# Community Trees Improve *Our Health.*

## GREEN FOR GOOD HEALTH

**Trees filter airborne pollutants** — including particulate matter — and can reduce conditions that worsen asthma and other respiratory problems.[1]

Overall, **greener communities offer a natural calming** to help people living in a stressed-out world.[2]

Residents living near high levels of greenery are **three times more likely to be physically active** and 40 percent less likely to be overweight or obese than residents living in less green settings.[3]

**Hospital window views of natural scenes** have been shown to reduce postoperative hospital stays, lower negative evaluations in nurses' notes, and decrease the use of potent analgesics.[4]

REFERENCES:
[1] Nowak, D.J.; Hirabayashi, S.; Bodine, A.; Greenfield, E. (2014). Tree and forest effects on air quality and human health in the United States. Environmental Pollution, Volume 193, October 2014, Pages 119–129.

[2] Hartig T, Kahn PH Jr. (2016). Living in cities, naturally. Science. May 20, 2016; 352(6288):938-40. DOI: 10.1126/science.aaf3759.

[3] Ellaway, Anne; Macintyre, Sally; Bonnefoy, Xavier. (2005). Graffiti, Greenery, and Obesity in Adults: Secondary Analysis of European Cross Sectional Survey. British Medical Journal 331 (2005): 611–12. Web. http://www.bmj.com/content/331/7517/611.full.

[4] Ulrich, R. S. (1984). View through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery. Science, 224.4647: 420–21. Web. http://www.sciencemag.org/content/224/4647/420.

**Picture this scene:** Runners make their way along a tree-lined trail in the city park. Employees from a nearby business chat as they enjoy their lunch at a shaded picnic table. Children run and play, breathing easily in the unpolluted air. It seems the whole community is enjoying a healthy lifestyle under the trees.

Incredible strides have been made in healthcare. Yet, while modern medicine can treat more health issues in better ways, modern lifestyles are contributing to a rise in poor overall health across the globe. People are becoming more sedentary, experiencing more unhealthy stress, and being exposed to harmful pollution. More needs to be done, and one solution is tree planting.

Greener communities will mean an increase in physical activity, an improvement in respiratory health, stress reduction, improved mental health, and even shorter patient recovery times in some instances. The benefits are even greater for children. By planting more trees, your community as a whole will benefit from better physical and mental health.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

• Build relationships with public health officials and educate them on the benefits of community trees.

• Offer to help local hospitals with tree canopy assessments and master plans or invite them to support or volunteer at a community tree planting event.

• Lead a forest bathing class to help connect community members to the benefits of spending time in nature.

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