

# THE GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



**THE GARDENS**  
ON SPRING CREEK

City of  
**Fort Collins**



## OUR VISION

To enrich the lives of people and foster environmental stewardship through horticulture.

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## OUR MISSION

To be a world-class botanic garden that is community oriented, educational, experiential and sustainable.

## FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR **ASHLEY KRUEGER**

2022 was a significant year for The Gardens on Spring Creek. We closed a chapter in our story as we said goodbye to our director of 14 years, Michelle Provaznik, who moved to serve as CEO of the American Public Garden Association. Michelle led the Gardens on our Friends Board for 5 years and as the Director for 14 years of sustained growth. From the small seedling we were in 2008 with two gardens, 7 staff and an operation budget of \$500,000 to a thriving specimen 20 gardens, 50 staff and an operating budget of \$2.2 million. Providing strong and resilient leadership, she spearheaded multiple capital campaigns, team growth, a re-opening of significant proportions and continued growth through Covid-19. The Gardens and the Community are grateful for her service and leadership of this organization.

We also celebrated many new projects and milestones throughout the year. The Gardens joined 21 other public gardens across the continent to take part in the first IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) cohort with the American Public Garden Association. As part of this group of inspiring professionals, representatives of our garden critically examined, learned, grew and mapped paths forward in this important work. The IDEA committee at The Gardens will continue to engage in this important work including a refresh of all our interpretive signage to include both English and Spanish.

A benchmark year for our numbers, we moved from recovery to resilience coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout the year, we saw growth in our donor, volunteer, event and education programs, introducing new people to the Gardens and deepening existing relationships. Our beloved plant sale was back in person this year for the first time since the pandemic. We grew a record number of plants and sold out for the first time ever! Thank you for supporting The Gardens by participating in this important fundraising event. Finally, we redefined our curator role and started the formal process of rolling out a plant signage plan, labeling hundreds of thousands of plants now established in our new gardens.

Looking forward into 2023, it was an honor to serve The Gardens as Interim Director, and I look forward to turning the page on the next chapter of The Gardens on Spring Creek serving our community as a place of learning, respite, exploration, inspiration, celebration and abundant beautiful diversity.

Thank you for being a part of The Gardens family. See you among the flowers and bees,

*Ashley Krueger*

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# PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

## GARDENS FOR ALL

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Gardens for All is a multifaceted equity and access program to ensure everyone in our community has access to the benefits and experiences available at the Gardens on Spring Creek. Gardens for All is grant and donor funded, with significant support provided by the City of Fort Collins through the American Rescue Plan Act through 2024.

In 2022 we saw growth in all our Gardens for All programs, providing free or reduced access to The Gardens for 3,201 community members in need.

### ADMISSION PROGRAMS

**Ability Pass:** For disabled visitors who require caregivers, there is a \$3 admission for clients, and caregivers are admitted free. We provided 368 discounted visits, doubling the number from last year.

**SNAP Pass:** 419 community members who qualify for SNAP benefits visited during the day and during Pumpkins on Parade and Garden of Lights for \$1 admission.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

We provided \$8,050 in scholarships for 288 participants, a 113% increase from 2021. Scholarships are for youth education programming and school field trips.

## HORTICULTURE

As our gardens finish another year of growth, we are making great strides to professionalize and formalize our collection. With the redefining of our curator role, we rolled out the beginning of our plant signage plan during the end of 2022, adding hundreds of new, updated plant identification signs in the welcome garden, daylily garden, and flowering tree grove. By the end of 2023, we will add new plant signage to almost all the gardens.

In addition to the management of 12 acres of ever-changing gardens, we also acquired a Bureau of Land Management permit for a second year. The permit allows us to collect wild specimens, and we brought dozens of permitted, wild-collected taxa into the system thanks to collaboration with Denver Botanic Gardens.

The horticulture team, in partnership with CSU Horticulture, work hard all winter and spring to seed, grow and transplant starts for our spring plant sale. To the delight of staff and community members alike we were finally able to return the sale to an in-person format. Gardens staff and CSU partners grew over 32,000 plants and surpassed our own expectations by selling out of every single plant aside from a small handful of vegetable starts. This is a critical fundraiser for our Gardens.



