

How did the tree planting for the Teacher-of-the-Year get started?

The Rotary club has been planting trees in honor of Plainfield's Teacher-of-the-Year since 1995. We wondered about the history of this tradition, so we turned to John Himmelheber, Rotary club member, for some background. These are his comments:

The Rotary club was looking for a special project before July 1, 1995. Since I had just retired from being the Principal at the Indiana Boys School with 39 years in education, and the school corporation had started the process of selecting the teacher of the year, and the town had started a new park of Friendship Gardens and needed more trees to add to its charm, I suggested this as our project. I was on the town council at that time, and they thought it was a good idea also.

We planned the first tree planting and had a plaque made for our first teacher of the year, Carol Kellogg of Plainfield High School in the fall of 1995. In the spring of 1998, Supt. Jerry Holifield sent the club a letter asking if we could go back and start planting a tree for all of the teachers of the year from 1990 when the recognition began. The club planned the do that and by 2004 we had added trees for each teacher of the year in addition to three trees in memorial to Harold Grosskreutz, Ivan Albright, and Dale Jackson.

For the last six years, the town has purchased the trees and the Rotary Club has purchased the plaque. All of the teacher of the year trees are in Friendship Gardens. The Rotary club also paid half of the \$1800 cost of a blacktop path down to a possible honorary garden to be used by the public over the hill towards the creek. Eventually teacher of the year trees can be planted there when other areas are full.

*John Himmelheber
Rotary club member*