



GREENING our communities

through Live Green Toronto Grants



PROJECTS:

- **LEAF: Backyard Tree Planting Program**
- **BOLD: Leslieville / Riverdale Tree Planting and Tree Preservation Pilot Project**

At maturity, the hundreds of trees planted through the LEAF and BOLD projects will annually:

- Divert 10.5 million litres of storm water
- Sequester 254 tonnes of carbon
- Conserve 120,000 kWh of energy
- Reduce air pollution

For more information about LEAF, visit yourleaf.org or email info@yourleaf.org.

For more information about BOLD, visit leslievilletreeproject.com or email treeproject@srhc.com.

Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) and Beautification of Leslieville District (BOLD)

There are often many routes to the same destination. Two groups, Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) and Beautification of Leslieville District (BOLD), wanted to find new ways to plant trees in Toronto and engage community members in the process. Using different approaches, LEAF and BOLD increased Toronto's tree canopy.

LEAF is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and improving our urban forest by offering subsidized trees for residents' backyards. LEAF wanted to expand its successful Backyard Tree Planting Program and plant even more healthy trees in neighbourhoods across Toronto. Toronto Hydro and Ontario Power Generation helped promote the program.

BOLD's goal was to increase the tree canopy in the southeast Toronto neighbourhood of Leslieville and promote the City's front yard tree planting program. Volunteers were taught about trees and urban forests, the City's free tree program and social marketing techniques.



"We love the work you're doing! We'll contact you again in the fall as we'd like to purchase another tree for our backyard."

Peter, LEAF participant

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Both the LEAF and BOLD projects increased Toronto's tree canopy. Trees cool and clean the air, reduce soil erosion, improve storm water retention, reduce residential heating and cooling costs, and beautify our neighbourhoods. BOLD focused on areas identified as being vulnerable to heat and having poor air quality, based on research conducted by Toronto Public Health and the Toronto Environment Office.

More than 900 residents completed LEAF's pre-consultation questionnaire, 424 backyard consultations took place, and 582 trees and 956 shrubs were planted in one year, exceeding all of LEAF's goals.

Seventy-six BOLD volunteers, including 14 Chinese-speaking volunteers, canvassed more than 3,200 homes in Leslieville to introduce the City's free tree program. The City's Urban Forestry unit planted 276 new trees on residential properties, 253 on commercial and institutional properties, and another 200 trees were planted on social housing properties. In addition, LEAF planted another 48 trees for the BOLD project. A program called NeighbourWoods was developed through which 20 volunteers helped with tree stewardship, identification and inventory. BOLD placed signs at houses that had participated in the program, which helped spread the word. A similar technique was employed by LEAF.

LEAF conducted follow-up visits to assess the health of the trees and shrubs and give feedback to the homeowners. Ninety-two per cent of the trees were thriving. This high success rate is a testament to the support provided to participants.

LEAF: Backyard Tree Planting Program (2009 Capital Grant \$128,500)

BOLD: Leslieville / Riverdale Tree Planting and Tree Preservation Pilot Project (2010 Community Investment Program Grant \$23,900)

Challenges

BOLD found that many residents were concerned that tree roots would damage underground pipes. To address this barrier, BOLD widely distributed a City flyer that addresses the myths and facts about tree roots and pipe damage.



The programs promoted the planting of native and site-appropriate species and influenced future purchases made by participants.

What's next

Participants in LEAF's program were enthusiastic about native plant gardens. LEAF responded by introducing native garden kits comprised of native shrubs and perennials chosen to attract birds and butterflies, as well as sample garden plans and tips. In the long-term, LEAF plans to provide additional products and services to improve their revenue, and to seek multi-year funding from municipalities, utilities and corporations.

In Leslieville, BOLD—now called the Leslieville-Riverdale Tree Project—discovered that new home-owners are especially motivated to adopt a new tree, so they are considering methods of distributing welcome kits to new neighbours. A new website (leslievilletreeproject.com) provides information about tree planting programs and lessons learned from their initiative.

"It's wonderful to see the trees appearing on our street. Thank you for all your hard work."

BOLD participant