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Yr 03

2019
ANNUAL
REPORT
WATERFRONT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS
THE WATERFRONT BOTANICAL GARDENS IS WELL ON ITS WAY.
2019 was an incredible year for Waterfront Botanical Gardens.

In spring, we officially changed our name from Botanica Inc. to Waterfront Botanical Gardens. I’m so glad that many of the members of the original Botanica organization were with us to celebrate the opening of the Waterfront Botanical Gardens on Oct. 4.

And what a wonderful day that was! Surrounded by supporters, staff, Board, volunteers, elected officials and more, the Graeser family cut the ribbon on the Graeser Family Education Center, and we officially opened to the public.

Even though many have congratulated us on what we have accomplished in the last few years, the momentum has been building for decades. The current team of staff and Board were lucky enough to carry the ball across the goal line. Our recent work represents the vision of hundreds of people for over 40 years.

Young people often ask me what it’s like to work on a project that won’t come to full fruition for several more years. Older folks ask how long it will take to build – they are more focused on what they will see in their lifetime. Is this a normal timeline? Folks ask how long it will take to build – they are more focused on what they will see in their lifetime.

Yes, other US cities have been building botanical gardens for over 100 years. The Missouri Botanical Garden was the vision of Henry Shaw in 1851. He was a pioneer in building botanical gardens in the US, after visiting many in Europe. The 150-acre garden opened to the public in 1859.

The New York Botanical Garden was founded in 1891, largely through the efforts of Nathaniel Lord Britton, a professor of botany at Columbia University. The 250 acres were opened to the public in 1900.

The Atlanta Botanical Garden started as a small plot of display gardens in 1973, and is now a 30+ acre urban oasis of plants, art, research and more, boasting over 700,000 visitors per year.

And my favorite inspiration, the Naples Botanical Garden in Florida is just 10 years old. In 2009 their now-developed 23 acres were a construction site, much like ours. Executive Director, Donna McLinnis, a mentor and friend, shares helpful information on what can be accomplished in 10 years, and what it means to run a public garden.

2019 was a momentous year in the development of Waterfront Botanical Gardens, and in the history of Louisville. How exciting for all of us to be a part of this history. We will continue to focus and work to complete this project. 2020 will be just as exciting as 2019 as we complete Phase 1, and move toward the building of the Japanese Garden.

So, my answer is that it’s amazing to be working on a large project that will take years to fund and build, and will be a significant cultural asset for the city for generations to come. In the future, no one will ever really know what it took to build the dream, the Waterfront Botanical Gardens. Today, our staff, Board, construction team, volunteers, members and donors know what it takes. There’s a lot of personal satisfaction to be had from working so hard on a project that will mean so much. Thank you for being a part of our “Dream Team.”

Warmly,
Kasey Maier
President
Leslie rarely traveled, not wanting to leave her kennel. She had three beloved cocker spaniels, Lucy, Tony and Oliver – each a rescue dog. Leslie’s three Cocker Spaniels are now in the temporary custody of long-time friend and associate.

Leslie was a tall, stately woman with an infectious smile, her eyes surrounded by large-framed glasses, her hair turning a bright silver as she aged. Her hands were large and strong, the hands of a gardener. Her cancer spread and worsened in later years. Even so, Leslie preferred to do her garden work herself, placing the heavy metal oxygen tank required to keep her breathing in a cart, pulling it behind her in the garden, or rigging it up behind her riding lawnmower.

It has been said by many close to Leslie that she never complained about her health and still wanted to work in her yard even as a developing pneumonia kept her inside. She died in her home on June 22, 2019 and was buried in the family plot in Cave Hill Cemetery.

Although she had no known contact with anyone on staff at the 23-acre Waterfront Botanical Gardens, Taylor said they drove to look at the site several times. “She loved the whole idea,” said Taylor.

Leslie’s gift to Waterfront Botanical Gardens will allow the gardens to finish phase one of an estimated three-phase, $63 million total project cost. Maier said she first heard about Leslie’s gift from a phone call. “We had surprise, amazement and tears. It was hard to believe at first, but once we got to know her through others, it was easier to understand. She will long be remembered at Waterfront Botanical Gardens.”

Ellen Leslie’s friends and neighbors all agreed she was a strong, independent and hard-working woman with a fun, if not occasionally risqué, sense of humor. She was very approachable, would be as direct with people as the occasion required, and loved her animals and gardens “much more than most humans she knew,” as was written in her Courier-Journal obituary.

