

# The Faces of Urban Forestry



**James Settle**  
Neighborhood leader and former  
Parks Advisory Board member



**New trees slowed traffic and made the neighborhood safer.**

“This stretch of road was a racetrack,” said Roanoke, Virginia, resident James Settle, recalling how speeding cars used to pour across a nearby bridge, down his street and past his family’s home.

Walking in James’ neighborhood was truly a dangerous proposition – until the City of Roanoke planted 26 ornamental and shade trees at the foot of the bridge. The trees grew into an effective entryway to the neighborhood and a buffer between busy traffic and single-family homes. The constancy of speeding cars subsided.

James says he has never felt safer, and the 26 trees made the difference.

“If we could do only one thing as a neighborhood, we’d plant trees,” he said.

While other neighborhoods hope to realize the same safety benefits, a challenging budget environment in Roanoke has lowered the number of trees the city can plant. James has inspired a local volunteer group of tree stewards to step up to fill the void, with the goal of giving every resident the same sense of comfort he now experiences.

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– James Settle



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit [arborday.org/faces](http://arborday.org/faces)