen trees and spruce were planted during 2012, bringing the 23 - year total to 2,603.

Other activities included the 18th Annual Arbor Day Edition, four Yard of the Month winners, the garden tour, a public seminar, and monthly articles in the Austin Daily Herald.

### **Officers and board members for 2012 with years of service are as follows:**

President – Mike Ruzek - 23

Vice President – Gretchen Ramlo - 17

Treasurer – Kathy Borland – 10

Secretary – Melanie Faust – 7

Penny Bartesch – 2

Jan Chuick – 13

Terry Fox – 2

Tom Graff – 1

Kelly Lady – 11

Gordon Larson - 2

Bill McLain - 2

Bonnie Mogen - 16

Harlan Nelson – 7

Howard Nepp – 8

Jack Sherman – 22

Chris Stepp - 2

Darlene Thaisen – 17

Julie Thomsen – 6

Kim Underwood - 4

### Mission Statement

Spruce Up Austin, Inc. is established for the purpose of coordinating various resources to initiate, establish and maintain beautification projects in the Austin area with a strong emphasis on planting trees. Spruce Up Austin, Inc. will use these projects to promote a greater environmental awareness within the Austin community, to encourage citizens to improve their property and to enhance a positive image for the City of Austin. Spruce Up Austin, Inc. will also participate in various activities that will educate the Austin community on plants and landscape concepts.





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## Spruce Up Austin 2012 Activities & Accomplishments

### Projects

- I. Mr. I.J. Holton passed away April 11, 2012. In front of Mr. Holton's house is a traffic island that is landscaped and was maintained by him for many years. He had donated to SUA as well as many other organizations in the city. SUA decided to spruce up the island by planting a tree in honor of Mr. Holton and adding other plants and mulch. The project turned out to be a neighborhood gathering along with SUA board members and Mr. Holton's daughter Ann and son Brooks. There were 24 people attending. When the project was done the Holton family provided refreshments. Total cost was \$376.90 and the value to the community of \$660.
  
- II. Honorary Trees – For 2012 there was eleven honorary trees purchased by families and organizations. SUA purchased three other trees to honor other individuals who have helped SUA in its mission. The total cost for 14 trees was \$1901 and the value to the community is \$2566.

<b>HONORED</b>	<b>TREE TYPE</b>	<b>PARK</b>
1. Mike Ruzek	Canada Red Flowering Cherry	Austin High School
2. Peter Lommen	Australian Pine Spruce	Morning Lions
3. Leontine & Faber McNalley	Canada Red Flowering Cherry	Galloway
4. Eugene Anderson	Red Bud	Bandshell
5. Everett Hanson	Red Bud	Orchard Creek
6. Tyler Brady	Autumn Blaze Maple	Packer Arena
7. Zara Svobody - Czech Lodge 38	River Birch	Honor Guard
8. Kathryn Andressen	Autumn Blaze Maple	Hormel Nature Center
9. Archie Baley	Red Maple	Lafayette East
10. Fred Creighton	Japanese Lilac	Rotary
11. Sara & Warren Osboe-Palensky	Catalpa	Bandshell
12. Tom Graff	Oak	Lafayette East
13. I.J. Holton	Diablo Nine Bark	22nd St. S.W.
14. Sara Fachtelkotter	Catalpa	13th Ave & 7th St S.E.

- III. Award – In August SUA was honored by the Mower County Fair Board. They presented SUA the Outstanding Service Organization Award. This recognized the work of SUA for 23 years within the city of Austin. The Fair Board became more familiar with SUA on a project in 2011 where 41 large trees were planted on the fairgrounds. This was a rare project where the value to the community far exceeded the actual cost by over 5 times!



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## Spruce Up Austin 2012 Activities & Accomplishments

### Projects continued

- IV. The number of projects for 2012 was limited compared to other years due to the severe dry conditions. Multiple resources partnered to water trees that had been planted in the past two years. Spring of 2013 will show how successful these dedicated efforts will be.
  
- V. The City of Austin received a grant from the Minnesota Green Corps to do a tree inventory on public land within the city. This was completed in 2012 and the results will have an impact on Future SUA projects. SUA and the Austin Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department need to plant more varieties of trees and reduce the numbers of other varieties that have been planted in the past.

