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In Honor of Earth Day - our very own River Steward "Giving Tree" Story!

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Friday, April 22, 2016

In Honor of Earth Day - our very own River Steward "Giving Tree" Story!

Leslie King

Our Giving Tree

Almost a year has passed since we said our farewells and congratulations to the 2015 Cohort of River Stewards. But their River Steward experience and the story of their senior project carries on. It carries on in the trees that have been planted behind Adventure Central (AC) in the woods of Wesleyan Metropark. It carries on in the seeds which continue to get picked and stored in the refrigerators of AC. It carries on in the basement under the grow lights, where the seeds slowly become sprouts. And it carries on in the teens and staff of AC who continue sustain, nurture and steward the project day to day, and season to season. But, it also carries on in other ways. In ways each individual River Steward uniquely transfers what they learned into their daily lives and continue to grow, themselves, as stewards of our rivers and communities.

Today I received an email from one of those Stewards, Rachel Bachman, who shared with me how this project has carried on for her and how this week it truly came full circle. Once I read her email, it brought me back to a very early fall morning in 2014, when I gathered with the senior cohort to talk about the bigger picture of their partnership with Adventure Central and how it was so much more than "just" collecting seeds and working with teens. I shared with them the short video and children's story by Shel Silverstein, "The Giving Tree". I think you will see after you reading Rachel's email why and how it all came together for her this week. Below is Rachel's email for you to enjoy.....

"I have a little "story"... I had adopted one of the AC trees before leaving Dayton after graduation. Doug helped me plant a red oak in a huge ranch dressing container Nate gave me. I felt so bad for the little tree because of course I had so much going on (trips before starting my job, starting a job, finding a place to live with Kyle). At the end of the summer the tree was starting to dry out a bit at the ends of the leaves. I transplanted it into a bigger pot and I was having a hard time telling what was happening to it. I couldn't tell if I stunted it or not! Then fall and winter happened and I stuck it in my sunroom for the winter. Once spring came around I keep checking on my tree (well twig at this point) and I was not at all convinced that it was going to take it. I stuck it in my backyard in a pot and then this week I look over at it and IT HAD LEAVES! So I just spent a ton of time telling you I didn't kill my AC tree hahaha. And now I am going to attach a picture. The tree showing life made my entire earth day week (check out the cute little spider on it)!"

excerpt of email from Rachel Bachman



Being Earth Day, I thought it was a perfect moment to re-visit this children's story and honor all those who give back to the earth in whatever way they choose. I hope you can take a minute to listen to the story in the video linked below. Maybe one day there will be kids swinging on it and families picnicking underneath its shade. I look forward to hearing about how Rachel's tree continues to grow and give life. And, I hope to hear from many more former River Stewards about their "Giving Tree" story and how its grown..

HAPPY EARTH DAY and RIVER LOVE TO YOU ALL! with peace ~ Leslie