



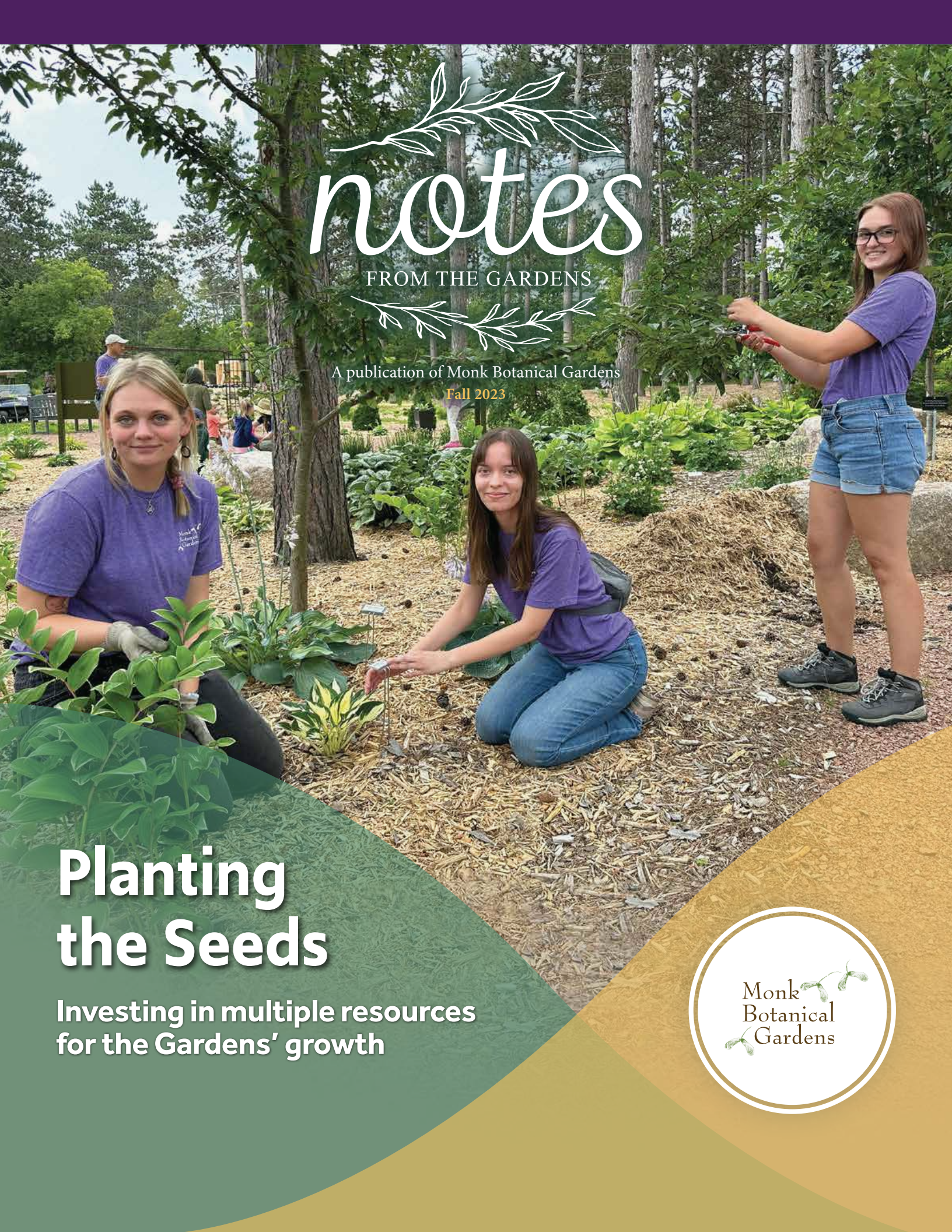
notes

FROM THE GARDENS



A publication of Monk Botanical Gardens

Fall 2023



Planting the Seeds

Investing in multiple resources
for the Gardens' growth



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Gardens Friends,

It's almost fall and we have had one heck of a busy season! But first, on behalf of all of us at the Gardens we want to express our sincerest gratitude for your continued support. Your dedication to our mission of fostering a love and appreciation for nature within our community has helped us achieve some amazing accomplishments.

We are thrilled to announce that the Gardens has undergone some exciting changes! With a fresh outlook and lively spirit, we have made several enhancements to our appearance. From meticulously curated displays of vibrant flowers to our stunning new water fountain, the grounds are looking better than ever before and there is a reason for that – new grounds staff!