# EDUCATION

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From our youngest learners in the Read and Seed preschool program, through elementary students in school programs and summer camps, to teens in our Project Hort program, The Gardens provides youth education programs for pre-kindergarten students through seniors in high school. Our adult education programs offer opportunities to learn about gardening, art, cooking, and our natural environment. This year we offered our first offsite plant walks in partnership with City of Fort Collins Natural Areas. Health and wellness programs continue to grow.

This year we saw growth in revenue and 42% growth in participation in our youth and adult programming, including nearly double the number of families participating in summer camp. In total, The Gardens education programs taught 9,489 students of all ages and garnered \$108,000 in gross revenue.

- **Youth Programs:** \$79,000 in revenue and 7,755 participants
- **Adult Programs:** \$29,000 in revenue and 1,734 participants

## PROJECT HORT: A Teen Volunteering Experience

Project Hort, short for horticulture, is a full summer stewardship and volunteer program for teens entering sixth through 12th grade who are passionate about gardening, plants, animals or the environment. Generously supported by OtterCares, this program provides participants opportunities to make new friends, practice professional skills while volunteering and learn all about philanthropy while designing, writing grants and implementing a community impact project.

In 2022, 15 local teens from 11 different schools volunteered over 2,500 hours collectively and impacted over 300 community members. Teens saw an increase in how much they believed they can make a difference and their openness to listening to other's point of views.



“Project Hort provided the opportunity for our teen to serve and work on projects as a team member and a leader. He learned time management skills and the value of service learning in a fun, nurturing yet professional environment.”

- Project Hort Parent

## VOLUNTEERS

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Volunteers are a gift to our organization. Without their support, we would be unable to provide the caliber of gardens, education, programming, and guest experience that we offer.

### VOLUNTEERS

This year was a record-breaking year for individual volunteer engagement, with 575 volunteers contributing over 13,800 hours—4,167 hours more than in 2021. Of the 575 volunteers, 255 were one-time volunteers and 320 were long-term volunteers.

### INTERNS

This year we received a Larimer County Workforce Innovation Grant to launch a comprehensive paid internship program. Through this grant, totaling just under \$150,000, The Gardens will offer up to 26 paid internships from 2022–2024.

Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development awarded over \$1.6 million in competitive grants to help fund impactful solutions to the region's biggest workforce challenges, focusing on employment, training, and skills development.

This year we hosted seven paid and six unpaid internships at The Gardens in our education, special events, and horticulture departments. The internships are open to college students and to adults looking to diversify or improve job skills.



## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EVENTS

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In 2022, The Gardens on Spring Creek's public special event and private rental programs were restructured under one events department, a strategic development that streamlined many aspects of the two programs, including staffing, resource coordination, and operational logistics.

Our beautiful botanic gardens continue to provide our community with an abundance of engaging public and private event opportunities while raising critical operational funds. During the past year, The Gardens hosted a wide variety of public and private events, including several multi-day public event series, fundraisers supporting our non-profit partner, and over one hundred private rentals, for a total of 147 event days, engaging a total of 47,935 individuals, and bringing in a total of \$615,573 in gross revenue and \$403,870 in net revenue.

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The strength of The Gardens stands solidly with our active partners in the community.

**Non-Profit Partners:** The Gardens partners with local organizations serving community members experiencing hardship to provide passes to the Gardens and Garden of Lights. This year we worked with our community partners to provide 883 passes to the event.

**Library Passes:** Select libraries offer check-out day passes to The Gardens. Anyone with a library card can check out a family pass for regular daytime admission to The Gardens. We have three active libraries and are bringing on three more libraries in 2023.



**We are proud to have partnered with the following organizations in the implementation of these programs:**

Best Buddies

CARE Housing

CASA of Larimer County

ChildSafe

Dementia Together

Foothills Gateway

Foster & Adoptive Families of Larimer County

Glenn A Jones MD Memorial Library

Housing Catalyst

La Familia

Larimer County Department of Human Services

Matthews House

Partners

Poudre River Public Library District

Poudre School District

Respite Care

SummitStone Health Partners

The Arc of Larimer Co

The Jacob Center

Thompson Valley School District

VA Peer Support

Wellington Public Library

# CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

The Gardens on Spring Creek and the Friends of the Gardens Board are grateful to the many local businesses and foundations that provide in-kind services and cash donations to our organization. Their support is critical to the success of our horticulture and education programs and community events.

