



**Guelph
Enabling Garden**



Volume 5, Issue 1

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IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR...

the year in review by Sandy Warley

This was the first full year of the Garden's operation. Though first conceived of in 1999, work on the construction of the Garden didn't begin until the fall of 2004, and it was June 2005 before the hard landscaping and foundations planting were completed. We squeezed a lot into the remaining months of 2005 – the raised beds and some ground beds were 'adopted' and planted, some workshops were offered, and we got to test drive the volunteer program. But it wasn't until the spring of 2006 that we could embark on a full gardening year.

And what a joyful and rewarding year it was.

We began with a plant and compost sale in early May and wound up with a reception to recognize our volunteers in October. In between, operations in the Garden were in full swing.

First and foremost, the garden was constantly used by the folks for whom it was designed – members of our community with diverse abilities. As individuals or in organized groups they planted, maintained and enjoyed the raised and ground beds they had adopted. Others simply enjoyed the colours, scents and feel of plants selected for their sensory properties. Trina Alix offered a full program of well-attended workshops and demonstrations on horticultural therapy and practice throughout the summer. The 'frail elderly' made good use of the Garden, for they found that the smooth, wide paths made walking easy and safe and the benches good places to rest.

During the year we planted more trees, shrubs and native flowering perennials and installed seven benches donated by supporters of the Garden. By mid-summer the Garden was full of colourful



plants, pleasing vistas and shady places for resting and reflection. As a result, the Garden quickly became an oasis of beauty and repose that could be enjoyed by all members of our community.

A team of some 25 volunteers undertook all the work of planting, watering, weeding and maintaining the Garden. Working in shifts throughout the week, these good people kept the Garden in immaculate condition, chatted with users and answered their questions.

In all, the Garden was essentially established by the end of the year. It could be seen to be ‘enabling’ its primary target group – the members of our community with physical and cognitive difficulties – to achieve personal goals and to be included in the life of the community in a tangible way. Beyond that, the Garden is another notable jewel in the crown of the Royal City.

No wonder it was a genuine Garden party when donors, supporters, volunteers and users gathered on a lovely fall day in late September.

The 2006 gardening season ended with a sense of quiet satisfaction that the vision of those who conceived and supported the

Enabling Garden had been realized.

A Personal Note:

Anita and I are involved in various aspects of the Garden’s operation but our most rewarding experience is as volunteers and users. We were at the Garden every Sunday morning this year from April to October.

Our first act on arrival is to make a tour of the garden, examining the progress of plants with the swing of the seasons, drinking in their beauty and endless interest, and noting the jobs to be done that day. Anita then busies herself with weeding, watering, plant care and sweeping the paths throughout the Garden while I tend the raised bed that bears our names.

Our bed is small, only 5’ square, but what it means to me epitomizes what the Garden is all about.

I’m a life-long gardener. I started gardening as a nipper helping my Dad tend his garden. My first job was in horticulture. I studied it in university. I’ve had good gardens wherever we’ve lived. Gardening has been my passion for as long as I can remember. Anita has had the same experience and interest, and



creating and tending fine gardens together has been one of our strongest bonds.

Over a quarter of a century ago I developed progressive multiple sclerosis. As the disease tightened its grip and I lost strength, balance and mobility, the scope and range of what I could do in the garden narrowed. Successively, I gave up the vegetable garden, the fruit trees, work in the flowerbeds and, finally, mowing our lawns. As my physical abilities contracted, Anita took on more and more until, essentially, she was doing everything and I became a spectator.

Along came the Garden. In a brilliant act that married our shared interest in gardening and my disability, our children endowed a raised bed in our names to recognize the 50th anniversary of our marriage. At a stroke, with access and special tools, I was again enabled to care for a garden. Though small in area it's huge in terms of the lift that it gives to my sense of identity and accomplishment and thereby my wellness. I – and others with restricted abilities – am again enabled.

There's another attribute of the Enabling Garden that is important.

The experience of folks with disabilities (I'm not afraid of the word) is that they face social marginalization. We can't go places and do things as we did before. We meet fewer new people and have fewer experiences. At work or in the organizations to which we belong, we tend to be omitted from longer-term plans and projects because of uncertainties about our abilities and availability down the road. We become progressively discounted, omitted, excluded and, at last, unseen.

Projects like the Enabling Garden change that insofar as it explicitly acknowledges us and enables us to again add value to our community.