Because of you, we continue to grow as a cherished resource for our community, and we are excited to announce the addition of new staff members to our team. Make sure to say hello to our three new grounds and facility department staff: Patrick Murphy, Cora Borgens and Pat Witt. They all have impressive backgrounds that align with our push for excellence and passion for the environment. We know that they will contribute to the Gardens' success while bringing their unique perspectives to our daily operations.

But wait, there's more! We have partnered with Hunter Industries/FXLuminaire and Reinders for our Blossom of Lights event happening again this October. This partnership will make this year's event even more spectacular than ever before. With vibrant lights throughout the gardens and interactive displays, your experience will be nothing short of magical. So bring your family, friends, and loved ones to see what all the buzz is about.

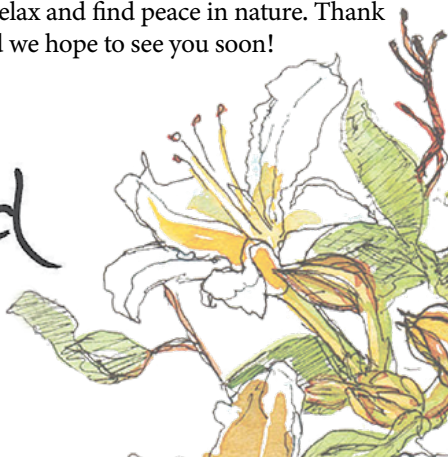
We are pleased to inform you about the new installation of our water fountain (donated by Cheryl Schwartz), which has become especially popular with visitors of all ages. Its calming babble and peaceful atmosphere provide a perfect backdrop to the Meditation Garden. Along with this, we've added two new yurts, creating Sprouts Garden Preschool's new campus. Finally, we are almost completed with Phase I of Sara's Storybook Garden. The plantings are popping with color and the donated butterfly benches and art pieces from NTC Alternative High School are bright and inviting. These additions have increased the capacity and scope of our educational programs, helping us meet the growing demand for programs in our community.

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation and invite you to come and visit Wausau's Happy Place this fall (my favorite time). There is no better place in Wausau to get away, relax and find peace in nature. Thank you for your continued support, and we hope to see you soon!

Warmly,



Darcie E. Howard
Executive Director



Darcie Howard, Executive Director

GARDENS STAFF

Darcie Howard - Executive Director
 Patrick Murphy - Facility & Grounds Director
 Elise Schuler - Education & Events Director
 Linda Schill - Development Manager
 Cora Borgens - Horticulture Manager
 Megan Johnson - Volunteer Coordinator
 & Administrative Assistant
 Kaytie Ruesch - Environmental Educator
 Pat Witt - Garden Supervisor
 Rebecka Hellweg - Sprouts Lead Teacher, Full Day
 Amanda Valencia - Sprouts Lead Teacher, Half Day
 Sadie Xiong - Summer Camp Staff
 & Sprouts Assistant Teacher
 Sarah Loth - Sprouts Assistant Teacher
 Linda Grudznske - Sprouts Assistant Teacher

Officers

Susan Lang, President
 Ann Lucas, Vice-President
 Paul Whitaker, Secretary
 Jon Plisch, Treasurer

Directors

Paul David, Holly Koeppel, Jody Maier,
 Mark Munson, Vickie Richmond Hawkins,
 Sheila Rossmiller, Tammy Stezenski

Mailing address

518 S 7th Ave, Wausau, WI 54401

Gardens address

1800 N 1st Ave, Wausau, WI 54401
 P: 715-261-6309
 E: info@monkgardens.org
www.monkgardens.org

Follow us!





BLOSSOM OF LIGHTS

Monk Gardens is honored to partner with 4H and H2N to celebrate the Hispanic tradition of “Day of the Dead” on Wednesday, November 1st during Blossom of Lights. This special event is one that people in Wausau and surrounding areas will NOT want to miss.

Wausau is full of cultural diversity (we have neighbors from Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Afghanistan, Congo, Syria, and Burundi). We are very excited to see that the community will be able to experience, learn, and participate in a celebration of a significant holiday that highlights part of our roots and is close to our hearts. With this event, we hope that people in our community connect and build relationships with other cultures that are settling in Central Wisconsin.

El Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a holiday that has been passed down by generations in our families and that is part of our culture. We have been celebrating it since we were growing up (Jasmine - every year with her grandmother in Guanajuato, Mexico), in our community, and in our schools (Mariana - during her school years, she used to write “Calaveritas literarias”, which are little poems that seek to talk a little about a family member, friend, or celebrity who passed away. These are written in rhyme and seek to highlight some specific characteristics of the protagonist).

This holiday gives us the opportunity to set up an ofrenda for people (and pets) in our lives that we still remember every day but are no longer physically present (for Jasmine is her great-grandmother, great-grandfather, grandfather, and cousin; and for Mariana is her brother, and grandparents). It is believed that the spirits of our loved ones that have passed away return to Earth on November 1st and 2nd. To welcome them we prepare an ofrenda (altar) that



is adorned with photos of our deceased loved ones, their favorite foods, and drinks. There are many other items that serve as symbolism like sugar skulls (representing the loved one’s soul), salt, candles, cempasúchil flowers (marigolds), water, crosses, copal, papel picado (paper cut-out decoration), and pan de muerto (sweet bread). The flowers mark the path that the dead must follow during the visit they make these days and are placed in the offerings and around the graves. Families visit the graves of their loved ones and set up offerings as well.

Like any other celebration, the Day of the Dead is filled with music and dancing. Please stop by our booths at the Gardens on November 1st from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. to celebrate with us.



Jasmine Carbajal
4-H Associate Educator for
Marathon & Wood Counties



Mariana Savela
WIPPS/H2N Program Manager



To read this article in Spanish,
follow this QR Code:

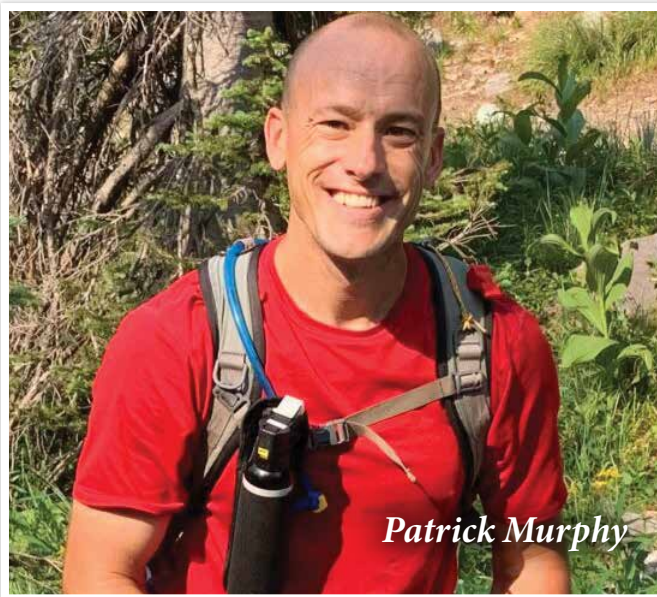


Oh, How Our Gardens Are Growing

Investing in new talent to see the fruits of our labor *Written by Pat Witt*

On any day you might find me in the Gardens telling visitors where to wander, directing volunteers, or just weeding or watering. Looks easy, right? As underneath it all the soil is teeming with the activity of enzymes, microorganisms, water and minerals sustaining and growing the plants, so too are we planning, designing, cultivating, managing and sustaining the operation of the gardens.

We are a new and different Gardens than 20 years ago and so is our team. The master plan must be implemented, the new programs developed, and the Gardens maintained to a greater standard of excellence than ever before. In April the 3 of us were hired to push forward these new plans.



Patrick Murphy

I am so grateful for our new garden management team. Pat Murphy, our Facilities Director, runs our operation, manages the projects, budgets, maintenance, and programs. I feel safe, supported, and appreciated in my efforts. With Cora Borgens, our Horticulture Manager, I am enthused by her excitement to create new gardens, her ability to help diagnose, document and maintain our plantings. As the Garden Supervisor I analyze every area with a critical



Pat Witt

eye and work with our volunteers who contribute hundreds of hours to maintain our Gardens. I feel enriched as the soil beneath our feet produces this wonder of nature that sustains us all and gives credence to the truth that Monk Botanical Gardens is Wausau's Happy Place.

As you wander through the Gardens and experience the peace therein, it is our intent that you will not so much see, but feel the work of our horticulture team, along with the influence of the many dedicated people who have started and continue to lend their expertise in providing an environment that engages, educates, and inspires our community.