Many thanks to our 2022 supporters.

## PROPAGATION PARTNERS

Fort Collins Nursery  
Fossil Creek Nursery  
Nutrien  
Rodahl and Co. CPAs  
Valpak  
Zak George Landscaping

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

Blue Federal Credit Union  
Blue Spruce Horticulture  
Hadfield, Stieben & Doutt  
HomeLight  
Madwire  
Mantooth Company  
Odell Brewing Company  
Russell + Mills Studios  
SummitStone Health Partners  
Trozan Insurance Agency

## EVENT SPONSORS

1st Bank  
Ace Hardware of Fort Collins  
Alpine Gardens  
Blue Spruce Horticulture  
BMW + Mini of Loveland  
Bohemian Foundation  
Colorado Allergy & Asthma  
Dellenbach Motors  
Downtown Ace Hardware  
Fort Collins Nursery  
Fossil Creek Nursery  
Lindgren Landscape  
Loveland Garden Center  
Mountain Valley Bank  
Nature in the City  
Northern Water Conservancy  
Odell Brewing Company  
Outpost Sunsport  
People and Pollinators  
Plant Select  
Poudre Pet & Feed Supply  
Rainbird  
Rocky Mountain Ace Stores  
SaveATree  
Savory Spice Shop  
Soukup, Bush & Associates  
The Women's Clinic  
Trozan Insurance  
Windsor Gardener  
Zak George Landscaping

## GRANTORS

Bohemian Foundation  
Fort Fund  
Nutrien  
OtterCares Foundation

## MEDIA PARTNERS

KUNC  
North Forty News  
Rocky Mountain Publishing



# MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

## GARDENS FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Gardens operations are supported by philanthropic revenue, earned revenue from admissions and programs, and public funding as part of the City of Fort Collins. This year we supported our operations with philanthropic funding from

- \$10,000 raised for Annual Beds and BirdHouse Villages
- \$100,000 gift for Outdoor Teaching Kitchen
- \$127,750 raised from Propagation Partners and Event Sponsors

## GARDEN A'FARE

After two years of reduced-capacity Date Night at The Gardens events due to the pandemic, The Friends of the Gardens were finally able to bring back their signature Garden a'Fare fundraiser. This year's event was bigger and better than ever, welcoming 500 guests to enjoy our fully activated botanic gardens at twilight.

**Member and Donor Support:** The Friends membership program counted 2,670 households in 2022. Being a Member with The Friends provides access to The Gardens and other benefits. The Friends also donated 168 memberships to families enrolled in Early Childhood Education in Poudre and Thompson School Districts.

**Overall, The Friends donated \$200,000 to The Gardens on Spring Creek through funds raised from membership, special events and their annual appeal.**

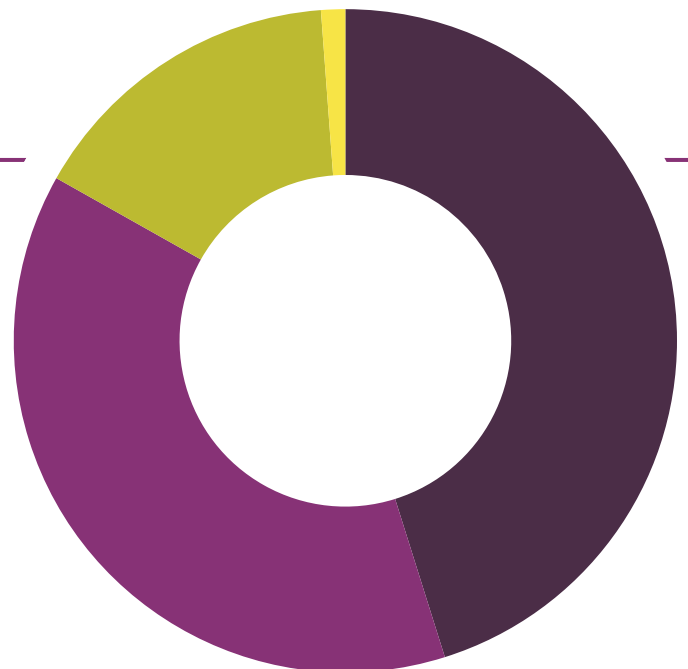
Thank you to the Friends and their ongoing support of The Gardens on Spring Creek.

