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To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the University of Louisville's maple syrup tree tapping initiative, which has taken place on campus over the past three years.

I have been involved with the university's tree advisory committee, Arbor Day event, and Tree Campus USA certification over the past two years, where I have engaged with students, faculty and staff regarding campus trees and sustainability issues. It is from this perspective that I write to support this project specifically and, more generally, to endorse the work that University of Louisville has been doing to promote urban forestry and sustainability.

The maple syrup tree tapping initiative exposes undergraduate students and the expanded surrounding community to urban forestry and provides them with specific knowledge and skills that they might not otherwise have access to. From my perspective as an urban and community forestry professional, I am most excited about this program because it implements research methods as well as practical hands-on experience. With this project, students have become exposed to formulating a research framework, identifying suitable trees, tapping trees with specialized equipment, monitoring environmental conditions, tracking sap output, collecting sap in buckets and processing it into syrup, carrying out workshops, analyzing data, and sharing results and the final product with other students, faculty, and the public. The project has evolved from its initial single class of tapping 12 trees, to several classes and extracurricular groups tapping nearly 140 trees on two U of L campuses. Last year's output resulted in over 1,000 gallons of sap collected, which produced over 30 gallons of syrup. Students have experimented successfully with tapping several species of trees in addition to maples, and learned valuable lessons by working with a community partner who has invaluable expertise in the field.

I look forward to the upcoming work that the U of L brings to its campus and the surrounding community, especially with its student-led approach to this project. This initiative can continue to evolve to provide a model for other institutions and urban communities in our region and beyond.

Sincerely,

Urban Forestry Partnership Coordinator