

# 2013 Year in Review

*Friends of*  
**Laurelwood Arboretum**

*Preserving and maintaining this unique property*



## Our Mission

To preserve, promote and improve Laurelwood Arboretum and to provide opportunities for horticultural appreciation and education through public programs, volunteer participation and outreach activities

## Our Core Values

Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum's work is built on a foundation of core values

- **Stewardship of Laurelwood Arboretum** – Passion for Laurelwood Arboretum and a commitment to the conservation of this treasured resource for current and future generations
- **Horticultural Excellence** – Dedication to the Knippenberg legacy of landscape design and horticultural practices
- **Public Use** – Commitment to providing unique opportunities for public use and appreciation of the land and its existing and future structures
- **Education and Events** – A special interest in sharing horticultural knowledge and raising awareness of the Arboretum's history, design and unique features
- **Fundraising** – Determination to ensure ongoing support for the present and future needs of the Arboretum through effective fundraising strategies
- **Teamwork** – Recognition that our mission can best be realized through the cooperative efforts of the FOLA Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, Wayne Township officials and employees, community organizations and members of the public
- **Leadership** – Cultivation and support of emerging leadership to ensure continuity
- **Public Involvement** – Promoting membership, visitation and volunteering through a multifaceted menu of events, programs, tours, social media and publicity
- **Organizational excellence and integrity** – Commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct and excellence
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – Maintain fiduciary responsibility in the use of, control over and reporting of all funds for the purpose of accomplishing the goals of our mission statement

## Message from the President

I am very pleased to report that work is well underway on the Knippenberg Center for Education. This long-awaited building will provide indoor space for educational programs, community events and meetings. The center will serve as a place to welcome visitors and offer maps, brochures, and other information. It will also have handicapped-accessible restrooms, a resource library and much-needed storage space.

We broke ground in October and hope to be able to dedicate the center in the summer of 2014. With the help of Wayne Township's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Water and Sewer Department, we have completed installation of all the utilities to the building. Their help will allow us to use the funds from the Passaic County Open Space and Farmland Trust Fund grant more efficiently to complete the project.

We are now trying to raise funds for construction of an educational greenhouse adjacent to the Knippenberg Center and for replacement of the deteriorated upper greenhouse. The most important role for the new greenhouse complex will be to provide materials to be used in FOLA's educational programs and for hands-on activities for Laurelwood's visitors young and old.

In addition, the new greenhouse complex will provide space for our horticultural staff and volunteers to propagate rhododendrons, azaleas and other shrubs to replenish and improve our collection, as well as perennials and annuals for our plant sale, Sensory and display gardens. This will save a great deal of money in the long run because we will need to purchase fewer plantings. Maintenance of Laurelwood Arboretum requires constant replacement and restoration as specimens age, die, or sustain weather, insect or wildlife damage. It is a never-ending but essential task if we are to maintain the high-quality horticultural display for which our arboretum is so well known.

It takes more than gardeners to preserve and maintain Laurelwood Arboretum. We depend on the continued help of the Passaic County Master Gardener community and the many other dedicated volunteers both in the garden and behind the scenes in positions such as secretary, treasurer, grant writing, photography and graphic design, public relations, educational programming, site management, and many other areas. In 2013, FOLA volunteers spent 10,058. hours helping us fulfill the Knippenbergs' vision for Laurelwood Arboretum as a public park. This translates into estimated savings of \$269,084. to Wayne Township.

Special thanks go to the Wayne Township Council, the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and particularly to Wayne Mayor Christopher Vergano and Ray Egatz, Chairman of the Passaic County Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee for their ongoing support of Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum's efforts to preserve, maintain, and enhance this special place.

*Jim McHugh*

President, Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum (FOLA)

## **Accomplishments**

- Breaking ground on the Knippenberg Center for Education. This was made possible by a grant from the Passaic County Open Space and farmland Trust fund, Wayne Township's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Water and Sewer Department, and dedicated volunteer involvement
- 2013 saw the expanded use and improvement of the Sensory Garden, which provides a beautiful space for many visitors, educational programs, weddings and photography sessions. This project was made possible by the generous support of the Passaic County Open Space and Farmland Trust Committee, the Wayne Lions Club, the Township of Wayne, and Friends of Laurelwood Arboretum (FOLA) and its volunteers. The garden provides a uniquely enriching experience and is accessible for all visitors
- A 5-year Horticultural Plan was begun to ensure the sustainability of Laurelwood Arboretum using environmentally responsible land management. This plan is in alignment with the FOLA Long Range Plan created in 2012. It focuses on assessing the current health of the Laurelwood Arboretum environment and its extensive rhododendron and azalea collection and rare trees and plants; expanding plant identification and propagation; habitat restoration in the Back 40 area; assessing current maintenance practices; future education of volunteers and staff; and investigation of the possible role of additional staff
- Security was increased in the arboretum with additional cameras and signs. This has resulted in a significant improvement, with no theft or damage to plants or structures in 2013
- A volunteer Master Gardener Plant Identification team worked throughout the year researching, verifying and selecting native trees in the arboretum. A Native Tree Tour brochure and fact sheets will be available in 2014 to enhance the visitor experience and to assist arboretum tour guides

## **Public Access**

The arboretum was open to the public daily from morning until evening. Gates are opened and closed by FOLA volunteers and the Wayne Township Park Ranger.

