Urban Releaf eNewsletter | February 2013

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"Building Healthy Communities One Tree at a Time"

5th Annual MLK Day of Service Tree Planting Event

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On Monday, January 21st, Urban Releaf hosted its 5th Annual National MLK Day of Service Tree Planting. The event was a full-on celebration and mini street festival as both long-time supporters and first-timer volunteers came out to 27th and Alicia Streets in West Oakland to help plant 40 trees.

To kick off the celebration, Councilmember Lynette McElhaney commended Urban Releaf for addressing environmental and employment issues in Oakland. Emcees Ayodele “Wordslanga” Nzinga and Rhonda White-Warner offered benedictions, and Aztec folkloric dance group Mixcoat Anahuac led participants in a march around the block to bless the land. The actual tree planting, performed by community members, under the direction of our tan-vested stewards, went smoothly and efficiently. Afterwards, kids—and even some adults—enjoyed horse and pony rides, courtesy of the Oakland Black Cowboys Association.

Special thanks to Brotha Chaz and The Peaceful Vibes, Tacuma King, Communities for a Better Environment,
Check Out Our New Website!

We recently redesigned www.urbanreleaf.org to be more user friendly, and have information about our projects and programs readily available to the public. Be sure to peruse through the new pages and photos.

National Arbor Day Foundation Award Winner

Kemba Shakur has been chosen to receive the Lawrence Enersen Award this April in Nebraska City for her lifelong commitment to tree planting and conservation at a local community level.

Black History Community Appreciation Gala Honoree

On February 21st, Kemba Shakur was celebrated as a Community Diamond at Paradise Free Jah Love, Service for Peace, Keith K-Dub, The Oakland Maroons, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., CAL FIRE, and US Forest Service.

Kemba Shakur Named 2013 Barefoot Sole of the Year

Executive Director Kemba Shakur has been named as one of Barefoot Wine’s “Soles of the Year” for 2013. Kemba’s face and story will be featured on limited edition bottles of Barefoot Impression Red Blend, a newly launched wine, which upholds the company’s commitment to supporting community organizations making a difference.

“We are proud to celebrate Kemba as one of our ‘Soles of the Year’ for her efforts to address a gaping need for a forestry movement in urban communities,” said Elizabeth Windram of Barefoot Wine & Bubbly. “She has put her
the Joyce Gordon Gallery in downtown Oakland. Thank you to Mistress of Ceremony Barbara Howard for organizing the event.

Sierra Magazine News Feature

Take a moment to check out the Q&A session with Kemba Shakur on urban reforestation. Click here to read the interview on the Sierra Magazine website.

Barefoot Winery Meet & Greet on February 14th

Kemba and our team are excited for this opportunity to help spread our message throughout the world, that urban communities can be transformed, one tree at a time. To learn more about the Soles of the Year program and see Kemba’s animated video, please visit barefootwine.com.

Longfellow Elementary Trees Destroyed

Ten years ago, our staff members planted purple leaf plum trees at Longfellow Elementary School alongside 250 school children as part of our Making Longfellow Happen Project funded by the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection. Last year, NBC Nightly News producers recognized how beautiful the trees were and included them in the feature, From Concrete Jungle to Urban Oasis. In early January, we were shocked to find that they had all been cut down. We are currently investigating to find out why this happened to these beautiful, healthy trees.

Thank You to Our Funders

Before
After “Clean Up Green Up” for Earth Day 2013

Join Urban Releaf and Communities for a Better Environment as we declare East Oakland a Green Zone this Earth Day. Neighborhood beautification activities will include tree and flower planting, garden bed installations and litter abatement. This is sure to be an awesome event in partnership with HOPE Collaborative, Acta Non Verba Farm Project, Tassafaronga Recreation Center,
EnCompass Academy and ACORN Woodland.

Date: Saturday, April 20th
Location: Tassafaronga Recreation Center, 975 85th Avenue, Oakland
Start Time: 10:00am

Help us help more youth plant trees!

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Urban Releaf
835 57th Street
Oakland, California 94608
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