### WITH GRATITUDE:

The Gardens would not be where we are today without The Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek. The Friends is the non-profit (501c3) that supports the Gardens on Spring Creek, a City of Fort Collins Cultural Services facility. The Friends is a member-based organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its mission is to cultivate a world-class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy. In 2022 they made a significant contribution to the success of The Gardens on Spring Creek.

## REVENUE

- City of Fort Collins | \$957,444
- Earned Revenue | \$806,021
- Contributed Revenue | \$332,195
- In-Kind Donations | \$24,968.97





# BY THE NUMBERS

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## HORTICULTURE

- Overwintered more than 9,000 perennial plants for 2023 Plant Sale
- Planted close to 1,000 Camassia in the Prairie Garden and Prairie Stream
- 1 Bureau of Land Management seed collection permit obtained, for a second year
- Expanded The Gardens weed guide by over 40+ species
- 2 plants in Plant Select® trials- one in ground and one in propagation

## COMMUNITY GARDEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

- 5,816 pounds of produce grown in Garden of Eatin' donated to Food Bank for Larimer County
- 53,147 pounds of produce donated to Food Bank through the Plant it Forward program
- 2,663 pounds of produce dropped off at The Gardens and donated to Food Bank for Plant it Forward program
- 167 Community Garden plots rented to community members
- 700 volunteer hours contributed by community gardeners to maintain the gardens
- At the close of the community garden season there were 50 people on the waitlist
- The grape pergola in the Garden of Eatin' was replaced
- More than 5,000 seedling transplants were planted in Garden of Eatin'

## BUTTERFLY HOUSE

- 42 different species from our suppliers
- 3 additional species donated by guests

## PUBLIC EVENTS

- 31 event days
- 44,943 participants
- \$579,675 gross revenue
- 32,711 plants sold at Spring Plant Sale
- 500 tickets sold to Urban Homestead Tour
- 7 concerts held, with 8,706 tickets sold/distributed
- 432 tickets sold to Garden a'Fare
- 5,335 tickets sold to Pumpkins on Parade
- 16,882 tickets sold to Garden of Lights

## PRIVATE EVENTS

- 116 private events held
- 2,992 guests at private events



## EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 2,529 students in-person school tours
- 4,670 participants in Read and Seed
- 98 families served through Summer Camp programs
- 1,734 adult students learning onsite and virtual

## MEMBERSHIP

- 4 member mornings held
- 2,670 memberships sold
- \$201,786 membership revenue
- 55% renewal rate

## DEVELOPMENT

- \$127,750 from Propagation Partners and Event Sponsors
- \$135,667 grants awarded
- \$48,910 in Annual Campaign + CO Gives Day gifts

## VOLUNTEERS

- 575 volunteers
- 13,803 hours contributed

## GIFT SHOP

- \$113,994 in sales
- 20 state/local vendors featured

## COMMUNICATIONS

- 379,005 total website visitors
- 7,900 Facebook Likes and 9,100 Facebook Followers
- 4,635 Instagram followers
- 32 articles in North Forty News
- 9 blog posts written
- 3 issues of NoCo Bloom published with more than 50,000 issues each
- \$52,382 in donated media

## VISITATION

- 297 Colorado zip codes of guests
- 50 states represented by guests plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico
- 69,047 total visitors, including 24,435 paid admissions

## GARDENS FOR ALL

- 5,730 community participants
- 368 Ability Pass participants
- 296 SNAP Pass Participants
- 179 free PSD and TSD Early Childhood Education family memberships

## EXHIBITIONS

- 9 sculptural micro-habitats in the Bird House Villages Exhibit

