

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Sallie Mae donates \$10,000 for tree planting and ecological restoration in the Gulf Coast region

On October 5, Sallie Mae participated in a commemorative tree-planting ceremony with students from the Martin Luther King Charter School in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward.

The event celebrated a \$10,000 corporate donation from Sallie Mae's Office Solutions and the Asset Performance Group. The \$10,000 pledge will go to "Katrina ReLeaf," to bring thousands of trees back into the Gulf Coast ecosystem. Created by the Washington, D.C.-based conservation group Forests, Katrina ReLeaf provides grants to Gulf Coast communities to replant trees destroyed by the devastating hurricanes of 2005.

In addition, Sallie Mae employees also contributed \$600 directly to the Martin Luther King Charter School, for the purchase of much-needed school supplies.



"Parents, students, and schools are Sallie Mae's primary constituency, and all of these groups have an important stake in assuring a good environmental future," said Nina Vellayan, president of Business Office Solutions. "We are proud to make this \$10,000 donation in connection with our annual Sallie Mae Summit and be a positive part of restoring livability to some of the Gulf Coast communities impacted by the hurricanes."



Thousands of trees in the New Orleans area were killed by floodwaters following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Trees not only help clean the air and water, provide shade, and create habitat for animals, they also protect coastal communities and ecosystems from erosion.

To commemorate the donation, three Martin Luther King Live Oaks from American Forests' Historic Trees program were planted on school grounds by students and volunteers from Sallie Mae, New Orleans community group Partners, and American Forests. Coastal Live Oaks are native to the Gulf region and a valuable part of the green infrastructure. Each of the eight-foot trees was grown from the seeds of a tree that shades the Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama where Martin Luther King Jr. embarked on his famous march to Montgomery.

In addition, a group of 40 students from Martin Luther King Charter School were given George Washington Red Maple saplings to take home and plant in their yards.

"Trees grow healthier communities — and they add life to the community," said American Forests' executive director Deborah Gangloff. "As New Orleans continues its long rebuilding process, American Forests is proud to work with Sallie Mae and Pathways Partners to help begin to restore the many environmental — and social — benefits that trees provide."

Environmental Education Initiative supported

In late June, Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson and leaders from Sallie Mae and The Canal and White River State Park Cultural District unveiled a plan to create an interactive exhibit along the city's Canal Walk.

This exhibit is only the pilot project for a broader Interpretive Master Plan, with the theme "Reflections on the Water. Past. Present. Future." that is designed to attract district visitors and engage them in a learning experience along the historic Central Canal.

The Interpretive Master Plan and pilot project for the cultural district were made possible through a \$200,000 grant from The Sallie Mae Fund.