Cora Borgens

Season Recap



This spring, summer and early fall have proven to be one of our busiest years on record in the Gardens. If you'd like to stay up to date on our current projects, events and activities, be sure that you've "LIKED" our Facebook page "Monk Botanical Gardens" to stay in-the-know and see pictures of our updates in the moment. But also be sure to carve out some in-person time in nature too! We'd love to see you and have the opportunity to say "Hello, Welcome to the Gardens today!"



Thanks to NTC Alternative High School for Sara's Garden additions!



A mural was designed for the Gardens' 20th Anniversary this year. Stop by and use it as a backdrop for your next photo!



Be sure to check out the new teak set in the Meditation Garden - donated by Jim Carl in memory of his wife Helen.



Two new yurts this summer! They were built to make room for the growth of our Sprouts Nature Preschool program.



Our new water feature near the pond's edge - donated by Cheryl Schwartz in honor and memory of her family members.

Intern Adventures

A summer of learning, friendship, and a lasting impression on the Gardens

Annabella Kennedy

Hello, my name is Annabella Kennedy. This year I am going to be a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; I am double majoring in Consumer Behavior and Marketplace Studies along with Environmental Science. This summer I was an Environmental Educator Intern at Monk Botanical Gardens. I chose this internship because I want to help improve our environment, and I think that teaching our youth the importance of our environment is a great place to start. I spent most of this summer working with summer camp and various field trips.

Read my full story using the QR code on page 7...



Danielle Singkofer

My name is Danielle Singkofer, and I was a Horticulture Intern. This school year I will be a junior at UWSP studying biochemistry. I was born and grew up in Wausau until moving away for college, and in that time the people around me were always welcoming and supportive of my personal growth. I volunteered over the years at my church, the humane society, and through Wausau East, and always had the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences there. I always had the opportunities I needed to succeed because of my community, so when looking for something to do this summer, I felt it was time to give back. Monk Botanical Gardens offered me a chance to do that while also learning to care for other people and the environment, and that seemed like the perfect place for me. I have always been passionate about education and nature and wanted to spend the summer outdoors, so when I found this internship, I didn't think twice before taking it.

Read my full story using the QR code on page 7...



Megan Schaefer

"I come to the garden aloneeeee" I hum as I unlock the front gate early one July morning and walk over to the potager area. All of a sudden, a striking set of eyes make contact with mine. I freeze. The opossum freezes. Are those babies on its back? Scrambling for my phone, I manage to capture a video of the creature as it promptly leaves the corn plot and walks into a cluster of red pines. Never having before thought of possums as adorable, they now rival donkeys for my favorite animal.

Read my full story using the QR code on page 7...





Ruby Ceman

Hi, my name is Ruby Ceman and I was a Horticulture Intern this summer. When I chose this position I had just spent a year living and working on a farm in the Bay Area, and knew I wanted to do something similar back in Wisconsin. I was attracted to the idea of being able to spend my summer working outside and learning more about the natural world, and also wanted an environment where I could feel connected and helpful to my community. Spending my summer at Monk lived up to all of that! My favorite memory of this internship was one Wednesday on “harvest night.” It was the point in the summer that our kitchen garden was really starting to produce, and our volunteer group might’ve gotten a little carried away because we found ourselves with tons of extra herbs and greens. Not many members showed up that night, so we decided to deliver the excess to Red Eye, a restaurant downtown. The manager was overwhelmed but delighted. It’s a simple memory but it felt like a special afternoon.

Read my full story using the QR code below...



Nathan Hartman

Hello, my name is Nathan. I was one of the Environmental Educator interns at Monk Gardens. This summer job provided me with many learning opportunities and new experiences. I am currently attending UW Madison with the intention of receiving an economic and history degree. I plan on getting my masters in education from Madison so I can become a high school social studies teacher in the future.

The main reason for selecting this internship was due to my interest in education. I had little experience working with children prior to my internship at Monk Gardens. At work, I got to interact with a wide variety of children almost every day. This was a great opportunity for me to pursue my interest in becoming a teacher. I was able to learn how to more effectively interact with kids and be a strong group leader. Which will help me in my future career of education.

Read my full story using the QR code below...



To read their full stories,
follow this QR Code:



A Vision of “What Could Be” Inspires a Gift from the Heart

Written by Linda Schill

We have some truly incredible news to share with you! Recently, we received an anonymous gift that has us feeling extra grateful and inspired.

A local Wausau couple, whose identity you will never know, made a generous \$100,000 donation to establish the Visions of Growth Endowment Fund, designated to support garden enhancements and internship development at Monk Botanical Gardens. Just the thought of it fills our hearts with immense joy! While it's hard not to shout their names from the rooftop, we want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the wonderful friends who made this contribution.

