



Photo by Linda Harmon

**Members of Tom Bostrom's and Mike Daley's Team B welcome one of Manwa Azzam's trees.**

# Tree effort branching out with rooted effort

*Volunteers add more than 143 to Ojai forest*

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Ojai Trees volunteers got a jump-start on giving and a taste of the real spirit of the holiday season by helping valley residents green their neighborhoods. According to Tom Bostrom, the nonprofit group's founder, the organization planted more than 75 trees this fall and unanimously awarded Garrett Clifford their first Neighborhood Forester award.

"Our Nov. 1 planting event was rained out but that didn't stop Garrett and a couple of his buddies," said Bostrom announcing the award. "He jumped into the lurch and they followed up and planted the trees on their own."

According to Bostrom, Ojai Trees has now planted more than 143 trees in the valley, helping to reverse the trend of Ojai's diminishing and aging urban canopy, and hopefully helping to stem the tide of global warming and improving our watershed. Ojai Trees delivers and provides planting assistance for residents, who select trees, and purchase them for \$75 each.

"The basic program is an

easy way to have a direct, positive effect on your immediate environment," said Bostrom. "Our Neighborhood Forester program enables citizens to take personal responsibility for the community forest in their neighborhood."

"Part of this day in which 30 trees were planted was especially sweet as we were able to plant 11 fruit and shade trees for a very sweet woman and her elderly mother," said Bostrom, at the ceremony. "I've been working with the woman's sister, who lives in Australia, who paid for the trees as a birthday present for her."

Earlier, Manwa Azzam watched from the doorway of her Park Road home as two planting teams placed and planted the 15-gallon trees, while her mother offered refreshments and thanks to volunteers. Azzam, who was a nurse in her native Lebanon, uses a keyboard to communicate after disease robbed her of her voice and all movement, except her left hand.

"These trees will be my children, thank you," typed Azzam.

To find out more or get involved go to [ojaitrees.com](http://ojaitrees.com).