

# Going Green



**The Village of Northfield traditionally celebrates Arbor Day with the 5th grade students from District 29 in Northfield.**

## Hug a Tree

**T**he Mt. Vernon Parks and Recreation Department believes in a hands-on approach when it comes to Arbor Day education and activities.

"Hug A Tree Day" in 2008 featured a collaborative effort between high school classes and the University of Illinois Master Gar-

deners. The combined team helped more than 700 elementary students at one school get their hands dirty as they investigated roots, counted tree rings and smelled the sap oozing from tree limbs.

George Bryant, Mt. Vernon Parks and Public Facilities Director, said, "One major goal of this event was to create a unique learning environment by having the high school students teach the elementary students." The enthusiasm that was generated by both groups was contagious as teachers applauded their return in 2009.

What child doesn't love to climb trees? Mt. Vernon Parks and Recreation Department combined that desire with safety measures and held its first tree climbing activity for children at the Annual Arbor Day Celebration. A detailed plan was developed that utilized children's climbing saddles, ropes and hardware. A local utility tree trimming contractor's staff supervised the climbing stations after the city's insurance carrier approved the program.



**Arbor Day activities in Mt. Vernon include a tree-climbing program organized by the Parks and Recreation Department.**

## Why Plant a Tree?

- One hundred trees can remove 37 tons of carbon dioxide per year and 248 pounds of other air pollutants per year.
- Research has shown that tree-filled neighborhoods have lower domestic violence and are safer and more sociable.
- Trees save us money. With properly placed trees around our houses, we can save up to 20 percent on annual air-conditioning and 2-20 percent on winter heating.
- Trees add value to your property. Each properly maintained tree in a front yard adds 1 percent to a house sales price and may even be the reason why someone wanted to purchase the house. Large specimen trees can add 10 percent to property value.

"The Mt. Vernon community loves for the Parks and Recreation Department to push the mark on creating high-energy family programs," said Bryant. "The children's tree climbing activity started a change in direction for the department and has resulted in the creation of new outdoor programs titled the Family Adventure Series."

**The Village of Elburn is one of many Illinois communities participating in Arbor Day tree-planting celebrations.**

