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For Immediate Release

Trees For Houston opens new Kinder Campus with official ribbon cutting ceremony and sneak peek of the building

Total investment for the project was \$9 million

HOUSTON, October 4, 2023 – Approximately 130 tree supporters came out on Oct. 3 for Trees For Houston’s (TFH) official ribbon cutting ceremony to unveil the new \$9 million Kinder Campus, featuring the Kyle and John Kirksey Center and the Bauer Education Center, an indoor/outdoor space. Additionally, the Chevron Tree Nursery is housed on the new permanent site at 1911 W. 34th Street in the Oak Forest area. The event was attended by local elected officials, Trees For Houston board of directors and staff, donors, members of the business community and other stakeholders.

Immediately after the ribbon cutting, under shade of the pergola near the building’s entrance, the Sun Club did the official “Flip the Switch,” to turn on the power. The Sun Club provided the building’s solar panels and cistern and is a program of Green Mountain Energy, whose parent company is Houston-based NRG Energy.

Following the program, VIPs participated in a ceremonial tree planting. Then guests were invited inside to tour the Kyle & John Kirksey Center.

The Kinder Foundation, founded by Nancy and Rich Kinder, provided the lead gift of \$3 million as part of Trees For Houston’s *Taking Root* Capital Campaign, chaired by Sheila Condon and Larry Nettles. Three other major gifts, including \$1 million from Kyle and John Kirksey, Sr.; \$750,000 from Chevron; and \$500,000 from the Ruth and Ted Bauer Family Foundation and the C.T. Bauer Foundation, along with donations from foundations, companies and individuals, provided the \$9 million to complete the project.

“Trees For Houston would not have been able to construct the Kinder Campus with the state-of-the-art Kyle & John Kirksey Center, the Bauer Education Center and Chevron tree farm without the generosity of our major donors and the public,” says Barry Ward, Executive Director of Trees For Houston. “This is a long-awaited day for our organization and the community we serve.”

“We are very proud to support Trees For Houston, which has such a positive impact on our community by expanding and extending our tree canopy. Trees are vitally important to our quality of life,” says Nancy Kinder, President and CEO of the Kinder Foundation.

“I congratulate Trees For Houston on the opening of the spectacular Kinder Campus, which will be a huge asset to the community with its educational programming and tree farm that will continue the greening of Houston,” says Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. “They have been a wonderful partner in

the City of Houston’s Resilient Houston strategy and Houston Climate Action Plan. The trees provided by Trees For Houston will help restore, protect and enhance our ability to capture and store carbon and help reduce flooding.”

The 7,350 square-foot Kyle and John Kirksey Center features office space, conference rooms and the indoor Bauer Education Center space for Trees For Houston and their tenant, Urban Harvest, which is leasing part of the building space. Kirksey Architecture and Lauren Griffith Associates designed the building and surrounding landscape, while Forney was the general contractor.

“Having been a part of many milestones throughout the 40-year history of Trees for Houston, seeing this beautiful new building is truly the most gratifying,” says John Kirksey, Sr. It is a tribute to the many hardworking staff and volunteers who have built TFH and represents the base from which TFH will continue to expand and fulfill our mission. We are proud to be a small part of that growth.”

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 nursery, centrally located near Loop 610 North, will provide efficient, convenient access to free and low-cost tree distribution for constituents and community partners during the week and on weekends.

“The Chevron Tree Nursery is a visible symbol of 25 years of collaboration, dating back to our Humble Tree Farm,” says Margaret Cooper, General Manager, Chevron Corporate Affairs. “Chevron’s commitment to Houston and a lower carbon future involves forward-thinking partners like Trees For Houston, and we look forward to fulfilling our shared mission of making Houston a more beautiful place to live and work.”

Ward noted that the tree nursery will be a game changer in meeting the increased demand by those served by Trees For Houston, including local municipalities, parks, schools, nonprofits, community partners and individuals. “And with the education center, we can better engage on-site volunteers and provide enriching educational opportunities for local school districts and community members through the education center.”

In 2022, Trees For Houston distributed and planted nearly 70,000 trees, with the goal of increasing to 100,000 trees per year within the next five years. The new facility is essential to achieving this goal. During the 2022-2023 planting season, TFH planted and distributed more than 67,000 trees at 170 tree plantings and 97 tree distribution events providing immediate environmental impact to all Houstonians.

Trees For Houston is a national model for innovative and economically effective urban forestry organizations, with nearly 680,000 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.

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

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Photos from event [here](#)

Photo Credit: Daniel Ortiz

Photos of campus and building [here](#)

Credit: Tom Koenig

Renderings [here](#)

Credit: Kirksey Architecture

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.