



FRIENDSHIP BOTANIC GARDENS

Fall 2016

Happy fall from the entire Friendship Botanic Gardens Family! We're incredibly grateful for your ongoing personal and financial support, and there's no question that your contributions are the sole reason the Gardens are able to survive and prosper. Please help us spread the word and encourage your friends and family to become members so that we can continue to reintroduce the world to the magic of Friendship Botanic Gardens.

This past year has been a whirlwind of excitement and transformation for the Gardens. Now as our 2016 season draws to a close, we'd like to share a few of the highlights from this latest chapter in the FBG story.

A Botanic Beacon

The Northwest Indiana region's best kept secret is not a secret any longer. Our new 10 foot wide LED sign is now up and broadcasting the presence of the Gardens to the hundreds of thousands of motorists that pass by our entrance every year. With this new "Botanic Beacon," along with the newly installed "Botanic Magic" sculpture by John Searles, our slice of the Highway 12 gateway into



Michigan City is steadily being transformed into an unforgettable first impression conveying that visitors have truly arrived at a lakefront destination community.

We've also just put the finishing touches on phase 1 of the ArcelorMittal Children's Garden! Now kids can simulate drawing groundwater up from the earth with a hydraulic hand pump before watching it trickle down a 16 foot gold miner's sluiceway. Next spring, the nearby garden beds will blossom with flowers and herbs selected to provide a feast for the senses of smell, touch and sight. This installment is only the beginning, and we can't wait to unveil what we have in store for phases 2 and 3. This ongoing project wouldn't have been possible without ArcelorMittal's generosity and enduring commitment to the Northwest Indiana community. Thanks ArcelorMittal!



Earlier this month, we finished planting the perennials that will bloom into the **Cancer Commemorative and Cancer Survivor's Garden** on our Island in Lake Lucerne (formerly the site of the world-famous Theater of Nations). In accordance with a plan created by new FBG board member Stu Franzen, the island's shore is now adorned with a variety of plants that will encircle and offset our newly repainted white gazebo – thus creating a perfect new wedding venue with a stunning

panoramic view of Lake Lucerne and the entire Celebration Side of the Gardens.

This past season has seen several other new and revamped gardens truly come into their own as signature features that enhance the FBG experience. The Romanian Garden has undergone an extensive makeover thanks to the dedication of stalwart FBG supporters George and Jeanette Neagu. Board Member Rima Binder has worked tirelessly to expand and transform the Lithuanian Garden into a singularly rich and fascinating celebration of Lithuanian culture. Board member Kevin Egan has taken the lead in creating a first-of-its-kind garden for FBG: a plot dedicated to Junior Diabetes patients. And finally, the Rotary Club of Michigan City has renewed their commitment to realizing the full potential of the Rotary Garden.

Something for Everyone

This past summer we unveiled our most jam-packed roster of events and programs in the entire history of Friendship Gardens. In addition to 3 momentous Music Under the Stars Concerts, we added a Botanic Bug Safari to our slate of free education programs. We then rounded out a spectacular year with live music and brewers from across the country at Okto-BEER-Fest. Things may be winding down as winter approaches, but there are still a few more garden celebrations before we say goodbye to 2016 for good. On October 29th we'll be hosting our first ever Haunted Trails and Ghost Stories Event – a spectacular opportunity to see the grounds illuminated by the new Trail of Lights. Finally, on November 24th we'll once again play host to the local tradition of the Thanksgiving Turkey Walk.

Golfing for the Gardens

The entire Friendship Botanic Gardens family would like to extend a special thanks to the Briar Leaf Men's Club for sponsoring the first-ever Golf Outing to benefit FBG. This was an unprecedented fundraiser for the Gardens -- not to mention a magnificent afternoon of spirited competition, live music, and world-class food from Portofino's Grille in Laporte. Thanks to the Men's Club's efforts, we raised over \$6000 toward the ongoing

revitalization of the grounds and growth of our community-enriching public programs and events.

A Sneak Peek at 2017

There are even more exciting developments on the horizon for 2017, and we hope you'll continue to support us as we expand and build upon the rich legacy that began over 80 years ago.

- Soon the Gardens will be home to 2 new ethnic heritage plots: an African Garden and an Irish Heritage Garden, both spearheaded by local community groups inspired to become a part of the growing buzz surrounding FBG.
- The Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission is launching an ambitious new project to build a bike path extending from Chicago to New Buffalo, and one portion of the trail will go straight through Friendship Botanic Gardens. NIRPC has committed to funding a paved pathway through the Gardens that will greatly improve the accessibility of FBG.
- We'll soon be launching major capital improvement projects, including projects centered on revamping and repairing the electrical infrastructure throughout the Gardens.
- In 2017 we'll begin installing more comprehensive signage to better guide and educate visitors about the most notable, plants, landmarks, sculptures, and other features found throughout the sprawling FBG grounds.

We can't express what an honor it is to have the unwavering support of so many community stakeholders as we blaze a new trail to FBG's future. We're always eager to hear your suggestions, comments, and ideas as we continue to grow into a transformative force for good in the Northwest Indiana region. Please don't hesitate to contact us at 219 878-9885 or info@friendshipgardens.org.

See you at the Gardens!

John Leinweber

FBG Board President

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