

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

*the*  
**GARDENS**  
*on Spring Creek*



*Take Root. Grow. Flourish.*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR **MICHELLE PROVAŽNIK**

Thirty years ago, the idea for a community horticulture center was planted. For the last four years we have worked hard to bring that vision to life through raising funds, building support, designing a world-class garden and participating in extensive development review.

On November 7, we were ecstatic to mark a significant milestone in completing The Gardens Master Plan with the groundbreaking of five acres of new gardens. The Great Lawn, Undaunted Garden, Foothills and Prairie Gardens will transform our site and our programming. We are looking forward to:

- Thousands of children learning about the importance of our native ecosystems and the beautiful plants found in them.
- Residents and tourists from across the country coming to visit the only “Undaunted Garden” in the United States while learning that waterwise gardening and beauty can be synonymous.
- National performers and local arts organizations providing one-of-a-kind entertainment experiences on the Great Lawn.
- Traveling art exhibits that will transform our gardens into an outdoor gallery.
- Expanded community events such as Garden of Lights, Nature’s Harvest Fest, and Halloween Enchanted Garden.

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

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

2017 was a pivotal year for our organization and the kick-off to several years of change as we transform to fulfill our vision of being a world-class botanic garden that is community oriented, educational, experiential, and sustainable.





## VOLUNTEERS

Whether an individual or part of a group, one-time or once a week, The Gardens cannot do what it does each year without our volunteer corps. This year was no exception with 696 volunteers contributing 9,326 hours of time equaling \$242,196 at the Colorado rate for volunteer time. This is equivalent to 4.5 staff—almost half of The Gardens current FTE's.

Thank you to the following agencies, departments and corporate groups for volunteering with The Gardens:

Americorps/Reading Corps  
Associates in Family Medicine  
Boy Scouts of America  
Cargill  
City of Fort Collins Utilities  
City of Fort Collins Waste Reduction and Recycling  
Colorado Allergy and Asthma Center  
CSU Camp 1870  
CSU Occupational Therapy  
CSU Wellness  
Foothills Gateway  
FRCC Environmental Education  
FRCC Horticulture  
HP Inc.  
Intel  
Kaiser Permanente  
Larimer County Conservation Corps  
Larimer County Workforce Center  
Mortenson  
National Charity League  
Northern Colorado Daylily Club  
Otero  
OtterBox  
Persons in Progress  
Rocky Mountain Research Station  
Security Service Federal Credit Union  
The Matthews House  
United States Air Force – Cheyenne 373 TRS/  
Detachment 21  
United Way  
Volunteer Fight Club  
Volunteers of America RSVP  
Whole Foods Market  
Woodward, Inc.

## FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK

The Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek is the non-profit partner of the Gardens on Spring Creek, a City of Fort Collins 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. Over the years, their support and hard work have been essential to establishing and growing The Gardens.

In 2017, the Friends Board was instrumental in securing final funding for the expansion of our gardens. This was accomplished through additional fundraising and advocacy for additional funding from the City of Fort Collins. Another milestone was achieved when memberships surpassed 600 member households for the first time, a 27% increase over 2016 – a huge accomplishment!

Many thanks to the 2017 Board of Directors: Dulcie Willis, Jesse Eastman, Jeffrey Cullers, Randy Morgan, Roger Warren, Marcia Petrun, Nathaniel Budd and new board member Alex Stern for all their efforts to make the year a huge success.