And so, on those lovely Sunday mornings when Anita and I are working in the Garden, we think always and speak often of the fine people who had the vision that the Garden would “enable and include” people with different abilities, of the civic leaders and staff who actively facilitated its creation, and of the donors, large and small, whose material and financial support make it a magnificent reality. ❀



A GARDENER'S FOCUS

Photo essay by Annette Twist, Enabling Garden volunteer and photo artist

My approach to photography is to create art. Every image has the potential to end up framed, on a photo card or in a calendar, frozen in time, to be enjoyed again and again. Because my passion is capturing and making botanical art forms, I have found that the Enabling Garden provides a rich and endless source of imagery. The Garden offers a rich palette, through its array of colours, light, textures, shapes and forms. Through the lens, I am discovering imagery perhaps as the gardens landscape designer had envisioned. However, I'm also interested in providing my own interpretations of the Garden, which truly has exceptional art possibilities. The following images taken in the gardens this past year represent only a few of my favourites and each has its own art style. I have attached an art style to each of the images, which range from landscapes, abstract expressionism, and still life, to portraiture.

**More of Annette Twist's photo essay can be found at:
www.enablinggarden.org**





REFLECTIONS ON WATCHING THE GUELPH ENABLING GARDEN GROW

by Joan Mathieu

As I step down from the Board of Directors of the Guelph Enabling Garden, I have been asked to compose some personal reflections on the Garden and what it has meant to me.

To me the Garden is a symbol of what human kindness, commitment and community generosity can accomplish. It's also about people, all the people, that together have planned, built, planted and cared for it.

But most importantly it's about the people who come to the Garden. Their enthusiasm, contributions and courage are what have truly transformed the Enabling Garden from a community project to a meeting place where everyone is welcome to participate and grow.

The road to this day was far from smooth... shivering as we purchased trees in November, digging with a pick axe to plant shrubs in the hot dry summer of 2005.

A moment of panic when our concrete came out of the truck with a bright orange hue and flash

floods cascading down the hill when the rain finally did come.

My father always said "There is no bad weather" and each of you has proven his theory as you planted, mulched, weeded and watered through all seasons, no matter the weather or the temperature. Hot coffee and donuts were hardly compensation for your hours in the freezing rain selling compost and plants.

Most importantly the Garden began to be used by those for whom it was intended.

The first summer it was those people, arriving as individuals or in groups, who planted all the raised beds. Hearing a woman say how wonderful it was to be able to get close to the river for the first time almost makes you forget about the flash floods and freezing rain. Watching children get excited about the smell and touch of plants and enabling others to garden after years of not have access to the soil is an experience I know I will never forget.

These people I've met and the friendships that have bloomed



have inspired me and have
enriched my life.

My retirement will take me out of
the boardroom and back to my first

love of tending the plants and
sharing the Garden with the
community.

Each of you should be so proud! ❁

AN ODE
TO THE GUELPH ENABLING GARDEN
by Jennifer Turnbull

A quiet and lovely natural place
So unique this work of art
For every person, a garden space
All are welcome to be a part

Built on what at first was dream'd
Vision and hope, a planted seed
An arduous journey it had seem'd
Yet from fertile soil the sprout was freed

As generous hearts and hands reached out
A special and healing wonder was grown
Beautiful sights and sounds about
A garden for all to call their own

Throughout the seasons and changing weather
In the Enabling Garden, we'll grow together!



A COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER

An artistic tribute to the power of creativity

More than three years ago artist Barbara Guy Long and Judith Rosenberg, Director of Spark of Brilliance, a community-based initiative that fosters healing and transformation through the arts, traveled to Scotland on vacation which turned out to be a mission. Quite unexpectedly they discovered an extraordinary mosaic art piece on an outside wall of Barbara's granddaughter's school in Dunbar, Scotland overlooking the sea.

The entire community of Dunbar, it turned out, including parents, teachers, and children, had collectively created the piece depicting an impressive tree of life using mosaic, found objects from the sea and the land, phrases of special meaning, and tiles with captivating carvings.

The two travelers immediately decided that such an artistic expression should be created in Guelph and what better location than the planned Guelph Enabling Garden in Riverside Park, a project which was near and dear to the hearts and minds of the members of Spark of Brilliance who were represented on the GEG Board of

Directors and who would be instrumental in the development of the garden.

