



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jackie Wedeking
319-640-0757

jwedeking@treesforever.org

The City of Cedar Rapids Will Vote on Whether to Invest in a New Youth Employment Program to Help Plant, Water and Care for Trees

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (Sept. 10, 2019)— At the city council meeting on September 10, Trees Forever is awaiting the approval of agenda item 34, which will start a youth employment program in Cedar Rapids.

Through Growing Futures, Trees Forever will employ and mentor teenagers and young adults as they plant, water and care for the city's trees with a focus on underserved neighborhoods.

"This is a great opportunity to foster growth for the next generation of young people and the next generation of trees, side-by-side," said Shannon Ramsay, Trees Forever CEO and Founding President.

Pending approval from the council, the city will be supporting Growing Futures with \$125,000 per year for the next five years. Trees Forever is also seeking additional funding through corporate sponsors and private donations. The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation and Transamerica are top level sponsors.

"We launched Growing Futures in Des Moines this past spring, and we're excited to bring it to Cedar Rapids," said David Blankenship, Trees Forever board chair. "There are few things I enjoy more than helping young people learn about the world around them and the potential within them. Caring for the land and a commitment to future generations is what appeals to me about the Growing Futures program and why I am proud to serve as the Program Chair for this initiative."

Growing Futures is hiring ten teenagers at \$10 an hour to plant, care and water Cedar Rapids' trees, but these teenagers will also participate in professional and personal development activities, which includes lessons in financial literacy, resume building, wilderness survival training and more.

Additional information about Growing Futures can be found at:

<http://www.treesforever.org/GrowingFutures>

Pending approval, the Growing Futures Teammates (GFTs) will start their first day on Saturday with a planting. While the Growing Futures Teammates will work predominately in Cedar Rapids, their orientation will be at a planting in rural Marion, made possible by a Trees Forever Working Watershed: Buffers & Beyond grant. The media is invited to the planting at Etzel Sugar Grove Farm, located at 706 St. Peters Road. At 9 a.m., GFTs will join Trees Forever TreeKeepers, Indian Creek Nature Center and Eagle Scout Troop 40 to plant 200 fruit and nut seedlings.

Contact Jackie Wedeking, Communications and Marketing Manager, for additional information at 319-640-0757 or by email at jwedeking@treesforever.org

###

Trees Forever is a nonprofit organization nationally headquartered in Iowa. We are dedicated to planting trees, encouraging volunteer and youth involvement and environmental stewardship. For 30 years, we've been planting a better tomorrow. For more information, visit www.treesforever.org or call 800-369-1269.