



Media Contact: Carol Brejt
carol@carolbrejtpr.com or 713.503.3885

For Immediate Release

Trees For Houston breaks ground on new Kinder Campus in Oak Forest, greatly expanding its capacity to serve the Houston community

HOUSTON, April 14, 2022 –Trees For Houston (TFH) broke ground today on the site of the future 1.5-acre Kinder Campus at 2001 W. 34th Street in Oak Forest with more than 125 people in attendance, including major donors, board members, staff, city, county and state officials and other invited stakeholders, along with media representatives. The new campus, once a rental storage site, greatly expands the nonprofit’s capacity to distribute trees and to provide educational programming for both children and adults.

To fund the new, permanent campus and administrative office building, Trees For Houston initiated the \$9 million *Taking Root* capital campaign. The campus is named after Nancy and Rich Kinder, founders of the Kinder Foundation, who provided the lead gift of \$3 million. The three other major gifts included \$1 million from Kyle and John Kirksey, Sr. for the building itself; \$750,000 from Chevron for the onsite tree nursery; and \$500,000 from the Ruth and Ted Bauer Family Foundation and the C.T. Bauer Foundation for the indoor/outdoor education center.

As attendees gathered for coffee and light bites from Snooze Eatery, members of Waltrip High School’s Ram Band kicked off the festivities with upbeat jazz tunes. The High School is located across the street from the Kinder Campus on W. 34th Street.

The ceremony, presented against a backdrop of trees signifying the future tree nursery, included remarks by Trees For Houston Executive Director Barry Ward, Kinder Foundation Chairman Rich Kinder, *Taking Root* co-chairs Sheila Condon and Larry Nettles, City of Houston Planning Director Margaret Wallace Brown, TFH Board President Kristopher Stuart and TFH Chairman Laura Mayer, in addition to State Sen. John Whitmire, who is a graduate of Waltrip High School.

Three proclamations naming April 13, 2022 “Trees For Houston Day” were presented by representatives of the City of Houston, Harris County and the State of Texas, which was initiated by State Rep. Penny Morales Shaw, District 148. Following the program, Trees For Houston representatives donned hard hats for the symbolic turning of the dirt.

“We are proud to be part of this transformational moment for Trees For Houston as they break ground on a permanent campus. Over the last 40 years, Trees For Houston has built an amazing, highly effective organization. We look forward to watching as this new home further supports their mission of promoting and protecting trees in Houston for years to come,” says Nancy Kinder, President and CEO of the Kinder Foundation.

“Trees are so much more than simple aesthetics – they provide shade, increase air quality, and lead to higher property values. Trees for Houston is a terrific partner in our quest to plant 4.6 million trees across the city by 2030, two trees for every resident,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “The generosity of Chevron, the Kirkseys, the Bauer Family, and the Kinders is a testament to their dedication to our community and seeing a sustainable future achieved according to the Resilient Houston and Climate Action Plans.”

The move allows Trees For Houston to consolidate operations into two main tree farms, boosting annual tree distribution by 20 percent in one year. The Chevron Tree Nursery on the Kinder Campus will provide efficient, convenient access to free and low-cost tree distribution for community members and community partners during the week and on weekends, instead of past limited pick-up times and minimal access to private tree farms.

“Our new Kinder Campus will be a game changer in so many ways,” says Ward. “It will allow Trees For Houston to significantly expand our mission to distribute and plant one million trees over the next 10 years in support of the Resilient Houston Plan, which recognizes the critical role trees play in making our city a healthier and more beautiful place for all residents. We will also be able to provide outstanding educational programming onsite and better engage our many volunteers.”

Ward noted that volunteers are critical to the success of Trees For Houston, with 1000 volunteers contributing more than 2500 hours in tree plantings throughout the region.

The campus, designed by Kirksey Architecture and Lauren Griffith Associates, with Forney Construction as the contractor, will have several notable “green” features, including a cistern to catch rainwater for irrigation and permeable surface areas replacing concrete. Additionally, the onsite tree nursery will “green up” the urban setting.

Trees For Houston is a national model for innovative and economically effective urban forestry organizations, with more than 600,000 trees planted since 1983. It is a major player in the City of Houston’s Resilient Houston strategy and Houston Climate Action Plan, which has a goal of planting 4.6 million trees over 10 years. The trees provided by Trees For Houston will help restore, protect and enhance our ability to capture and store carbon and help reduce flooding.

Notable plantings by Trees For Houston in 2021 included 11,971 trees with community partners, such as City of Houston, Memorial Park Conservancy, Spark Park, Houston Arboretum, and the Houston Zoo, in addition to 14,029 trees at volunteer plantings in parks, schools, along streets, esplanades, bayous and trails and in tribute groves.

To learn more about Trees For Houston visit TreesForHouston.org.

###

Link to Groundbreaking [photos here](#).

Photo credit: Daniel Ortiz

Link to renderings and planting [photos here](#).

Renderings credits: Kirksey Architecture and Lauren Griffith Associates

Photo credit: Daniel Ortiz

About Trees For Houston

Trees For Houston is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to plant, protect and promote trees throughout the Greater Houston area. Since being founded in 1983, more than 600,000 trees have been planted throughout the southeast Texas region. For more information, visit TreesForHouston.org.

About the Kinder Foundation

The Kinder Foundation, a family foundation established in 1997 by Rich and Nancy Kinder of Houston, Texas, provides transformational grants that impact urban green space, education, and quality of life. More at www.kinderfoundation.org.