



Spring 2016

Happy Spring from Friendship Gardens!

We've been very busy this winter, and we'd like to take a moment to share all of the exciting developments in the amazing Friendship Gardens comeback story. Last November, our Board of Directors voted to officially give the Gardens a new name to reflect our growing presence as an educational and scientific institution. Welcome to Friendship Botanic Gardens! We believe this new moniker captures our far-reaching vision for what the Gardens can become, while still commemorating the rich legacy laid down by the Stauffer brothers more than eighty years ago.

Our Board of Directors has undergone a few changes of its own. In 2015 and the beginning of 2016, we were honored to welcome 10 new Board Members into the Friendship Botanic Gardens family: Cathy Kearney, Don Dixon, Kevin Egan, Craig Phillips, Richard Houck III, Phil Poznanski, Rima Binder, Frank Seilheimer, Rubia Jascinevicius, and Alexander deHilster are the newest additions to our garden dream team, and we're incredibly fortunate

to have their talent and know-how moving forward.

At the helm of this new group of dedicated leaders is a new Board President: Mr. John Leinweber – the architect of the entire Friendship Botanic Gardens revitalization project.

The Gardens hold a very special place in the hearts of everyone on the FBG Board of Directors, and we're committed to making sure everyone in our region comes to appreciate the awe-inspiring potential that the Gardens hold.



It's no exaggeration to say that people from all over the country are becoming aware of the monumental progress we've made. This month, we were thrilled to welcome 47 students from the University of North Dakota, who stopped by Friendship Botanic Gardens to volunteer as part of an annual

cross-country service learning trip. They were a tremendous help in getting the grounds ready for our big spring opening.

Beginning in the spring, scientists from Loyola University will use the pristine wilderness on our grounds as a site to conduct research on red-backed salamander populations.

New Trails, Gardens, and Beyond

This April, we'll be breaking ground on several monumental new construction projects that will forever transform the FBG experience. Thanks to the generous support of NIPSCO, the Michigan City Redevelopment Fund, and the Board of Public Works, we'll begin construction on the "Trail of Lights," an illuminated pathway of streetlamps that will guide visitors through the garden entrances and exits after sunset. With the Trail of Lights in place, we'll be able to safely host receptions and concerts that run into the evening hours, and we'll be able to launch new fall and winter festivities like our upcoming Christmas Festival of Lights. Michigan City has long been in need of year-round tourist destinations to supplement our summer attractions like Washington Park, and Friendship Botanic Gardens is proud to lead the way in filling this crucial role for our community.

This is far from the only community need we're filling. Soon we'll be revamping our main entrance along Highway 12 – one of the crucial Eastern Gateways into Michigan City.



This transformation will include a new sculpture by artist John Searles, and an electronic sign broadcasting the offerings of Friendship Gardens to the world. These new additions will serve as a stunning first impression for motorists

entering Michigan City from the east, and they'll reinforce the Michigan City brand by letting visitors know they've truly arrived at a preeminent lakefront destination community.

Did you know there's an Artesian Well hidden in Friendship Gardens? Tucked in forested hills at the far southern edge of the grounds is a little-known natural spring where fresh groundwater can be seen bubbling up from the aquifer. According to legend, the site was blessed by famed explorer and missionary Jacques Marquette. We want more people to appreciate this remarkable geologic feature, so our grounds crew will soon begin blazing a forest trail that will take intrepid explorers from Lake Lucerne up to the spring in the surrounding hills.

As promised, we're just a month away from unveiling the first phase of the ArcelorMittal Children's Garden. The entire garden will be completed in 3 phases over the course of 3 years, but our first phase installation will be ready in time for our May opening. The centerpiece of the first phase will be several pieces of educational

nature-themed playground equipment, including a well hand pump and “Gold Miner’s Sluiceway” children can use to pump actual groundwater up from the earth.

Be on the lookout for these other new garden plots soon to make their debut at Friendship Botanic Gardens:

- A perennial garden on the island in Lake Lucerne at the former site of the Theater of Nations.
- Johnny Stimley of Ryan’s Pub will be spearheading the creation of an Irish Heritage Garden.
- Board Member Kevin Egan has begun work on a garden dedicated to Junior Diabetes patients.

Farther on the horizon:

- A Labyrinth Garden
- A Veteran’s Garden
- A Garden dedicated to Cancer Survivors and health and wellness

With everything we have in store for 2016, over 18,000 people will experience the Gardens this year – up from 11,000 in 2015 and 6,000 in 2014. Eventually, our goal is to grow Friendship Botanic Gardens into a cornerstone of our community that can draw over 50,000 people annually!

None of this phenomenal progress would be possible without the support of members like you, that’s why we’re eager to hear your feedback, ideas and suggestions moving forward. Don’t hesitate to contact us at 219 878-9885 or info@friendshipgardens.org.

Looking for more ways to help the gardens grow? Consider volunteering. No green thumb necessary! We’re highly flexible in scheduling volunteers and finding opportunities that match the strengths and interests of everyone who wants to help.

Don’t forget to buy your tickets now for our first annual Spring Garden Gala at Long Beach Country Club. RSVP online at http://friendshipgardens.org/spring_gala_form.html

See you at the Gardens!

***April 23rd
Spring Garden Gala at Long Beach Country Club***

***April 30th & May 1st
Wake Up The Gardens!
Noon-4pm: Volunteers are needed to get the Gardens ready for opening***

***May 8th
Season Opening & Mother’s Day
10-6pm: Mother’s Admitted FREE***

***June 25th
“Music Under the Stars” Concert --Mike Struwin
5:00-9pm***

***June 26th
Bug Safari
2-4pm***

***July 10th
Native American Heritage Day
Noon-4pm: Demonstrations, exhibits, crafts, open fire cooking. Come celebrate Native Peoples of the region***

July 17th

Dragonflies Alive Program

1-3pm

July 23rd

"Music Under the Stars" Concert – Karissa Wilson

5:00-9pm

August 14th

Lyric Opera in the Gardens

4-6pm: Join us for another wonderful performance from the upcoming Chicago Lyric Opera Season! Tickets on Sale online or at Door.

August 20th

"Music Under the Stars" Concert – The Crawpuppies

5:00-9pm

August 21st

Butterfly Bonanza

1-3pm: See these wonderful creatures in all stages and watch Monarch Butterflies released. Simple Children's Crafts. FREE Admission

September 11th

Polish Fest

11-6pm: Join us for a very popular day of festivities! Food, Dancing, Music Tickets available day of Event.

October 16th

Oktoberfest!!!

11am-6pm: Join us for an afternoon of Food, Beer, and Music! Performances by The Crawpuppies and Matt Gabriel

October 29th

Haunted Trail and Ghost Stories

6-10pm

November 24th

Thanksgiving Turkey Walk and Native American Heritage Celebration

9-3pm

Dec 10th and 11th

Christmas Festival of Lights

Join us for Holiday Festivities – Visit Santa, See the Lights!