



## **24 Sustainability Success Stories in 2024**

Story 8 of 24: Earth Day Celebrations

### **Rooting for Sustainability: UPMC Employees Adopt Trees**

UPMC is proud to bring the [Tree Pittsburgh](#) tree adoption program to our employees. Tree Pittsburgh leads reforestation efforts and protects the urban forests in Allegheny County.

Our partnership reflects a shared commitment to health and environmental sustainability. Since the first tree adoption event in the fall of 2020, 1,359 trees have found a permanent home in the yards and neighborhoods of UPMC staff. So far, tree adoption events have occurred at the following hospitals: UPMC Shadyside, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, UPMC Presbyterian, UPMC St. Margaret, and UPMC Magee-Womens Hospital.

The [Tree Pittsburgh Heritage Nursery](#) is where the trees used for all their programs, such as tree adoption and street tree planting, are raised. At any given time, the nursery has 20,000 to 30,000 trees being grown. Most of the trees are grown from locally harvested seeds from the healthiest and strongest trees in our local forests, preserving the biodiversity in our region.

One of Tree Pittsburgh's goals is to restore the urban tree canopy. Areas with insufficient tree canopy experience greater heat island effects, increased stormwater runoff, and lower air quality. The trees from adoption events not only beautify our communities but also provide animal habitats and remove pollutants from the air. Studies have shown that people living in neighborhoods with more trees experience lower stress levels, improved mental health, and a stronger immune system.

We eagerly anticipate future tree adoptions through Tree Pittsburgh. Before a giveaway, staff can sign up and select a couple of trees from a wide variety of options. On the day of the event, the selected trees are picked up. The free trees are about 3 years old and come in small 2- to 3-gallon containers that fit conveniently in any car. In addition, Tree Pittsburgh provides instructions for caring for a tree, along with a deer protection kit, at no cost.

Together, we can continue to make a difference and leave a legacy of environmental stewardship for years to come.