

Notes from the Gardens

Fall/Winter 2018

Healing with Horticulture

An Intern's Journey



Monk Botanical Gardens

Letter from the Director

A year of change...and you made it happen.



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Dear Fellow Garden Enthusiasts:

In August, I celebrated my one-year anniversary as the Executive Director of the Monk Botanical Gardens. More importantly, the organization has celebrated one year of growth and change. **YOU** have made this year a success through your love of and commitment to the Gardens. Thank you!

In just twelve months, the Gardens has seen tremendous growth in its staff, programs and volunteers. So far, in 2018, we have provided 78 mission focused events and programs, serving a total of 3300 people, of which 50% were children. In addition, we have 101 active volunteers, four summer interns, three part-time staff and one full-time staff (that's me) all working towards one goal-connecting people to plants.

Our cover story was written by one of our summer interns, Eva Cler. Eva shares with you how working at the Gardens helped heal her after a traumatic event. Each summer, donors like you, support our internship program, which provides young adults with the opportunity to experience what it is like to work in a botanical garden.

Eva's healing experience was made possible because of your support.

In this issue of Notes from the Gardens, you will read about the impact your gifts have made and will continue to make in 2018. You will meet our newest board member, Chelsea Trinkner and read about Bonnie Anderson, who donated hours of hard work to grow a gorgeous sunflower tower. You will discover the variety of programs we offered to 1500 children this season, along with a photo gallery of our events. Finally, you will learn about upcoming programs to be held throughout the winter, because we embrace winter!

Although summer is over and fall is upon us, I encourage you to slow down, take a walk in the Garden and enjoy this time of harvest and beauty.

Meet you in the Gardens,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darcie E Howard".

Darcie E Howard

Healing with Horticulture

This past spring break I went on a rock climbing trip. I have been rock climbing for many years and love the sport. Although I know there are dangers involved, I never thought I would witness a deadly tragedy.

I have struggled with mental health issues in the past, and witnessing this death sent me into a downward spiral. Within days, I wound up in a mental health unit. After receiving treatment, I was determined to get myself back on track. I continued counseling, got back on the rock wall and applied for what sounded like a cute summer internship.

After an awkward phone interview and a not too shabby in-person interview, I was offered the internship at the Gardens. I took the offer with no second thoughts, but soon starting feeling hesitation and anxiety. I wasn't sure if I could handle the social interaction, the long days, or the stress of living with a board member and total stranger during this critical time of recovery. After giving it some thought, I realized I needed to



change my attitude and look at the opportunities that the internship would provide. Not only would I build my resume and my knowledge of biology, I could focus on making new habits, meeting new people, and learning to feel present in my own mind again.

As an enthusiast of fast paced activities, I never understood gardening. What do you gain from it? A tomato? A pleasant view? A sunburn? A bee sting? I, of course, received all of these things, but I also reaped the benefits of being outside in a positive, calming environment. There was a pattern to when I worked and what I did. A lot of my hours were spent talking to people, but there were many hours spent alone with my own thoughts. I took

lessons from nature's ways and practiced feeling present, in control, and strong. As the summer went on, I learned to control my negative thoughts and look at the garden with new eyes.

I now have an appreciation for what gardening is, and the unique value of spending time with nature. Whether I was among people or alone in the garden, I was receiving the therapeutic benefits of a horticultural space. The healing power of nature is real, and with conservation on the downfall and mental health issues on the rise, places like the Gardens are truly a treasure. Spending the summer in the Gardens has transformed and restored me. This internship will have a profound effect on me for many years to come.



A Note of Thanks

Shar Soto, Education Chair

As Chair of the Education Committee, I would like to express my gratitude to all of our donors. Your generous contributions have helped the Gardens increase our educational offerings and programs.

Thanks to you -

Elise Schuler worked with the Wausau School District in developing the Community Connections program. Over the course of six weeks, this program gave over 300 students the opportunity to learn about and experience nature through hands on activities.

Thanks to you - We set up Tots in the Garden, a program which allows children ages 3-5, to visit the Gardens every other week and learn through play, stories and art, why being outside is so much fun.

Thanks to you - We were able to work with the Boys and Girls Club to teach young members how to plant, care for and use produce from the garden.

Thanks to you - We will be conducting after school classes in four elementary schools and twenty-one 4K classes, to involve children in topics such as: gardening, wildlife, bugs, birds, native plants, and more.



Thanks to you - We will be offering workshops this fall to teach adults how to can, dehydrate and preserve produce from their own gardens.

This is just a partial list of what you have helped us to accomplish. There is so much more that the Gardens would like to do, but that will only be possible with your continued support. Thank you again, and come visit the Gardens soon.



Upcoming Programs

Nature's Nocturne: Seek & Explore A Weekend Family Adventure starting at Monk Gardens Oct. 11th 4:30-7:30pm.

Weekend Wonders Family Program Play, learn, and explore as a family in the Gardens. 2nd Sunday of the month 2-3:30pm.