### PR and Education

Yard Of The Month - For eleven years we have celebrated the Yard Of The Month. We continue to find people whose pride in their yard earns them the coveted Spruce Up Austin Yard of the Month award. Winners of the 2012 Yard of the Month were:

June – 2206 7th Ave NW, Mark and Barb Kanne

July – 2009 5th Ave SE, Roger Reller

August – 1806 4th Ave SW, Brian and Nancy Bawek

September – 1010 8th Ave NW, Steve Van Houten

Spring Seminar - On May 17th SUA sponsored a free seminar at Austin Public Library titled “Plant the Best Trees plus Austin Tree Inventory Results”. Our speaker was Sara Fachtelkotter, MN GreenCorps Intern. Sara gave a great talk beginning with Tree Inventory results and ending with good information on choosing the best tree including purpose, full grown size, and soil conditions. Attendance was approximately 33 people. All enjoyed the information shared.

Arbor Day Tab – Spruce Up Austin partnered with the Austin Daily Herald for the 18th Annual Arbor Day Edition. The tab focused on our partnership with Austin Parks and Recreation, and included stories from our board members. SUA received a \$633 donation from the Austin Daily Herald, to be used for Spruce Up Austin projects. We have also continued contributing monthly articles in the Austin Daily Herald on various tree topics and SUA activities.



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## PR and Education continued

Garden Tour - This annual fundraising event was held Saturday June 23. To make the event more appealing, special features were added at each home. A light rain fell throughout the day but it didn't stop us from raising \$1548 to be used for various SUA projects. The gardens and features in this year's tour are listed here -

Mike and Barb Ruzek, 1307 8th Ave NW, Creative Ideas Contest

Jeffrey and Jeanne Thatcher, 2206 9th Pl SW, and Bob and Valerie Jessen, 2204 9th Place SW, Live Garden-Inspired Painting by Kay Middlebrook

Peter and Lynn Cunningham, 2715 15th Ave NW, Perennial Sale

Randy and Wendy Kramer, 205 24th St NW, Live Music performed by Jim Rudd and Company

Katie Ulwelling, 710 4th Ave NE, Handmade jewelry and Garden Hat sales.

RE-fest - SUA again participated in this event. A Celebration of Green Living and Clean Energy. This year we manned our own booth and shared information about our organization. The booth was free to us because we provided a workshop titled "Trees Love To Be Planted - Correctly." Mike Ruzek performed the workshop on the RE-fest Solar Stage while a nice sized crowd watched and learned.

## Resource Development

A thankful appreciation goes to our 2012 financial supporters. They are the Austin Daily Herald, the Austin Utilities, one anonymous donor, and those who participated in the Spruce Up Austin Honorary Tree Program.

## Maintenance

We started out this year in April with some of our members getting involved with Community Pride Day "Cleaning up Austin". Throughout the year our maintenance groups kept watch over their areas and pruned, mulched and clipped when needed. All maintenance groups were encouraged to take pictures every couple of years for histories sake. It was a VERY dry year, so we all were also encouraged to water-water-water our project as much as possible. We once again partnered with Cornerstone Church for Earth Day in October...because of the dry year we did not plant trees as usual, general maintenance was done and trash was picked up. We had four teams that participated. It is our hope that we get some moisture so we can get on with planting trees!!!



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## Nominating Committee

The most important part to the success of SUA is the dedicated long term board members. Two board members that have served for many years are Jack Sherman (22 years) and Darlene Thaisen (17 Years). They are leaving the SUA board along with Terry Fox, Tom Graff, and Julie Thomsen. They represent 48 years of service to SUA and we thank them for all that they have done to improve the landscape of our community.

The new SUA board members for 2013-2014 are Greta Anderson, Rolando Benitez, Pam Schmidt, and Renee Wangen. Greta and Renee have helped with SUA projects for many years.

The new officers for 2013-2014 are President - Gretchen Ramlo, Vice-President - Chris Stepp, Secretary - Melanie Faust, and Treasurer - Kathy Borland. The leadership of these and past officers is appreciated.

Ex-officio board members that will continue are Lee Bonorden, Bill Kinney, and Bonnie Rietz. Jerry Adwell is replaced by Jack Sherman and Craig Hoium is replaced by Julie Thomsen. All of these volunteers have served on the SUA board at one time and have continued to be friends of the SUA mission. Their contributions to the success of SUA is appreciated.

## Appreciation

Spruce Up Austin gives our continued thanks to Austin Parks and Recreation department, our local nurseries for their cooperation, and our various donors. The greatest asset of SUA is its board members' dedication and length of service. SUA has an eighteen member board with the average years of service being over 9.5 years. A special thanks to the board for their dedication, good humor, and hard work throughout the years.