

# Trees get second chance at new location thanks to ReLeaf effort

By Ginger Livingston  
The Daily Reflector  
Sunday, March 31, 2019

Development brings growth but it also creates losses, especially when it concerns trees.

Trees that faced demolition due to pending construction of a new student housing complex got a second life when they were moved to Greenville Housing Authority's Moyewood neighborhood as part of the annual Community Tree Day held Saturday.

More than 60 volunteers joined with ReLeaf volunteers and staff from Greenville's Public Works Department and planted about 100 trees in the neighborhood off South Memorial Drive and West Fifth Street.

The mass tree planting effort, which started in 2011, is designed to improve the community's appearance and promote greater understanding about the importance of a tree canopy in urban settings.

This year's event had an added urgency because 17 trees were transplanted from a former Community Tree Day neighborhood that is being demolished so a student housing complex can be built.

Five years ago more than 80 trees— among them English oaks, crepe myrtle and maples — were planted in the Glen Arthur neighborhood, which is bordered by Charles Boulevard and 14th Street. ReLeaf sprang into action when its members learned about development.

"We rescued the trees we could," said Hunt McKinnon, ReLeaf's president. "The large trees are going to be removed, there is nothing we can do about that." However, the trees ReLeaf planted were about 12 feet tall and could still be moved, a task carried out by Stephen Jones Landscape Management.

"It would have cost the community those trees so we are really happy we were able to reinvest them here (at Moyewood)," McKinnon said.

Using a tree spade, Jones preserved the root structure of the individual trees.

"Most of the trees can survive without any issue because they'll have enough of the roots so they should recover," Jones said

"In time those trees will give good color and canopy to the sites where they'll be going," McKinnon said.

Because larger equipment was needed to dig holes and lift the transplanted trees, they were not planted while the volunteers were present, said Kevin Heifferon, assistant director of public works.

"As a growing city, we are losing some trees to development and road construction. It's important to plant back where we can, where we have area and room," Heifferon said.

"(Glen Arthur) makes us more aware of future development and (we) try to be as predictive as we can," Heifferon said. "We also know there are some things out of our control. We'll do our best to try to save trees and move them when we can. I think we've done a really good job estimating those areas, but the way Greenville is growing, I think all bets are off in a lot of ways."

Moyewood's residents were thrilled to be the recipients of the Glen Arthur trees and the 80 others the volunteers planted.

"We need more greenery. That's more oxygen, clearer air," said Yolanda Keyes, president of Moyewood's resident association. "It will enhance the community and make it more beautiful.

"We need more trees out here because some of the trees died and they had to take them out," said Keyes, who has lived in Moyewood for 10 years. One of those dead trees was in the yard of her building. A new tree was going and she was hoping for a crepe myrtle.

"They are beautiful when they bloom," she said.

Keyes joined with members of Ayden-Grifton Cub Scouts Pack 34 to plant trees.

Zachery Taylor, 8, along with his cousin, Giovanni Kelly, 8, and friend, Lilly Varnadoe, shoveled dirt around one newly planted tree while 3-year-old Dylan Taylor tried to shift a bag of mulch.

Family friends participated in the event last year and it seemed like a good event to for the children.

"We need trees in order to survive. The more we can plant, the better," said Kimberly Taylor, one of the pack's parent volunteers.

Across the street, four members of Boys to Kings Mentoring Alliance and B2K Scout Pack 611 of Kinston worked together to water a newly planted tree.

"This represents a really great community collaborative effort ... It really just improves the look with trees and landscaping in an area we travel so much," said Wayman Williams, Greenville Housing Authority executive director. "This is part of what we see as an overall effort to improve the appearance of our communities."

*Contact Ginger Livingston at [glivingston@reflector.com](mailto:glivingston@reflector.com) or 252-329-9570.*