Once back in Guelph, the two approached Goldie Sherman, well-known ceramic artist who agreed to become Project Manager for the undertaking. However, it wasn't until a full three years later that the project actually grew wings, and another year after that, in 2006, that a grant from the Guelph Community Foundation enabled



This photo, and the next two, show volunteers from St. James High School creating clay tiles.



the work to move into Phase II of development.

From November 2005 to December 2006 the exhilarating work of creating the clay tiles progressed. Individuals and groups from the Guelph community took part in the artistic development of the more than 200 tiles required to fulfill the design of the art piece. The piece was to be 11 feet wide and 7 feet high and would be permanently installed on the eastern wall of the newly built storage shed on the grounds of the Guelph Enabling Garden.

Artists and artisans from Guelph and surrounding communities; families and individuals with special needs and various life challenges; members from Spark of Brilliance satellite branches in Guelph, Orangeville and Burlington; The Flaherty Group Home for Adults with Autism and their support staff; St. James School – Student of Liberal Arts and their teachers; members of The Guelph Glass Guild; clients and outpatients from Homewood Health Centre and their support staff; friends and colleagues from as far away as Cuba; cancer patients from Toronto and their families; guests at family birthdays; and many, many more volunteers from the mainstream

community came together week after week on dark winter evenings, spring, summer and fall, all with deep commitment to the sensibility of the project.



In February 2007 the final tile was completed for six specially commissioned orders from two Guelph families who wished to commemorate the successes of an adult son with Autism and the untimely and tragic death of a daughter in an automobile accident; and a family whose brother had disappeared into a life of seclusion and who were unaware if he was still alive someone in the world.

A Community Coming Together mosaic art piece illustrates the four elements of Earth, Air, Water and Fire. Various symbols of our multi-cultural community; the flora and fauna of the environment in the Enabling Garden; the animals and birds of the world around us; tiles holding



meaningful messages from their creators; phrases of hope, healing, and encouragement; memories and words of love to lost ones; and deep expressions of the joy of creativity are all carved into this outstanding art piece.



Chuck Jewell from the Canadian Mental Health Association is supporting the completion of the final phase of construction, and stained glass artist Katrin Wolters is advising on the central glass motif, the spiral of life, which is also the logo of the Guelph Enabling Garden. The Community Mental Health Clinic has provided the space for the construction phase of the art piece, where dedicated artists gather each week to work toward the completion of this collaborative creation.

In the Summer of 2007 the group will unveil the mosaic sculpture with a celebration in The Guelph Enabling Garden at Riverside Park where Project Manager Goldie Sherman, many of the creators of the piece, performances by musicians, dancers and drummers, and various Guelph Dignitaries will be in attendance.

A Community Coming Together mosaic art piece, is surely an expression of people from all walks of life; those who represent various special interest groups; people living with different life challenges, and volunteers who were willing to share their gifts and talents, collaborating in a common goal of building a legacy that speaks to the power of creativity.

We wish to express our gratitude to all those who have supported this project and invite you to watch for an announcement of the unveiling ceremony of *A Community Coming Together* in the Summer of 2007. ✿

Judith Rosenberg, Director, Spark of Brilliance, on behalf of all the participants.



HORTICULTURAL THERAPIST CONTRACT POSITION- SUMMER 2007

20 hours a week for 16 weeks

This position is responsible for the co-ordination, planning and execution of Horticultural Therapy and related programs to be held in The Guelph Enabling Garden. The candidate will oversee the daily use of the Garden working on site with clients and the public.

Dates required are May 7th until August 26th, 2007
See website: www.enablinggarden.org

The suitable candidate must be able to work flexible hours, some Saturdays and evenings will be required. The position requires access to a vehicle for picking up supplies.

A personal computer and phone are required as well as familiarity with and access to email. Access to transport is a personal responsibility.

The chosen candidate reports to the Board of the Guelph Enabling Garden.

Responsibilities:

1. Act as a Horticultural Therapist and program supervisor on-site.
2. To impart the purpose of Horticultural Therapy programs to user clients and the public.
3. To be responsible for the development and execution of weekly Horticultural Therapy teaching sessions in the Garden.
4. To be present in the Garden daily to act as a support person; to guide and assist people using the garden.
5. Organize and supervise support sessions for individuals and groups.
6. Act as a resource person for those using the garden beds.
7. Outreach to the schools and community.
8. Coordinate supplies required for the workshops and teaching sessions.
9. Ensure that participants are working in a safe environment.
10. Report and present to the Board the progress of workshops and Garden activities.
11. Evaluate the garden's capacity to meet the needs of its users.