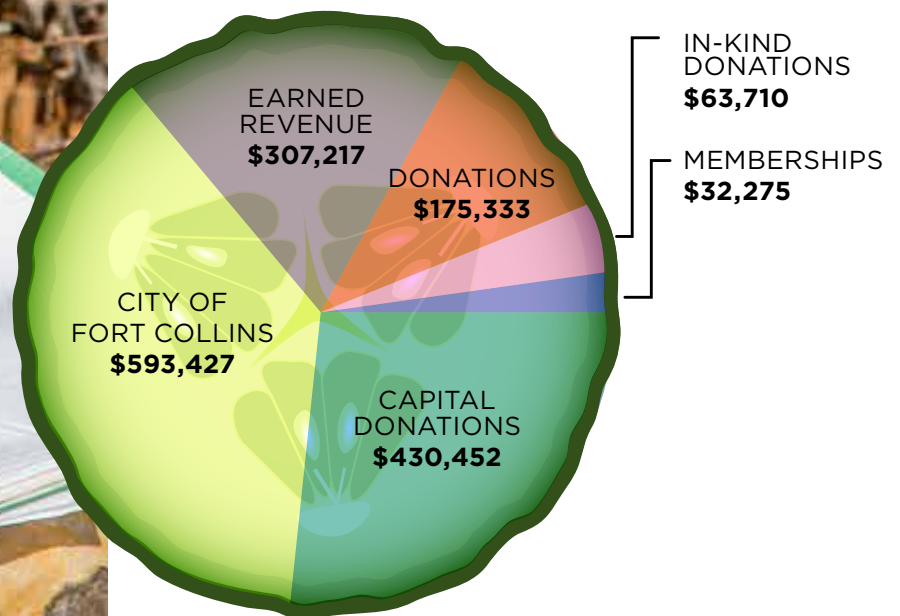
## EDUCATION

With over 6,000 students ranging from two to ninety-two, the heart of our mission to enrich the lives of people and foster environmental stewardship through horticulture can be found in our education programs.

We re-introduced Garden to Fork classes with sold-out classes, offered new classes geared for families and offered new bird-themed tours in partnership with The Bird Conservancy, Audubon Rockies and Trees, Water and People.

In addition to our regular class lineup, we partnered with the Northern Chapter of the Colorado Native Plant Society to host the first annual Native Plant Week, offered programming for pollinator week and co-organized Aves Sin Fronteras—our first bi-lingual event.

## FUNDING 2017





## HORTICULTURE

The horticulture team grew over 20,000 plants for our Spring Plant Sale. Most were sold during the event and the remainder were used in our gardens or donated to other organizations needing plants.

Several small garden renovation projects were completed around the site resulting in the addition of 45 new plant varieties and additional 33 bulb varieties not previously in our collection.

In July, Jamie Burghardt, Operations and Horticulture Manager, joined The Gardens team. He brings a broad experience from other public gardens and has implemented several changes to enhance the guest experience through horticulture.

Horticulture staff is busy putting plant lists and orders together for the build-out of our new gardens—a task that will continue into 2018. You will also find several perennials in the hoop house grown by staff and volunteers in preparation for the expansion.

## COMMUNITY GARDEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

Community gardening continues to be very popular in Fort Collins. The newest community garden to open was at Twin Silo Park. Over 30 new plots were made available to the community at the end of 2017 and filled immediately for next year's growing season. The Gardens now manages over 160 garden plots across the City which are available for residents of our community.

Snow after Mother's Day delayed the start of the gardening season and meant little fruit production on our local trees. Fortunately, local gardeners rallied donating 40,746 pounds of produce to the Food Bank for Larimer County through the Plant it Forward program including 5,870 pounds grown by Gardens staff and amazing Eatin' Effort volunteers in the Garden of Eatin'.

## VISITATION 2006-2017







## SPECIAL EVENTS

Our special events bring our mission, programming, and community connections to life. With over 35,000 guests experiencing The Gardens through our special events in 2017, these endeavors are fundamental to our overall success. 2017 reminded us how much weather can impact our outdoor events. The year started off with the best weather we've had in years for the Spring Plant Sale, leading to record sales and attendance. Thanks to the horticulture programs at Colorado State University and Front Range Community College, all of our partners, and volunteers for making this event a huge success!

Some of our summer and fall events were not as fortunate as rain, cold temperatures, and/or wind impacted attendance at Garden a'Fare Beer Tour, Nature's Harvest Fest and Halloween Enchanted Garden. Despite these impacts, we ended the year strong with Garden of Lights. This was due in large part to warm dry weather throughout December and a new collaboration with Woodward who loaned us their holiday structures as their Drake site was closed for construction. The new holiday village was loved by all—and children experienced a close-up view of the toy shoppe! This event's visitation reached 30,000 guests and revenue was up 50%—a phenomenal way to wrap up 2017.





# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

**Audubon Rockies** — Nature's Harvest Fest, Habitat Hero programs and guest teacher in youth programs, school programming and Aves Sin Fronteras partner

**Bird Conservancy** — Aves Sin Fronteras and school programming, Nature's Harvest Fest

**Boy Scouts of America** — host eagle scout projects

**Boys and Girls Club** — STEAMfest, education programs and volunteer opportunities, outreach programming at Wellington Gardens

**City of Fort Collins departments** — work with Utilities to present the High Plains Landscape Workshop, CSU Water Festival and adult classes; work with the Parks Department's Botanical Team and Safety Committee; partnered with Parks, Park Planning, and Neighborhood Services to build community gardens in parks; co-host school field trips, camp programming and planned Nature's Harvest Fest with the Natural Areas Department, work with Wellness Team on classes for City employees, Nature in the City

**Colorado State University** — Departments of Horticulture; Entomology; Human Development and Family Studies; Occupational Therapy; Natural Resources; Gillette Entomology Club — partner on events, grant proposals, host internships; Service Learning, and Key Cluster, SLICE, Silver Wings, Wellness, CSU Net Impact, NoCo Bloom, and club volunteer opportunities for students