Tots in The Gardens Each session will be an adventure with nature, using the alphabet as a guide. 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month 10am-11am.

Nature's Ornaments Use nature to make gifts for the holidays. Dec. 1st 10am.

Winter Wonders Camp Come explore the world of plants and animals in the winter. Dec 31st & Jan 1st 9am-12pm. Ages 5-8.

Luminary Snowshoe Walks Bring your family and friends to the Gardens for a luminary-lit snowshoe walk. Dec. 28th and Jan 25th 6pm-8pm

Sweetheart Luminary Snowshoe Walk For adults only. Bring someone you love for a romantic walk through the Gardens. Feb. 15th 6pm-8pm

Find out more @ monkgardens.org/programs

A Tunnel of Flowers

Tales of a Garden Steward



After a successful 28 year career as a dental hygienist, Bonnie Anderson retired and began volunteering for the Growing Great Minds program. This program provides environmental education to elementary school students. As part of this program, Bonnie wanted the children to help grow something for the Gardens that they could visit and play in. The idea for a tunnel of sunflowers and morning glories was born.

Bonnie and her husband spent hours clearing the chosen space from bramble and thistles. They weeded, tilled and pounded 7 ft. metal stakes into the ground to provide support for the tunnel. The students planted seeds and watched the flowers that would be trans-

Many of the students who helped plant the tunnel returned to see its progress, pulling their parents hands as they proudly showed them what they had helped to create.

planted to the tunnel grow. Over the next few months, Bonnie watched in awe at the impact the tunnel was making.

Many of the students who helped plant the tunnel returned to see its' progress, pulling their parents hands as they proudly showed off what they had helped to create. Bob Rogers, a photographer and Gardens volunteer, used the tunnel as a subject, capturing the tunnels growth. A trio of international counselors took selfies in the tunnel to record their visit. But Bonnie's most powerful experience came one morning while weeding.

A small boy and his grandma were walking past when the boy said, "Can I help you?" Smiling at the boy and looking at his grandma for approval, Bonnie said, "Of course you can". Over the next fifteen minutes the boy learned what a weed was, how to identify it and how to remove it. It is moments like this that every educator waits for, the moment when you see the connection a student makes to what you are teaching. Bonnie did not see the boy again, but she knows that on that day, the tunnel of flowers had served its purpose.

Board Spotlight

Chelsea Trinker

Until last December, Chelsea Trinker had no idea that the Monk Gardens even existed. "I was born and raised in Green Bay, graduated from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point and accepted a job working for Aspirus Wausau Hospital," she said. "The Gardens was practically in my backyard and I didn't even know it."

Being new to Wausau, Chelsea wanted a way to meet people and get involved in the community. She went on the United Way Website and started clicking on things that interested her. One of the things that caught her eye



was the Monk Gardens. "I was born with two black thumbs," she said. "I knew nothing about plants, but loved how the Gardens was trying to involve the community through special events". Chelsea contacted Darcie Howard and soon became a volunteer for the winter snowshoe walks. She enjoyed that experience so much that she volun-

teered for "Booze and Botany", even coming up with the name. "I think the Gardens is one of the best kept secrets in Wausau," she said, "But I don't want it to be a secret anymore. I want everyone to know and enjoy everything that the Gardens has to offer."

This passion and enthusiasm for the Gardens did not go unnoticed. In June, Chelsea became a member of the Board of Directors and now serves as the Board Secretary. She hopes to become an asset to the Gardens and looks forward to everything it has planned in the future.

Passionate People Wanted: Are you committed to the Monk Botanical Gardens' mission of being a premier botanical garden, providing opportunities to experience plants and understand their significance? We are seeking highly motivated people who are passionate about our mission and want to help the Gardens grow by providing time and talent to our Board of Directors. Interested in learning more? Contact Bob Reinertson at reinertson@ruderware.com.

Did you know...

Monk Botanical Gardens rents its facilities?



Perfect for weddings, birthday parties, corporate outings and family gatherings. Go to monkgardens.org for more information.



Summer Programming

In review



◀ Green Saturday

Plant Sale, Flea Market & Workshops.

Tots in the Gardens ▶

Connecting tots to plants all summer long.



◀ Booze & Botany

Artesian food, craft cocktails & demos.

Community Connections ▶

A summer in the dirt for over 300 Wausau students.



◀ Knitting in the Garden

New event highlighting the art of knitting. Over 60 people of all ages came to show off their work, learn from local experts and enjoy a gorgeous day in a beautiful setting.



◀ Dirt to Pot Cooking Series

This new workshop series highlighted simple and delicious meals demonstrated by local chefs. Each class began with a lesson about how to successfully grow a vegetable used in the dish of the night.

Stewards of the Gardens

Thank you to our Volunteers! Without our dedicated garden stewards offering their time, expertise and elbow grease, we would not be able to provide a variety of outstanding educational programs, unique and engaging events and beautiful themed gardens.

Timothy Allen
Barbara Amsrud
Bonnie Anderson
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Scott Thompson
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