

# Good News Department

## Get To Know The Tree Next Door This Spring

(NAPSA)—Through rain, sleet, snow and sun, trees add beauty to our surroundings day after day. They offer shade on a hot day, serve as shelter for a variety of animals and supply us with an assortment of household items. This spring, why not show a little appreciation and acknowledge the trees within our communities that beautify our front yards, line our roads and provide shade in our neighborhood parks?

Urban trees—our neighborhood trees—benefit families and communities every day. According to a recent article in *The University of Washington Alumni Magazine*, “neighborhood trees remove pollutants from water, help alleviate carbon dioxide in the air and provide cooling shade for concrete-laden cityscapes.” Urban trees such as the oak, cedar and maple provide a variety of resources to our communities and way of life that are not always understood or appreciated.

This spring is the perfect time to recognize our community trees for their “growing” efforts. Through its Teaching Kids to CARE Spring Initiative, Doubletree Hotels has teamed with the Arbor Day Foundation to give kids the ultimate opportunity to get up close and personal with the environment by teaching them about trees that live right in their own backyard! Aside from educating young minds about the history of popular trees and providing an in-depth look at the background and origins of trees kids are playing the ultimate game of “tag.” The monthlong environmental initiative to celebrate the world’s oldest environmental holiday—Arbor Day—will encourage students, parents and teachers to “tag”



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trees with customized recyclable “tree tags”—identifying each by name to educate the community about the vital role the tree plays in our daily lives.

For those parents and teachers wanting to encourage their kids and students to increase their eco-friendly practices and environmental knowledge, here are some “tree-mendously” fun activities that will get them excited to learn about the trees they see every day:

**1. Decorate Educational Tree Ornaments**—Encourage kids to get outdoors and collect their favorite tree leaves. Ask them to trace the shapes on construction paper, cut them out and decorate with crayons, sparkles, markers, etc. Be sure to remind the kids to include the name of the tree! Once they’ve decorated their leaf shape, punch a hole on top and give it to friends and family as a personalized gift! The ornaments can be used to decorate anywhere and teach people what type of tree it comes from.

**2. Sit Down for an Afternoon Tree Talk**—Engage kids in

a group discussion and ask them “What role do trees play in our everyday lives?” Make a master list of different categories (e.g., home furnishings, building supplies found in a school classroom, etc.) and divide students into groups. Each group should take 10 minutes to think of as many tree products as they can for each category. Have everyone discuss the results and see who can come up with the longest list of items.

**3. Create a Colorful Mobile Tree**—Go outside with the kids to collect the most interesting and colorful leaves you can find, then, using different length strings, hang them on a wire hanger and spread them out. Crisscross a second hanger with the first one and repeat the process—hanging the leaves on each string until everyone has their own one-of-a-kind mobile tree.

**4. Write a Community Tree Newsletter**—Work together with a group of students to develop a list of 10 things that everyone can do to help save and protect trees. Help them print the list out (on recycled paper) in a newsletter format and have students distribute them around their neighborhood.

**5. Capture Their Thoughts About Trees**—Using a digital camera, take individual photos of your students. Ask them to write down their favorite thing about trees (e.g., the way they smell, the shade they provide, etc.). Tack their pictures onto a giant board and hang it somewhere visible to remind the little ones how important trees are to all of us.

To learn more about how you can make a difference in your community, visit the Teaching Kids to CARE Web site at [www.doubletree.com/thinktrees](http://www.doubletree.com/thinktrees).