

## Sun Valley Introduces Sustainable Street

### TreePeople celebrates multi-year, multi-partner effort

by Jason Schmidt, Natural Urban Systems Group Program Associate



These before and after photos show some of the Northeast San Fernando Valley's neighborhood retrofit on Elmer Avenue. Improvements include curbs and gutters, parkway bioswales and native trees.

Photos by (l-r) Edward Belden, Laurie Kaufman, Edward Belden

In hot, dry Sun Valley, the Elmer Avenue neighborhood recently underwent a bold transformation by becoming a model of sustainability for the City of Los Angeles. Through a variety of rainwater harvesting techniques, drought-tolerant landscaping and native trees, Elmer Avenue reestablished a connection with the Los Angeles River watershed in a way that no other neighborhood has.

This neighborhood now catches, filters and reuses rain and stormwater from a 40-acre upstream area. The benefits include replenishing the local groundwater supply, increasing permeable surfaces, limiting the use of potable water for outdoor irrigation and increasing wildlife habitat and access to greenspace.

"The residents of Elmer Avenue are now watershed managers," says Rebecca Drayse, Director of TreePeople's Natural Urban Systems Group. "Their properties and the street are literally interconnected – mimicking the natural hydrology of the Los Angeles River watershed that's been so greatly impacted by development for the past century. But more than that, the residents have also experienced an increased sense of community and place as they've gathered together to plant trees and care for their new landscape."

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Rebecca Drayse, Director of TreePeople's  
Natural Urban Systems Group

Elmer Avenue has become the embodiment of a Functioning Community Forest: TreePeople's vision for a sustainable L.A. It's a neighborhood that brings value to its environment and community by cleaning the air, capturing the water, healing the soil, and reducing its impact on the surrounding landscape. It's a neighborhood that is adaptive and resilient to climatic extremes, droughts and floods, and also enhances the quality of life for residents.

The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council managed the transformation of Elmer Avenue and encouraged an innovative partnership between non-governmental organizations like TreePeople and public agencies. "TreePeople has been an essential partner in Elmer Avenue's multi-year research and demonstration project," says Nancy Steele, Executive Director of the Los Angeles

and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council. The Council is a collaborative center for watershed research and analysis focusing on the watersheds of the Los Angeles Basin.

Elmer Avenue also had support from many federal, state, regional, and local partners. **For more information visit [www.lasgrwc.org](http://www.lasgrwc.org) and click on Programs & Projects.**

## Dear Friends,

Photo by Melinda Kelley



In the past couple of years, our community has been buffeted by shortages of water, due to drought, and of money, due to economic crisis.

Thankfully, TreePeople has survived, and thrived, through both.

Carrying us through the water shortage has been our 216,000-gallon rainwater cistern in Coldwater Canyon Park, demonstrating that Los Angeles can meet much of its water needs by harvesting rainfall for the benefit of our environment, economy and society. Our cistern, completely filled from winter rains for the past two years, has provided nearly all the landscape needs for four acres of our headquarters.

Carrying us through the financial drought has been the generosity of our donors and partners. You have enabled TreePeople to intensify our efforts to meet the urgent needs of our community. In the past two years, that has meant responding to massive fires in our local mountains, alleviating hunger by expanding our Fruit Tree program, and responding to the long-term water crisis by creating, demonstrating, and implementing new nature-based solutions. As always, we have continued to support people planting and caring for the community forest in some of most tree-impooverished areas in our region.

While facing continuing water and economic urgencies, TreePeople is focusing on where we are needed most and where we can make the most difference.

To keep posted, follow my blog (see below).

Thank you for ensuring that we are here, ready, and available to lend a helping hand.

Andy Lipkis  
*TreePeople Founder & President*

More at [www.treepeople.org/andy-lipkis/blog](http://www.treepeople.org/andy-lipkis/blog) and on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/AndyLipkis](http://www.twitter.com/AndyLipkis).

## Upcoming Events for July and August

*TreePeople volunteers and staff support many events each month.*

*Below is a summary of our upcoming activities. To receive our monthly e-newsletter, or for a complete calendar listing and to register, please visit [www.treepeople.org/calendar](http://www.treepeople.org/calendar).*



### MEMBER BENEFIT

Members receive 10% off full-priced retail items from Cisco Home at Brentwood, La Brea and Pasadena locations.

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TreePeople is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization

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#### TreePeople's Mission

TreePeople is a nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world.

10TH ANNIVERSARY

## Once Upon a Canyon Night

Photo by Juan Villegas

Volunteers both on and off stage have had a tremendous impact on the success of the summer series.

Friday, July 16 is opening night of the 10th season for *Once Upon a Canyon Night*, TreePeople's unique summer series of entertainment. The series is presented in the beautiful S. Mark Taper Foundation Amphitheatre at TreePeople's Coldwater Canyon Park headquarters.

This intimate venue, "in the woods and under the stars," has been the summer home of the Actors Conservatory Ensemble (ACE) since the amphitheatre was built in 1998 thanks to the leadership of TreePeople Board Member Jim Hardie.

Through the years, TreePeople and ACE have co-offered dozens of weekends of entertainment including play readings, concerts, family and film nights, comedy and more. Thousands have enjoyed the seasonal entertainment and helped raise more than \$150,000 for TreePeople and the park, largely through the work of volunteers both on stage and off.