Qualifications:

- Training in the field of Horticultural Therapy.
- Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent communication skills: listening and sharing.



- Be a team player in a client-centered environment.
- Good problem solving skills and able to work in a flexible environment.
- Commitment to the project and the benefits of Horticultural Therapy.
- Word processing and email expertise
- Post secondary school or work experience.
- Pass a criminal reference check at your own expense.

Wage:

\$17/hour; approx. 20 hrs/week for 16 weeks

Please send resume to Guelph Enabling Garden, 40 Dean Ave. Guelph, ON.
N1G 1K8

Or email to: enablinginfo@sympatico.ca

Applications accepted between March 1 and March 24, 2007. Interviews to be held the week of April 2nd.

Only those chosen for an interview will be notified.

GUELPH ENABLING GARDEN 2007 BUY-A- BRICK CAMPAIGN

The Guelph Enabling Garden is a unique and special therapeutic garden in Riverside Park to benefit people of all abilities. To date we have sold and installed over 200 engraved bricks along the Garden pathways. These stones add a wonderful personal touch to the Garden and they have been an essential part of our fundraising.

We have only 100 bricks left to sell so please buy yours now and not be disappointed.

Purchase a brick in honor or in memory of a loved one, to profile your business, or to mark a special day. All funds raised through the **Buy-A-Brick** campaign will go to support this special garden.

For only \$120 your support will endure...

Please note the increase in price of \$20 to cover construction costs

Contact: Lois Finlay, 549 Watson Pkwy S. Guelph, ON. N1L 1C4.

For more information please call: 519-829-3445 or email: loisfinlay@netslash.net

Website: enablinggarden.org (forms available on website)



GUELPH ENABLING GARDEN SUSTAINING DONORS

2007 to 2009

CIBC Wood Gundy...Chris Bedard & Janice Bacon
Jackson & Joan Mathieu
Sandy & Anita Warley
William Winegard

GUELPH ENABLING GARDEN DONORS

January, 2007

Major Benefactor and Ground Breaking Donor:

Reid's Heritage Group

Founding Donors (those that provided seed funds or in-kind help during our start up)

BDO Dunwoody
City of Guelph
Gamsby and Mannerow Ltd.
Miller Thomson LLP
Reid's Heritage Group
The Ontario Trillium Fund
The United Way Community
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Nelson Aggregates
T.K. (Sandy) & Anita Warley
W.C. Wood Company Ltd.

Silver Donors:

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Employee Award)

Guelph City Mazda
Guelph Horticultural Society
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Jamieson Estates: Chester Carere,
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Peter & Joan Mitges
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Terra View Custom Homes
TD Canada Trust/ Fergus
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United Rental of Guelph
Van Harten Surveying Inc.
Douglas Wood Large Tree
Services
Zonta Club of Guelph



A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

Maintaining the Garden

Margaret Turner – Chair Fundraising Committee

We are all pleased that Enabling Garden has been accepted as a beautiful new jewel in the Royal City's Crown of Parks. We have been delighted by the way in which individuals and groups for which it is intended have embraced it. Our current goal is to ensure that the funds required for maintaining the garden and its programs will be in place for the future.

A modest campaign has been launched with the goal of attracting 15 donors who will pledge \$1000 per year for the next three years. This support will guarantee that the Garden will continue to flourish in the near future. It will also allow time to create a foundation to support the

Garden in perpetuity. Contributors to this unique program will be recognized as Sustaining Supporters in the Garden's program of recognition.

We are pleased to report that we have four Sustaining Supporters to date. They are:

- CIBC Wood Gundy...Chris Bedard & Janice Bacon
- Jackson & Joan Mathieu
- Sandy & Anita Warley
- William Winegard

If you wish participate in this initiative and help to guarantee the Garden's future, please contact us by calling 519-763-2804 or e-mailing:
enablinginfo@sympatico.ca

***Mark your Calendars: Saturday May 12 GEG Annual Plant Sale at the Garden from 9:00 – noon.**

Deliver potted and labelled plants to Joan Mathieu @ 40 Dean Avenue or to the Garden on the Friday evening or Saturday morning.



The Guelph Enabling Garden newsletter is edited by Bill Knapp with graphics courtesy of Glynis Logue and Lynn Tessaro.

If you no longer wish to receive Guelph Enabling Garden publications, please contact us at (519) 763-2804. If you received this newsletter by mail and would prefer to receive it by e-mail, please let us know at enablinginfo@sympatico.ca.

