



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**CITY OF CHICAGO HITS HOME RUN FOR EARTH MONTH WITH CHICAGO WHITE SOX  
COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING PARTNERSHIP**

*Baseball season underway as a new season takes off: tree-planting season*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Brandon Johnson today joined the Chicago Departments of Public Health (CDPH), Environment (DOE), Streets and Sanitation (DSS), Transportation (CDOT), and the Chicago Park District for a celebratory Earth Month tree planting in collaboration with the **Chicago White Sox** and other community partners as part of the City's [Our Roots Chicago](#) tree equity initiative.

Launched in 2022, Our Roots Chicago is just one facet of the City's dedication to environmental justice and health equity, grounded in the Chicago 2022 Climate Action Plan with funding through the Chicago Recovery Plan to plant 75,000 trees by 2026 in historically underserved neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover. Since the program's inception, the City has already planted more than 41,000 trees on public parkways.

"As a City, we are committed to investing in people and communities that have been neglected for far too long. The tens of thousands of trees that we are planting on the South and West Sides are making our neighborhoods healthier, more climate-resilient, and even more beautiful than they already are," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Today, we are joined by the Chicago White Sox because they also recognize the importance of investing in Chicago's people and communities."

"Making Chicago a better place to live, work and play is at the heart of the organization, and Our Roots Chicago's mission to improve quality of life for all communities by building a vibrant tree canopy across the city is the perfect way to mark Earth Month," said **Christine O'Reilly, White Sox vice president of community relations and executive director of Chicago White Sox Charities**. "Green space is vital to health and wellness, and we are proud to lend our voice to such an important project and help promote environmental stewardship."

In honor of the collaboration, Chicago White Sox Charities donated \$5,000 to The Morton Arboretum, an internationally recognized tree-focused public garden and research center



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and a key partner in the Our Roots Chicago project. Leading up to Arbor Day on April 26, the donation is directed to support the efforts to expand and grow the tree canopy in priority areas throughout Chicago.

Our Roots Chicago uses a community-driven and data-informed approach, equipping local tree ambassadors to submit free public parkway tree requests on behalf of residents in priority communities while educating residents on the public health, social, economic, and environmental benefits of trees. As the initiative grows, the over 150-member Tree Equity Working Group continues to partner, advise, and work with the City in a whole-of-government approach.

Like the City, the White Sox have a community-centered mindset, launching its [Volunteer Corps](#) in 2009 to help make Chicago a better, safer, and healthier city. Armour Square, which is the neighborhood that is home to the ballpark, is one of the Our Roots Chicago priority areas, making it a natural partnership.

The Morton Arboretum, through its Chicago Region Trees Initiative, provides training and resources for Our Roots Chicago and the Tree Ambassador Program. The Arboretum will be providing \$640,000 in Inflation Reduction Act funding received through the U.S. Forest Service to support 32 additional Tree Ambassador community organizations in their work over the next two to four years. “The City’s Tree Ambassador Program is contributing to a healthier, more diverse and more equitable urban forest by engaging and equipping community groups to plant and care for trees in their neighborhoods,” said Jill Koski, Arboretum president and CEO, adding, “The Morton Arboretum is grateful for the support of the Chicago White Sox in this critical initiative.”

The Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) has been part of the Our Roots Chicago Tree Equity Working Group since 2021 and part of the Tree Ambassador Program since 2022. Armour Square is one of the neighborhoods with the lowest tree canopy in the City. “With our civic engagement focus and our ability to connect with first-generation immigrants in the neighborhood, CBCAC has been successful in sharing the benefits of having more trees with our community residents and getting tree-planting requests submitted. We are excited to be part of the City-wide effort to make our City greener and healthier,” said **Grace Chan McKibben, Executive Director, CBCAC.**

“Because of these partnerships and community involvement in Our Roots Chicago, we are able to develop green infrastructure in neighborhoods of shortage,” said **Chief Sustainability Officer and DOE Commissioner Angela Tovar.** “As we celebrate Earth Month with the Chicago White Sox, their Volunteer Corps, and the City’s Tree Ambassadors, we are excited to expand the collaborative effort to create a more equitable and greener city.”



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“We know certain populations feel the disproportionate impact of a lack of urban tree canopy through worsened air quality, extreme heat conditions, and more,” **said CDPH Commissioner Olusimbo “Simbo” Ige, MD, MPH.** “Through Our Roots Chicago, community members and city departments and agencies are coming together to improve the health and overall wellbeing of all Chicagoans, especially those in priority areas.”

The Department of Streets and Sanitation manages tree planting through its Bureau of Forestry. Spring tree planting is underway, and Chicago residents can request a free tree to be planted on the parkway in front of their home by using the [CHI311 app](#) or by calling 311.

For more information on how to get involved in the Our Roots Chicago program, visit [Chicago.gov/OurRoots](https://chicago.gov/OurRoots), and learn how your organization can become Tree Ambassadors by visiting [chicagorti.org/program/tree-ambassador-program](https://chicagorti.org/program/tree-ambassador-program).

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