



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IES TREE PROJECT RECEIVES XCEL ENERGY FOUNDATION GRANT

(Denver, Colorado) The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) has been awarded a \$15,190 grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation for the **Trees for Healthy Kids and Community Project** designed to use strategic tree selection and planting to improve air quality and reduce noise for school children at Mitchell Elementary School in Golden, Colorado. The completed project will serve as a model for other Colorado communities seeking cost-effective ways to improve environmental quality at elementary schools and other locations.

For years, parents and administrators at Mitchell Elementary School recognized that the school's close proximity to busy U.S. Highway 93 contributed air pollution and noise on school grounds. Concerns about potential impacts on children's health from breathing polluted air prompted school officials and PTA members to seek a solution to the problem. IES, a leading expert in the use of trees for environmental improvement, working with school administrators and PTA members, and city and county officials, conceived the project to address the problem.

The goal of the **Trees for Healthy Kids and Community Project** is lasting, positive change in environmental health at Mitchell Elementary. The project involves strategic tree planting with extensive cooperation among stakeholders, including experts in related technical disciplines, members of the community, and volunteers from surrounding neighborhoods.

IES will analyze the Mitchell site to select the best tree species and planting locations for optimal environmental benefit. Volunteers will plant 30 to 40 trees on the school's grounds in the spring. Once matured, the trees will provide an effective vegetative barrier between the school and U.S. Highway 93.

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Because of their ability to absorb harmful gases, trees have been shown to be an effective means of reducing ozone pollution and improving overall air quality. IES has conducted extensive research into the ways in which certain tree species provide the best benefit in terms of improved air quality, reduced noise pollution, reduced stormwater runoff, moderated air temperature, and aesthetic appeal. Research findings will be used in selecting trees for the Trees for Healthy Kids and Community Project to optimize benefits for Mitchell Elementary School.

Upon completion, IES will evaluate the project and produce a final report that will enable other communities to replicate the effort for their benefit.

“We are extremely appreciative of the Xcel Energy Foundation for enabling this project, which will improve the environmental health of the Mitchell Elementary School children,” said Carol Lyons, IES Executive Director. “Once this project is complete, we will have demonstrated a cost-effective, practical means for improving air quality in Colorado.”

The effort is part of the larger “Tree Project: Integrated Urban Environmental Improvement through Tree Selection and Planting” initiated by IES in 2005. Through this project, IES and its partners have characterized the effects of urban forests on the environment and applied knowledge gained to improve tree selection and planting. The Xcel Energy Foundation has supported the Tree Project since its beginning.

The Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) is a Denver-based non-profit organization dedicated to addressing complex environmental challenges. IES uses sound, independent science to find potential solutions, develop objective evaluation methods, implement strategies, and measure and demonstrate costs and effectiveness. IES’s approach emphasizes integration across technical disciplines and inclusion of all potential stakeholders throughout project design and implementation.

For more information about the Tree Project or IES, please visit www.i4es.org.

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