The donors shared this sentiment, “We’ve been coming to the Gardens and volunteering here for many, many years. We find great enjoyment here, and each time we walk out of the gates of Monk Gardens we always feel better for having visited. It’s such a beautiful creation. Our hope is to help sustain the Gardens forever and to make it more visible for everybody to enjoy.”

The beauty of an endowment fund is that it relies on a long-term investment strategy to sustain not just the gardens spaces, but also the educational initiatives that make Monk Botanical Gardens an invaluable resource for our community. By investing in our future, we can continue to offer innovative programming, engage with schools, and provide a sanctuary for reflection, connection, and personal growth.

The donors went on to say, “Every single gift is important, every single dollar. There was a time that we couldn’t have given this much money, but we still gave what we could at the time. We’ve been blessed with enough. We’ve lived a comfortable life without extravagant things, we’ve raised our family, and now we believe it’s time to share a little more of what we have with the community and the places that have added beauty, comfort and peace to our lives over the years.”



These donors share our same appreciation of the many who’ve contributed in various ways to help the Gardens grow, year after year. Gifts of volunteer service, membership renewals, annual fund donations, gifts of shared expertise, and simply attendance at programs and events. It all adds up, and this work requires a variety of “seeds planted” to create a beautiful Garden for all to enjoy.

The donors also humbly added, “We have no idea how Monk Botanical Gardens might possibly change because of our decision to establish this endowment. But, we believe in the gardens vision for growth and want it to be a ‘forever happy place’ in our community for ALL people of ALL ages to enjoy. We hope by planting this financial gift now it will continue to grow into a gift for everyone, for generations to come.”

We couldn’t agree more! TOGETHER, we will continue to cultivate a vibrant and blooming sanctuary, a place where nature’s wonders inspire, educate, and bring joy to all who walk through our gates. Thank you for being a part of our journey and supporting Monk Botanical Gardens.

The Visions of Growth Endowment Fund will accept individual gifts and funds of various types, invest those gifts and funds for long-term growth, and distribute income from those investments to support garden enhancements and internship development - all in alignment and in furtherance of Monk Botanical Gardens’ mission.

If you would like to make a gift to the Visions of Growth Endowment Fund or start a conversation about planned giving to support the Gardens in a new and visionary way, please contact Linda Schill at 715-600-1166.

FALL & WINTER EVENTS

Hands-on Plants Workshops

Relax by the fire while you create decor for your home, inside and out, using natural materials found in the Gardens! Refreshments and a glass of wine included.

September 26 & 27 - Scarecrows

November 14 & 15 - Porch Pots

November 28 & 29 - Wreaths

December 5 & 6 - Gnomes

December 12 & 13 - Kissing Balls

Hands-on Plants Kids

Running consecutively with most Hands-on Plants workshops!

Solstice & Equinox Celebrations

Fall: September 22 • 4:00 - 6:30 pm

Winter: December 21 • 4:00 - 6:30 pm

The autumnal equinox is a time to celebrate the harvest and practice gratitude. Join us for a harvest of the Gardens and enjoy music by the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra. All ages can participate!

Enjoy the shortest day of the year with a night hike, an activity to give back to nature, and traditional winter solstice candle & wreath activities.

Tots in the Gardens

Fall & Winter:

September thru December • 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 10:00 am

Every month is a new theme, and each session includes an activity or craft, and a story. Learn about plants, birds, bugs, and the tools you can use to explore nature with your 3-5 year old.

RSVP for each week opens 14 days ahead of time.

Dress for the weather!

Blossom of Lights

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings through October

Visit our new event webpage www.BlossomOfLights.org for all the details. This immersive experience for all ages will delight with a botanical-inspired sea of special visual effects. Stroll through the myriad of dramatic, artistic lights and light sculptures gracing the various spaces around 10 acres of the Gardens.

Blossom of Lights will take you through the Gardens and end at the Kitchen Garden and Potager, where you can enjoy Scarecrows on Parade and purchase shirts, dinner from a local food truck or vendor, and beer & refreshments!