- The Arboretum was has been closed temporarily to ensure the safety of the public during construction of the Knippenberg Center
- An estimated 15,000 visitors enjoyed the arboretum in 2013
- We hosted tours for more than 200 visitors, thanks to our volunteer docents and the motorized vehicle donated by the Wayne Lions Club
- There were nine wedding photography sessions, one wedding ceremony, many graduation and prom photos taken, a plein air painting day and two brownie "bridging" ceremonies

## **Volunteers**

More than 200 volunteers contributed 10,058 hours, a value to the community of \$269,084. (based on the nationally accepted volunteer hourly rate)

- FOLA volunteers manage the arboretum, work onsite to maintain and improve the gardens, and participate in financial oversight, fundraising, grant research and

submission, long-range planning, infrastructure improvements, security, and plant identification. They also lead tours, create educational programs and materials, and publicize Laurelwood through press releases, the website, and social media

- A core group of 50 volunteers worked regularly in the arboretum on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from April through October
- A volunteer greenhouse committee worked 533 hours in the fall and winter months, potting up cuttings for the arboretum and the FOLA plant sale
- Volunteer groups included the Passaic County Master Gardeners, Community Options, Boy Scouts, Jewish Vocational Services, and the New Jersey Land Conservancy
- Weekly Passaic County Master Gardener projects included maintaining and restoring the South Rock Garden, the Second Bridge Garden, the Sensory Garden, and the pavilion and gazebo gardens
- An advanced team of Master Gardeners, trained at pruning at the New York Botanical Garden, led a team on Fridays to do much-needed pruning of trees and shrubs in the arboretum
- Other activities included the spring plant sale and holiday decorating at the New Jersey Botanical Garden Holiday Open House and Dey Mansion
- Many volunteers have worked for years along with architects and design professionals on the design of the Knippenberg Center. Several new volunteers with extensive engineering, design and architectural experience will be helping to complete the design of the center and working on upcoming projects

## **Membership**

Membership in 2013 rose to 320. This is more than a 600% increase over the 44 members FOLA had seven years ago

- We now have 13 Lifetime Members and anticipate that the number will grow in the future
- Tours, programs and events usually generate a significant increase in membership but were limited in 2013 by inclement weather and the start of construction of the Knippenberg Center
- Throughout the year many members made contributions to FOLA over and above their membership dues (including scheduled monthly donations)
- We are particularly proud of our rate of membership retention, which reflects a strong base of support for FOLA. 150 families have already renewed for 2014, and we now have 13 Lifetime members
- In the coming year, we will continue to focus both on retention and on attracting new members
- We started our membership year with a *"Thank You"* program for FOLA members and Master Gardeners attended by more than 70 people. Kathy Salisbury, Duke Farms Education Director, presented a program about Landscaping with Native Plants
- In a successful effort to enroll new members and encourage current members to renew, we had a membership table at the spring plant sale, Wayne Day, all tours and programs, special volunteer events, the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon and our Annual Meeting
- We kept the Notice Board at the arboretum supplied with membership materials and remittance envelopes throughout the year
- Our membership committee welcomes new members with ideas for increasing membership in FOLA and reaching out to new constituencies

## **Education**

One important mission of an arboretum is to provide educational opportunities. Completion of the Knippenberg Center for Education will allow FOLA to enhance and expand its educational programs. A dedicated committee of education professionals and volunteers is formulating exciting programs for 2014. Some ideas for future educational programs are:

- Environmental education activities in conjunction with local schools
- After-school nature projects/hikes
- Launch of our Native Tree Tour to mark Arbor Day
- Work with environmental educators from Ramapo College and William Paterson University

At this time, two Eagle Scout are completing projects in the arboretum—construction of a bridge and an educational display that uses tree rings to mark historical events

Some educational endeavors at Laurelwood in 2013:

- Provided volunteer opportunities for National Honor Society students to work along with Master Gardeners to learn horticultural practices
- Conducted nature hikes for Cub Scouts & Brownies, as well as hosting two “bridging” ceremonies for Brownies who are becoming Junior Scouts
- Gave numerous tours of the arboretum to various community groups and Master Gardeners
- Created and led scavenger hunts for children from the Wayne school system.

