



Ithaca Children's Garden

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The mission of the Ithaca Children's Garden is to create a unique and joyful garden environment designed to inspire, empower, and connect children and youth with the importance of plants and the natural world in their lives.

November 18, 2010

Dear Friend,

The Ithaca Children's Garden keeps growing with new whimsical and interactive gardens and a variety of fun and engaging educational programs. All this is made possible entirely by your donations and grant funding.

With just two part-time staff and the help of dedicated volunteers our programs and events have reached over 3,000 people in the last ten months with thousands more stopping by to visit the Garden this year. We are a lean organization and every dollar donated goes directly towards achieving our mission of connecting children with nature. We ask for your support in offering greater opportunities for youth to play, learn, and grow into healthy and responsible citizens connected to plants, the natural world, and their community.

Over the past five years the Garden has grown from a bare three acres to a place brimming with vibrant activity. In 2011 the Garden will be entering into a new and exciting phase of development.

With your help we can:

- Install a whimsical perimeter deer fence providing children and parents safe, free exploration.
- Add electrical service to facilitate programs such as Garden Chefs and our community events while demonstrating alternative energy options.
- Construct a shade structure for GAIA's Nest, the discovery sand area, to protect young visitors from the full sun.
- Place information kiosks and interpretive signage in key locations to enhance communication and learning.
- Commission interactive sculptures that combine art and science to create unique learning opportunities.
- Build garden structures such as arbors and trellises for orchard trees and vines.

With the addition of many new features, innovative education activities in the works include:

- Music in the Garden: a drop-in program for the new Music and Sound Garden. Children will use plants to create musical instruments and strum along with local musicians.
- Expanding the Garden Chefs Program, which connects gardening, cooking, and culture, to reach more youth throughout Tompkins County.
- Providing funding to offer low-cost field trips to schools, pre-schools, and daycare centers.
- Bringing our most popular programs to a wider audience of children through in-school and after school programs
- Building upon a successful first season of the Youth Horticulture Apprentice's market garden by increasing opportunities for teen participants to develop marketable job and life skills.

We hope you will join other members of our community in supporting all the wonders of the Ithaca Children's Garden. Your donation will make a large difference in helping us reach more children and families through hands-on, multidisciplinary programs that are educational, nature-based, and most importantly, fun! You can help build and maintain a truly unique community resource, the Garden itself. Thank you for making the Garden grow!

Sincerely,

Tamara Scott
President, Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Tamara Scott, President
Kimberley Owen, Treasurer
Kathleen Downes, Secretary

Kathryn Reeves
Louise Raimondo
Monika Roth

Staff

Leigh MacDonald-Rizzo, Education Director
Advisor - Harriet Becker

2010 Program Highlights

Education Programs

Garden Chefs: a partnership with CERIS - Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies that combines gardening, cooking, and culture using vegetables harvested from six International garden plots.

Salad Farmers: our popular spring program where kids ages 3-8 design, plant, care for gardens of their own, and celebrate the harvest with a "Salad Party."

Summer Sprouts: weekly stories for preschoolers ages 2-5 attracted 622 children and their caregivers in June-Sept.

Art in the Garden: young artists created leaf prints, seed mosaics, cyanotypes, and wind chimes from the Garden.

Family Fun Workshops: Bug Quest, Pizza on the Grill, and Fairy Gardens were popular themes for these programs

Field Trips and Outreach Programs: ICG Education Coordinator Leigh MacDonald-Rizzo hosted 17 groups visiting the garden and provided educational programs at Beverly J. Martin School and Mama Goose.

4-H Urban Outreach and the Cass Park summer camp: use growing space in the edible garden & help at the Garden.



Events

Arbor Day Spring Open House: 250 participants

Where do the Children Play?: Community viewing & discussion with documentary originator Liz Goodenough in partnership with CU Plantations & the TC Public Library - 70 attendees

Gaia's 5th Hatch Day! Celebrating Gaia the Turtle's first five years in Ithaca with hands-on learning, storytelling, and music - 400 participants

Scarecrow Jubilee & Pumpkin Jam: Celebrating everything autumn - 524 participants...breaking our previous attendance record of 448.



Partnerships

William T. Keeton House at Cornell: built the Plastic Bottle Greenhouse - a unique example of plastic being recycled into a growing space for spring plants.

Cornell Landscape Architecture Masters Students: designed and installed the Music Garden including fun features like the drum flower, thundersheet, sound mound, rain sticks, sound curtain and the fiddlehead garden.

Cornell Horticulture Department: student volunteers and faculty helped start the orchard and renovate of the turf "plates" on GAIA's back.

New Roots Charter School: students are volunteering in the edible garden to install a hoop house for fall growing.

Youth Horticulture Apprentices

Ten teens helped build picnic tables and a child-sized birdhouse, weeded and mulched all gardens, helped with Hatch Day, planted the Edible Garden and sold produce from their garden at the Farmers Market at the Social Services Building on Wednesdays.