Blossom of Lights Theme Nights

Friday, October 6 • Late Night

Blossom of Lights open 7:00 - 11:00 pm

Thursday, October 12 • Music & Lights

Stroll through the Gardens and enjoy background music from 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Thursday, October 19 • Pet Friendly Night

Bring your four-legged friends for a stroll through nature illumination from 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Saturday, October 28 • Halloween Event

Dress in costume, enjoy candy and Halloween activities throughout the night from 6:30 - 8:30pm

Wednesday, November 1 • Day of the Dead

Read more about this cultural celebration on page 3 of this newsletter. Taking place from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Visit the Blossom of Lights event webpage to purchase tickets and learn more!



BECOME A PERENNIAL LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBER!

By including the Gardens in your will, trust, and other estate plans, you are creating an investment of a lifetime, and ensuring the Gardens' educational opportunities and beautiful designed gardens will be offered in your community for generations to come.

Call us today at 715-261-6309 for more information or to inform us of your planned gift.

GROWING MINDS & HEARTS:

Sprouts Garden Preschool

Written by Elise Schuler, Education & Events Director

Starting this fall, Monk Botanical Gardens' Sprouts Garden Preschool is offering a full-day class, and additional before and after care options.



well-balanced he was throughout the year. We enrolled Gabe for full day Sprouts because we knew he would thrive. I think he may be the luckiest one in our family to experience such a holistic, nurturing outdoor early childhood education”.

At Monk Botanical Gardens, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to experience the joys of nature-based education. That’s why we’re transitioning to an income-based tuition model to make our Sprouts Garden Preschool accessible for all families in our community. We’re committed to creating an equitable and inclusive environment where every child can reach their full potential, no matter what.

Sprouts Garden Preschool integrates nature, gardening, outdoor exploration, and hands-on experiences to foster a love of learning and respect for the environment. With the addition of full-day classes and extended care, parents can have peace of mind while their little ones enjoy a nurturing environment throughout the entire day. Our two new yurt classrooms offer a cozy and comfortable space for imaginative play, storytelling, and exploration.

At Sprouts Garden Preschool, we wholeheartedly believe in the transformative power of nature-based education, cultivating curious minds and nurturing kind hearts as we embark on an incredible journey of learning, growth, and environmental stewardship.

Gabe enrolled in Sunflower Sprouts (a half-day 3 year old class) last year, and was a joyful addition to the group mid-year. He felt at home and we were happy to be able to have him join us for a few weeks of Summer Camp and then continue with us this school year as well.



Gabe’s mom, Amy, shared that “We have always valued spending time outdoors with our children. When we moved from Madison last year, I had no idea an outdoor preschool program existed! A gentleman at the YMCA told me about it and I immediately reached out. Our son had a spot! We saw how happy and



THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS, THE GARDENS CONTINUES TO GROW!

MEDIA:



MAJOR:



PATRON:



FELLOW:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| CoVantage Credit Union | Lewitzke Foundation | Turf MDs |
| CoVantage Cares Foundation | Nicolet National Bank | Wausau Early Birds Rotary Club |
| Great Northern Distilling | Northwoods Financial Strategies / Brant Meyer | Wild Birds Unlimited |
| Green Lawn | Peoples State Bank | Wisconsin Public Service Foundation |
| Underground Sprinklers | Ruder Ware | |
| J&D Tube Benders | | |

FRIEND:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 14 West | Olson Tire & Auto Service | Whitewater Music Hall & Brew Works |
| Associated Bank | REYES Coca-Cola Bottling | Community Arts Grant Program of the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin, with funds provided by the Wisconsin Arts Board, a state agency, the Community Foundation, and the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation |
| DigiCOPY Wausau | Surgical Associates of Wausau, SC | |
| Macco Floor Coverings | Wausau Area Garden Club | |
| NC WI Master Gardeners | Wausau Awards & Engraving | |
| Northwestern Wisconsin Associates | Wausau Breakfast Optimists | |
| Olson Auto Body & Paint | Wausau Noon Optimists | |



Mailing address: 518 S 7th Ave, Wausau, WI 54401
Gardens address: 1800 N 1st Ave, Wausau, WI 54401

WAUSAU'S HAPPY PLACE.

A place where
Nature is Illuminated.

Open now for a first look at our full
lineup of fall and winter programs!



BLOSSOM OF LIGHTS

Nature. Illuminated.

Stroll through Wausau's first ever walking light show
at Monk Botanical Gardens

October 5-28th
Thursday - Saturday Evenings

BlossomOfLights.org

Hosted by



SUPPORTED BY



Thank you to our sponsors!



Ruder Ware
CoVantage Credit Union
Wisconsin Public Service Foundation
Nicolet National Bank
Wild Birds Unlimited