There was also her very private and generous side revealed in her will after she died at age 87 leaving the Waterfront Botanical Gardens more than $5 million. “We had no idea it was coming,” said Waterfront Botanical Gardens President Kasey Maier.

Nor did Leslie’s neighbor and friend Marilyn Taylor. Taylor first met Leslie about 35 years ago, the day before Leslie was to have her vocal cords removed – the result of smoking-induced cancer that left her speaking through an air passage in her throat for the rest of her life.

Leslie, an only child who was briefly married, was the long-time owner of Vine Crest Kennels, a popular, well-worn facility she would donate in 2016 to what became GRRAND Central Station Kennel for rescued Golden Retrievers.

Her father, Fred Bruce Tetzel, a former vice-president of sales at Louisville Gas & Electric, died in 1985 at age 87, and her mother, Helen Downing Tetzel, died in 2006 at age 98. The only other family members at the time of Leslie’s death were a niece and great niece.

“She just loved flowers and animals, her yard and her ponds, and every time we went somewhere she would meet people who kept their dogs at her kennel. She would never remember their names, but she would always remember the names of their pets,” remembered Taylor.
If you visited our site after September of 2019, you would have seen a beautiful bed of annuals as a temporary feature in the Gardens. Thanks to a generous donation from the Robert W. Rounsavall, Jr. Family Foundation at the end of 2019, this bed will be transformed into a plaza fountain with an interchangeable garden bed. The plaza fountain will be located near the main entrance of the Graeser Family Education Center and will sit adjacent to the Beargrass Creek Pathway. We are grateful for the Rounsavall Family Foundation’s support and look forward to unveiling the Plaza Fountain in 2020.

EDUCATION 100 UPDATE

In 2019 our group of Education 100 donors grew to include almost 100 individuals, foundations, and businesses. Each of these donors committed $10,000 toward the construction of the Graeser Family Education Center and Gardens. This extraordinary group of donors have collectively contributed over $1 million toward the project. As a result, each of the donors are permanently recognized on the Graeser Family Education Center and Gardens. This year, 2019, these donors committed $10,000 toward the construction of the Graeser Family Education Center and Gardens. This was the Year of Construction.

We went from a concrete slab in January to a fully-functional, finished event space that holds 250 people in September. During the year, Whittenberg Construction completed their work on the building. T&C Contracting continued site work on the Beargrass Creek Pathways, the plaza, planting areas, temporary gravel parking lot, water wall and much more. The Horticulture team and volunteers worked very hard through the summer drought to prepare the gardens for the Oct. 4 opening. There were no major delays and everything looked beautiful for our opening week events. In the weeks leading up to opening the site looked very much like a construction site. Last minute fixes and changes were made. Gardens were planted.

After the Grand Opening, there was more work to be done. Thanks to those who sponsored elements of the Gardens, we were able to move forward with:

2019 CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The bronze sculpture by Rowland Jones, Capriccio, sponsored by Patricia Sullivan
The Sally and Charlie Moyer Pollinator Garden, surrounded Capriccio
The Duthie Gardens, sponsored by the Duthie Family in memory of Mary Lee Duthie
The Dr. John and Bonnie Roth and Family large plaza bench
The granite water wall, sponsored in memory of Jayne Harlan Nichols
The Kentucky Native Gardens, sponsored in memory of Betty and Robert Bonner
The Plaza Fountain, sponsored by the Robert W. Rounsavall, Jr. Family Foundation

Small bench sponsors, donor wall sponsors, the donors in the Education 100, and of course, the Graeser Family

- The Jim and Christina Ullum Family
- Leslie Taylor
- Robert W. Rounsavall, Jr. Family
- The Unversal Credit Union Family
- The Kentucky Native Gardens, sponsored in memory of Betty and Robert Bonner
- The Sally and Charlie Moyer Pollinator Garden, surrounded Capriccio
- The Duthie Gardens, sponsored by the Duthie Family in memory of Mary Lee Duthie
- The Dr. John and Bonnie Roth and Family large plaza bench
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### REVENUE

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Foundations &amp; Corporations</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>In-Kind</td>
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### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

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<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>$13,917,102</strong></td>
</tr>
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The October grand opening of the Graeser Family Education Center was attended by about 60 volunteers in October at Hidden Hill Nursery. Plants that would one day find a home in the main WBG site are indigenous that would one day find a home in the main WBG site.

Another crew of about 50 volunteers on call nearly the whole month of September to help us get all the plants in the ground in time for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 4.