Performers donating their time have included Emmy and Tony winners and Oscar nominees – ranging from Paula Poundstone and Ben McKenzie ("The O.C." and "Southland") to Charles Durning, Robert Forster, Robert Guillaume, Mariette Hartley, Jordana Spiro ("My Boys") and the late Robert Culp. Concerts have included the ever-popular Mark Copeland & His Big Band, contemporary Jazz pianist Lao Tizer, vocalist Billy Valentine, I See Hawks in LA, Tom Freund & Friends, and Allan Vogel.

"Our amphitheatre is an intimate Hollywood Bowl," says TreePeople Founder and President Andy Lipkis. "Bring your blanket and picnic basket, then sit back and listen to music or a theatrical reading. It's the best of L.A. in the canyons on a warm summer night."

We also host Sunday afternoon classes as part of the summer series, including yoga, photography and more. We hope you'll join us this year! **For a full schedule, visit [www.treepeople.org/once-upon-canyon-night](http://www.treepeople.org/once-upon-canyon-night).**

## Welcome, New Board Members

**JIMMY CHO** is Director of Customer Communications, Research and Web Strategy for Sempra Energy, home to the Southern California Gas Company and San Diego Gas & Electric. He earned a B.S. in Geology from Brown University, an M.S. in Civil Engineering from Stanford University, and an Executive Management certificate from UCLA's Anderson School of Management.

**BRENT COHEN** is the President/COO and Co-Founder at Circle-Builder Software, providing online social networks for faith-based groups. Brent has led a number of digital technology and communications companies including the new media unit at Grey Advertising, Digital Evolution, Entertainment Asylum/AOL and Move.com before starting eHobbies.com in 1999. He also taught Advanced Marketing Strategies for Nonprofits at the American Jewish University of Los Angeles.

**TED FLANIGAN** is the President of EcoMotion Inc., a Southern California-based energy and environmental consulting firm that fosters sustainable energy development. For the past 25 years, Flanigan has advocated for smart and responsible energy management, working within two major electric utilities, the New York Power Authority and Los Angeles Department of Water & Power. Flanigan and EcoMotion are currently implementing programs that include Solar Santa Monica and Anaheim's Sunpower for Schools.

**PETER SINSHEIMER, Ph.D.** is the Executive Director of the UCLA Law and Environmental Health Sustainable Technology & Policy Program. Dr. Sinsheimer earned a Ph.D. and M.A. in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles, an M.P.H. from San Diego State University, and a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. He served for 12 years as the Director of Occidental College's Pollution Prevention Center.

## Getting Things Done With TreePeople



Photo by Juan Villegas

AmeriCorps NCCC's Gold Team 1 takes a break from their work in the Santa Monica Mountains.

This spring, an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team played an indispensable role in our Santa Monica Mountains restoration efforts. AmeriCorps NCCC brings together a diverse group of youth for a year of team-based national service. TreePeople's team, Gold 1, and its nine members removed acres of invasive species, propagated thousands of local plant seeds, and lead hundreds of volunteers.

"Working with TreePeople has been great!" said team member Sophie Putka. "Sometimes it seems like there's so much more to do, but it feels amazing to look back and see the small accomplishments we made during our time with TreePeople." Big thanks to Gold Team 1 for "moving the needle" on our mountain restoration work!

## Thanks to Our Second-Quarter Donors!

For 37 years, TreePeople members have generously provided the foundation for our continuing programs. Membership makes a huge difference and we thank all our donors for their special gifts.

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 Zev Yaroslavsky



Photo by Matt Dayka

## TreePeople's 23rd Annual An Evening Under the Harvest Moon

*An Evening Under the Harvest Moon* will return to our beautiful location atop Coldwater Canyon Park on Saturday, October 2, 2010 from 5 to 9 p.m. This fabulous evening celebrates all we have accomplished this year through our committed volunteers, generous donors, corporate sponsors, civic leaders and friends who continue to inspire and energize TreePeople to help nature heal our cities.

For more information, please contact  
**Tracey Hughes, Sr. Manager Marketing Development at**  
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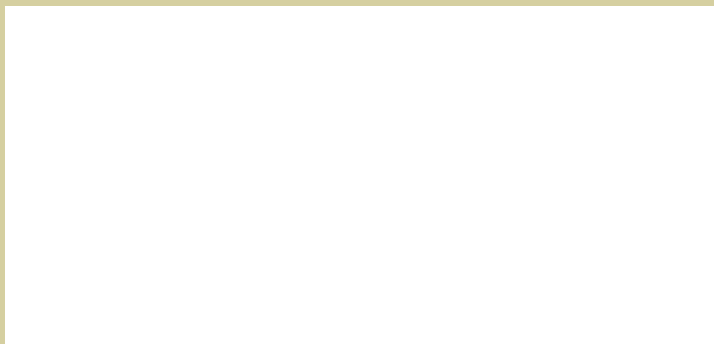


Photo by Michael Roberts

Save The Date: October 2, 2010  
**An Evening Under the Harvest Moon**

12601 Mulholland Drive  
 Beverly Hills, California 90210  
 Telephone (818) 753-4600  
 ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