**Cooking Studio** — Garden to Fork cooking classes

**EarthBeat Dance** — Youth programming

**FC Rotaract** — Rotary volunteers assist with events

**Food Bank for Larimer County** — 5,870 pounds of produce grown at The Gardens was donated to the Food Bank; 40,746 pounds donated by local gardeners through Plant it Forward

**Fort Collins Museum of Discovery** — Youth programs, outreach and Halloween Enchanted Garden

**Front Range Community College** — Spring Plant Sale partnership with Horticulture Department; Environmental Education Department — youth programs; intern host; volunteer site for service learning projects

**Front Range Ranch and Rescue** — Nature's Harvest Fest

**Garden Clubs** — including the Northern Colorado Daylily Club, Rocky Mountain Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, and Colorado Dahlia Society

**Girl Scouts of Colorado** — complete service learning projects as part of scout badge programs

**Herbal Heart Apothecary** — Nature's Harvest Fest

**High Plains Environmental Center** — partner on education programs and Spring Plant Sale

**INPIRE Initiative network** — Working with group of city, county, public and private environmental organizations to provide environmental education programming to NW Fort Collins. Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, City of Fort Collins Departments, CSU, City of Loveland, Boys and Girls Club, PSD, The Big Green, Sproutin' Up, Larimer County Conservation Core, The Growing Project, Colorado Youth Outdoors, Wildland Restoration Volunteers, Front Range Community College

**Larimer County Cooperative Extension** — co-host Twilight Garden Series, High Plains Landscape Workshop, NoCo Bloom, and other education programs and tours

**Larimer County Department of Natural Resources** — co-sponsor Nature's Harvest Fest

**Larimer County Workforce Center** — host internships

**Larimer County Conservation Corps** — AgriCorps projects in the Garden of Eatin'

**Lost Prairie Winery** — Garden to Fork, cooking classes and Garden a'Fare

**Loveland Youth Gardeners** — cohost the NoCo Urban Homestead Tour fundraiser

**Northern Colorado Beekeepers Association** — youth programs and special events

**Plant Select®** — host a Plant Select® demonstration site

**Poudre School District** — host school field trips and service learning projects; provide community garden plots for Linton Elementary School, youth programming for HeadStart

**Regional botanic gardens** — collaborated with staff of regional botanic gardens including Denver Botanic Gardens, Cheyenne Botanic Garden, Betty Ford Alpine Gardens and Montrose Botanic Garden

**Rocky Mountain Raptor Program** — Nature's Harvest Fest

**Trees, Water and People** — Aves Sin Fronteras and school programming

**UCHealth** — Healthy Families Initiative

**United Way** — volunteer site for Make a Difference Day. United Way helped with volunteer recruitment/pairing assistance for The Gardens, part of Kids on Track collaboration network

**U.S. Forest Service** — Tree Trunks, Kids-to-Work education programming

**Volunteers of America** — host site for the RSVP program

**Wildlands Restoration Volunteers** — host school field trips, support Roots and Shoots and agricultural fair



## 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 who provide in-kind services and cash donations to our organization. Their support is critical to the success of our special events and overall operations. Corporate and Foundation supporters in 2017 included:



Associates in Family Medicine

Audubon Rockies

Bohemian Foundation

Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Café Vino

Cargill

Center for ReSource Conservation

City of Fort Collins, Fort Fund

City of Fort Collins, Nature in the City

City of Fort Collins, Utilities

City of Fort Collins, Wellness

City of Greeley Water

Colorado Allergy & Asthma Center

Coloradoan

Colorado State University - Horticulture

Colorado State University Extension

- Larimer County

Cooking Studio Fort Collins

Ed Carroll Motors

Eye Center of Northern Colorado

Fiona's Deli

Fort Collins Nursery

Fossil Creek Nursery

Fox & Crow

Front Range Community College

Gallegos Sanitation

Garden Thyme

Garden Yards

Jax Fish House

Kaiser Permanente

KUNC 91.5FM / KJAC 105.5 FM

Locality

Lost Prairie Winery

Loveland Garden Center

Mainline

Miramont Lifestyle Fitness

Moot House

Music City Hot Chicken

Northern Water Conservancy

Nutrien

Odell Brewing

OtterCares

Outpost Sunsport

Pedersen Toyota

Plant Select™

Poudre Community Academy (Give Next)

Poudre Pet & Feed Supply

Restaurant 415

Savory Spice Shop

Spoons

Sprouts

Swingle

ValPak

Wild Birds Unlimited

Woodward

Zak George Landscaping

Zebulon