

BIOGRAPHY

ANDY LIPKIS, PRESIDENT



Andy Lipkis began planting trees to rehabilitate smog and fire damaged areas when he was 15 years old. He founded TreePeople and has served as President since 1973.

TreePeople has been an international guiding light for the Citizen Forestry movement. Andy's programs include airlifting bare-root fruit trees to Africa, inspiring the planting of one million trees in L.A. before the 1984 Summer Olympics, numerous disaster relief efforts during flood and fire, and many versions of training that increase citizen involvement in urban tree planting and care. A recent program is T.R.E.E.S. – Transagency Resources for Environmental and Economic Sustainability. T.R.E.E.S. demonstrates the feasibility and facilitates the implementation of integrated urban ecosystem management to increase the health and sustainability of our cities.

Andy is a creative problem solver who develops solutions to pressing public health, economic and environmental issues by forging partnerships between diverse and sometimes conflicting groups. For over 30 years Andy's leadership has helped make Los Angeles a testing ground for visionary, community-based efforts.

- Andy coined the now trademarked term "Citizen Forester" in reference to the thousands of volunteers TreePeople has trained and supported to organize their neighborhoods to plant and maintain trees on urban streets. The term Citizen Forester has been adopted by tree-planting organizations throughout the United States.
- Andy helped guide the creation and implementation of L.A.'s curbside recycling program.
- With his wife and colleague, Kate, Andy wrote *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree*. Published in 1990, the book sold 50,000 copies.
- In 1991, with KCBS staff, Andy co-produced the Emmy award-winning series *How Does Your Garden Grow?* He also produced for the National Urban Forest Conference, a video series designed to help urban forestry professionals and citizen tree groups market their cause to local governments.
- After L.A.'s 1992 civil unrest, Andy co-created the Urban Greening Initiative of the USDA Forest Service, which brought L.A. \$2.5 million in jobs programs and urban forestry projects.
- Andy and Kate Lipkis co-founded the Citizen Forestry Support System; a nationwide training program designed to support organizational effectiveness in citizen tree groups.
- Andy serves on the board of directors of the National Tree Trust and the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. He sits on the board of advisors of several organizations and has served on the faculty of the Urban National Forest Academy.
- Following the devastating 2003 Southern California wildfires, Andy worked with the California Resources Agency, UCLA and others to organize an unprecedented conference for the state's top fire ecologists, scientists and Citizen Foresters to prevent future damage to the region's environment, economy and human health.
- In 2004 TreePeople completed construction on one of Los Angeles' most sustainable buildings, the Center for Community Forestry Conference Center. This building had been a vision of Andy's for over a decade and includes a 225,000-gallon cistern to capture, clean and re-use rainwater. It is also part of a state-of-the-art campus designed to nurture local, statewide and national leadership in sustainability.
- In 2006 TreePeople committed to helping the City of Los Angeles plant 300,000 trees in parklands to support Mayor Villaraigosa's Million Trees LA initiative.
- In 2007 TreePeople was recognized in Edens Lost & Found. This nationally broadcast PBS program highlighted the sustainability work of four U.S. cities.
- Across the country and around the world, Andy Lipkis has addressed and assisted groups and agencies involved in the linked issues of environment, urban forestry, sustainability, and water and energy use. These include: the United Nations, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Canada's Katimavik Youth Corps, the U.K. National Urban Forestry Unit, the U.S. Forest Service, the Greenhouse Crisis Foundation, Greening Australia, American Society of Civil Engineers, and many others.

Andy's awards and honors come from groups as diverse as the Baha'i Faith, Daughters of the American Revolution, National Arbor Day Foundation, the California State Board of Forestry and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Andy and Kate Lipkis were named to the UN Environment Programme's Global 500 Roll of Honour. They hold American Forests' Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1991, President Bush named TreePeople the 440th Point of Light. In 1998, Andy was honored as Founder of the Year for National Philanthropy Day.