

# 'Trees for Life' project aims to help the environment

**Richard H. Baker,**  
YourNews contributor

GIFFORD -- Pelican Island Audubon Society, in partnership with the Environmental Learning Center and Every Dream has a Price, recently planted 10 trees provided by Sebastian River Farms and Indian River Land Trust at two affordable housing units in Gifford.

The event marked the first planting for "Trees for Life," a project designed to plant 100,000 native and fruit trees in Indian River County in 10 to 15 years. The initial goal is to plant 5,000 in the next two years.

"Trees for Life" is a community partnership with 22 organizations including the county's Health Department and Extension Service, with the goal of restoring native tree coverage to re-forest and re-green our neighborhoods and parks, and transform local landscapes from predominantly grasses and lawns to native vegetation.

The program also has the goal of improving the environment. Trees absorb carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, cool cities by six to eight degrees, clean surface waters and save homeowner's money.

Pelican Island Audubon has 100 live oak trees ready to plant. Trees are free, but residents must take a brief course



**Gertrude Smith (resident, seated) with Jerry Lane and Ron Highhouse, Sebastian United Methodist Church; Dr. Richard Baker, Audubon president and Steve Palmquist, Audubon board member; Sarah Rhodes-Ondi, ELC; Julianne Price, president Every Dream has a Price and Sara Pottor, ELC.** SAMANTHA OBBAGY

on how to plant, water, and care for a tree and sign a contract to look after it for one year.

A GPS map with the location for each tree planted will show the progress of

the program. If every adult in the county planted one tree, it would surpass the goal and benefit our every one. It is essential that we work together to improve our health and quality of life.



**Sarah Rhodes-Ondi, Julianne Price, Steve Palmquist and Dr. Richard Baker planting a buttonwood tree.** SAMANTHA OBBAGY

The project is also seeking donations. A generous woman, upon learning about the Trees for Life project at PIAS Intensive Bird Class, made a major donation saying, "I just love trees and your project is so wonderful and needed."

Residents interested in planting a tree or making contribution should contact Pelican Island Audubon Society at 772-567-3520 or email [piaudubon@yahoo.com](mailto:piaudubon@yahoo.com).