In addition to our regular 250 active volunteers, 2019 saw the creation of a dedicated group of volunteers for the Earth-lovers who are interested in connecting with other like-minded friends on the principles of environmental education, sustainability, and strengthening cultural life in our hometown.

VOLUNTEERS

The successful grand opening of the Graeser Family Education Center required hundreds of volunteer hours throughout the year. In addition to our usual participation in community outreach events, a dedicated group of volunteers tended to our new plants and instruction on all topics WBG - from site history, to the people of the project, to the current construction and future plans, to the state of the soil and plants in the garden. Outside of the core training, there are also supplemental classes on more specific topics of interest. Armed with this knowledge, Garden Guides are on hand during our visiting hours to welcome guests and answer any questions that they have about the project. In November, 2019, two classes of 60+ Garden Guides graduated from the program.

Conceived in January 2016, the Waterfront Botanical Gardens’ Cultivators is a volunteer group of earth-lovers who are interested in connecting with like-minded friends on the principles of environmental education, sustainability, and strengthening cultural life in our hometown.

Cultivators is a volunteer professional group for earth-lovers who are interested in connecting with like-minded friends on the principles of environmental education, sustainability, and strengthening cultural life in our hometown.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have undergone many hours of instruction on all topics, WBG - from site history, to the people of the project, to the current construction and future plans, to the state of the soil and plants in the garden. Outside of the core training, there are also supplemental classes on more specific topics of interest. Armed with this knowledge, Garden Guides are on hand during our visiting hours to welcome guests and answer any questions that they have about the project. In November, 2019, two classes of 60+ Garden Guides graduated from the program.

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THANK YOU, DONORS!

$1,000,000+

Emil and Nancy Graeser
James Graham Brown
Foundation

$500,000-$999,999

Emil and Nancy Graeser
Kentucky Energy and
Power Foundation Inc.

$50,000-$99,999

Anonymous
Nancy D. Bush

$1,000-$2,499

Anne Marie Beeler

$50-$99

Beth Graham

$500-$999

Troy Williams

We make every effort to ensure that our donor and volunteer list is accurate and up-to-date. Our donor listing reflects cash received from donors during 2023. If you see an error, please contact: (502) 276-5404 or info@waterfrontgardens.org

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
THANK YOU, DONORS! (CONTINUED)

TRIBUTES IN MEMORY
AND IN HONOR
Sidney Anderson
Martha Bernhard and William Nash
Lila Boden
Julie Campbell
Will and Louise Cunningham
Elizabeth Dalton
George and Mary Lee Duthie
Mavis Howard Foster
Ben and Helen Franklin
Emil and Nancy Graesser
Dorothy Grooming
Michael Anthony Kraft
Page Laughlin
Denis Littrell
Jill Marsh
Elena Matthews
Norma Kaye Moore
Louanne K. Oliver
Marilyn Paletti Lose
Linda Sheets
Trista Smith
Martin and Joan Steiner
Ellen Stites Thurber
Michael Willett
Gloria William Withwine
Nancy Wolff

IN-KIND DONATIONS
750 Four Productions
A Healthy Address
Apocalypse Brew Works
Atria Senior Living
Ben Sollee
Bisig Impact Group
Bowling Nursery
Bristol Catering
Caudill Seed
David Wicks and River City Paddle Sports
Edible Louisville
Falls City Brewing Co.
Fante’s Coffee
Franke Otte Nursery and Garden Center
Frost Brown Todd, LLC
Hagerty Engineering
Heine Bros. Coffee
Hidden Hill Nursery
Landscapes by Dallas Foster, Inc.
Larry and Virginia Hunt
Limbwalker Tree Service
Live Well Natural Health
Louisville Grows
Louisville Salt Cave
Louisville/Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD)
MPI Printing
Outfront Media
Pat Haragan
Peace of the Earth
Phocas
Relay Design Co.
Richard Shu
Sea Ray of Louisville
St. Matthews Feed and Seed
Steve and Merry-Kay Poe
Stites & Harbison PLLC
Tavia Cathcart Brown
The Butchertown Social
The Inner Warrior
The Plant Kingdom
Tom Willburn and Chad Tolbert
Tom’s Terrariums
Trees Louisville
V-Grits
Valerie J. Smith
Waterfront Development Corporation

ONE MORE
SPECIAL THANKS
In 2019 an anonymous donor sponsored the planting of 250,000 daffodil bulbs along Interstate 71 and the Waterfront Botanical Gardens site by Brightside. It is beautiful when they are all in bloom in March.

AND A LITTLE
RECOGNITION
Recipient of the 2019 GLI IncRedible Award for Non-Profit of the Year