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Student Leaders to Plant Trees in Flood Plains

MASON CITY, IA - Each year, the YIELD group (Youth Investing Energy in Leadership Development) completes a project for community betterment. YIELD students are high school juniors from Mason City High School, Newman Catholic High School, and the Alternative High School whom have been identified by school administrators and faculty as future leaders. This year's students decided to plant fruit trees in Mason City's flood plain areas, to help rejuvenate the land and provide fresh produce to community members. Their main focus is the area north of East Park and adjacent to Oak Park, which was badly impacted by the 2008 flood.

The YIELD group consulted with local nurseries, conservationists, city staff, and conducted research online to select fruit trees and other tree varieties that will work best in the flood plain areas. Students were responsible for securing all donations, and thanks to contributions from individuals and local businesses, they were able to purchase more than 50 trees to be planted north of East Park and at Georgia Hanford Park, both areas damaged by floods.

Students firmed up project logistics before graduating from the YIELD program in December, and are now meeting up to plant the trees, with social distancing and other precautions in place. **The YIELD group will meet at 8:15AM on Wednesday, June 3 to plant the fruit and shade trees. They will start by Oak Park (8th St & N New Hampshire) before moving to the northeast entrance of the arboretum at Georgia Hanford Park. Members of the local news media are welcome to cover this work session.**

The YIELD students encourage community members to enjoy the revitalized space, and in time, take advantage of the produce provided by their trees.

YIELD, which originated in 2003, is program of the Chamber of Commerce to provide leadership training to local high school youth. The program now serves as a model for other communities.

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