## **Arboretum Programs and Events**

- Membership/Master Gardener thank you program – Landscaping with Native Plants by Kathy Salisbury, Education Director of Duke Farms
- Volunteer Recognition Luncheon and program – Landscape Design by Elaine Fogerty, Passaic County Extension Agent
- Spring Flowering Tree Tour – Dr. Edith Wallace, former professor of biology, William Paterson University
- Spring Family Scavenger Hunt – Sara McHugh, FOLA board member
- Plant Sale
- Summer Solstice Photo Tour – Dawn Healey, President, Essex Photography Club
- Wayne Day Booth
- Family Fun Day – Making Art In the Garden
- Deer Resistant By Design – Cynthia Rauth, Green Goods Manager, Max is Back Garden Center
- Meet-Up Tour of Newark Conservancy Educational Sensory Garden
- Groundbreaking ceremony for the Knippenberg Center for Education

## **Community Outreach**

Press releases and articles were published weekly in local and state media. Coverage in *Wayne Today*, *Wayne Patch*, *Wayne Magazine*, *Hawthorne Press*, *Gardener News* and *NJ Business*

- Monthly listings posted of our activities on Laurelwood Arboretum website and in Passaic County Master Gardener newsletter.
- Flyers for events displayed at the arboretum Notice Board, locally and distributed to area groups
- FOLA Newsletter and emails of events, membership information and arboretum news sent to FOLA members and the media
- The FOLA website, [www.laurelwoodarboretum.org](http://www.laurelwoodarboretum.org) and Facebook page were improved and updated regularly
- Tour brochures, maps and bloom lists were available at the Notice Board throughout the year
- *Year in Review Annual Report* sent to FOLA members, supporters, and township and county officials. Current and past reports also available on the FOLA website

### **Site Management**

- A new entrance sign, contributed by the Pines Lake Women's Club and the Pines Lake Garden Club, was installed
- Ongoing maintenance and improvement of planting beds, paths, gazebo, benches, walkways, staircases, bridges, streams, streambeds, drainage and the aging irrigation system
- Ongoing plant improvements through regular maintenance practices, propagation, garden redesign, organic pest control, and deer prevention
- Improved plantings and design in the Sensory Garden
- A new chipper, acquired through Wayne Township, expedites the clearing of large quantities of accumulated brush and wood from pruning and storm damage
- A group of volunteers initiated a comprehensive Plant Identification program that will eventually include all the important trees and plantings in the arboretum
- An extensive tree and shrub pruning and renovation program was begun with the assistance of trained volunteers
- Improved the Working Area Map with color designations for drainage, streams, and lawns
- Created maps for the placement of roads that are in need of repair and future benches
- Developed volunteer projects and provided training and supervision for more than 200 volunteers
- Maintenance of the upper greenhouse and supervision of plant propagation for both the FOLA plant sale and the various gardens in the arboretum

### **Fundraising**

FOLA's 2013 budget was funded by membership dues, donations, and our spring plant sale. The FOLA budget is for administrative expenses, publications, programs, membership, volunteers, equipment and infrastructure expenses

An annual grant from Wayne Township pays for employee salaries, insurance, plants and supplies. Wayne Township receives funds each year from the Knippenberg Trust that partially offset the township's grant to FOLA for the management of Laurelwood Arboretum

- Our first-ever annual fundraising campaign, *Give the Gift of Green*, was very successful, raising \$3,274 for the start of the gardening season
- Throughout the year, a number of members and visitors to Laurelwood made contributions to FOLA totaling more than \$3,000. In addition, we received \$3,560 in memorial gifts
- A longtime member donated \$3,000 for a bench in the arboretum
- We created a *Living Tribute of Flowering Plants in Laurelwood Arboretum* program to encourage “in honor of” and memorial gifts of \$50 or more
- We joined TD Bank’s Affinity Program and encouraged members with accounts at TD Bank to participate
- Received \$700 in fees for weddings and wedding photography sessions
- Updated our website to make it easier to donate to FOLA
- Updated our Wish List and created a brochure to send out in response to inquiries
- Submitted grant applications for the Knippenberg Center’s greenhouses and for the Rhododendron collection improvements

FOLA’s fundraising committees met regularly and solicited no-cost professional advice

### **Finance**

Knippenberg Center for Education, financed by Passaic County Open Space and Farmland Trust Grant (\$457,875) and Wayne Township (\$100,000), is now under construction.

- FOLA is projected in 2013 to be on or close to budgeted amount in the Wayne Township annual grant
- FOLA administration budget is lower than expected due to higher memorial donations (\$7,996) and *Give the Gift of Green* fundraiser (\$3,274). Expenditures were also lower than budgeted
- As recognition and use of the arboretum increases, so will the need for increased funds to maintain, improve, and replace its infrastructure and plantings. The planned Knippenberg Center will provide space for additional educational programming for the community, requiring additional funds and perhaps staff
- FOLA continues to seek additional sources of funding, such as individual and corporate donations and grants from government entities and private foundations for capital and operating expenses