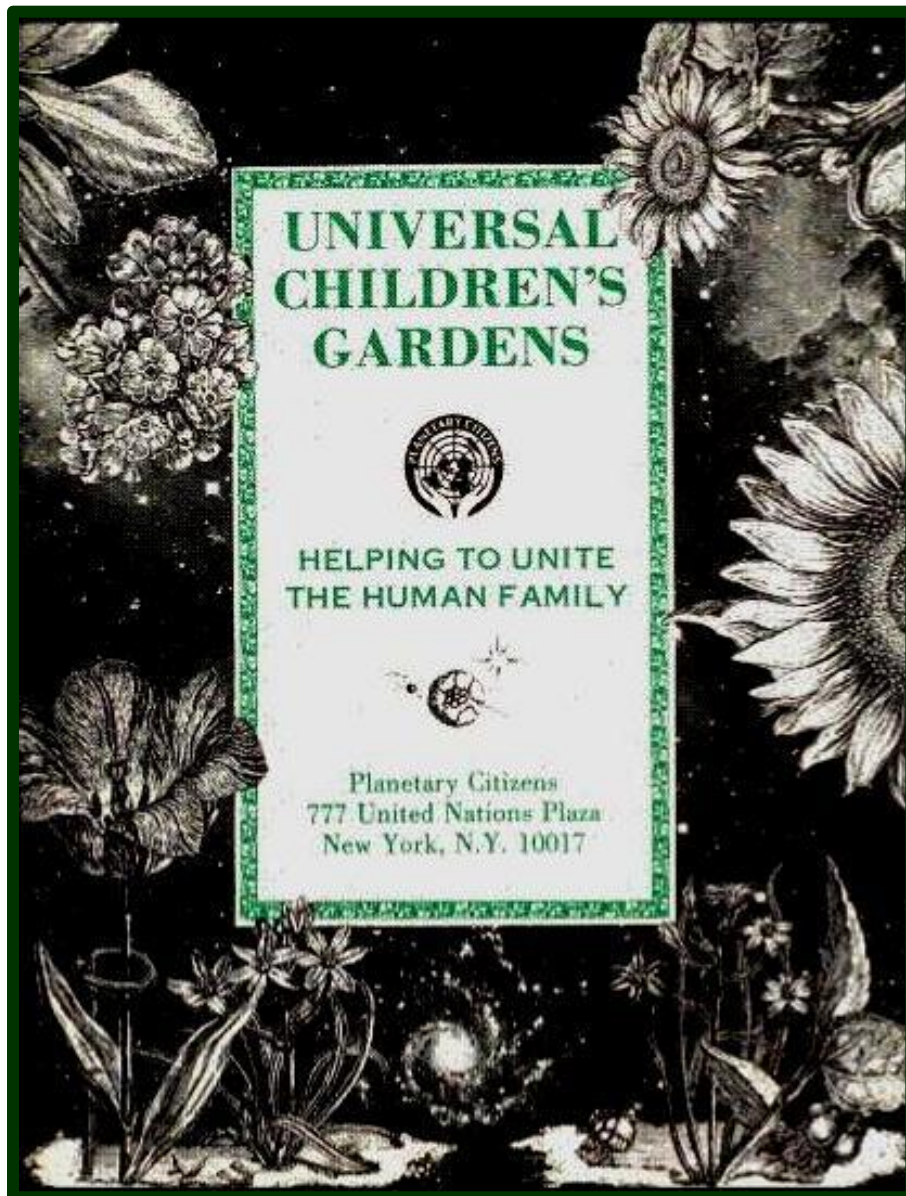


Universal Children's Gardens

FOR THE LOVE OF HUMANITY AND THE EARTH

1979-1984

Below, the original cover from the Universal Children's Gardens 32-page booklet published by Sandy Hinden while working for Planetary Citizens, a nongovernmental organization affiliated with the United Nations.



Universal Children's Gardens

* * *

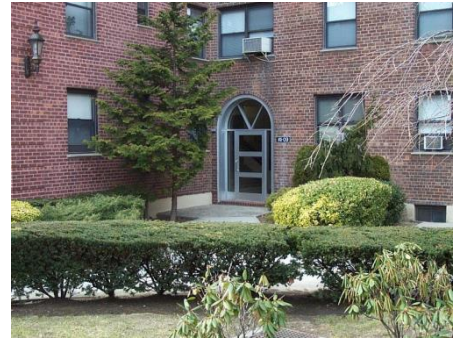
The Mission of
Universal Children's Gardens
was to
grow food, flowers, trees,
peace, hope and friendship
locally and globally...

* * *

Universal Children's Gardens helped children learn to enjoy each other and the garden, help protect the local environment, grow food, flowers and trees, preserve water, avoid polluting, beautify their community, plant seeds of peace, hope and friendship, and help create a better world – locally, nationally and globally.

THE HISTORY OF UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S GARDENS

In 1976, Sandy Hinden was living in a large coop housing community in Flushing, in the Borough of Queens, in New York City. There was an oil crisis going on, and the cost of running the coop had risen dramatically. The budget to maintain the gardens, in Mitchell Gardens Coop, had been cut, and the trees, lawns and flowers were not being maintained properly.



As a child, in the 1950s, Sandy Hinden had grown up in the Bronx, in New York City. He lived in an apartment complex called *Garden View*, where there were five buildings surrounding a garden and a fountain. *Garden View* was beautiful when it

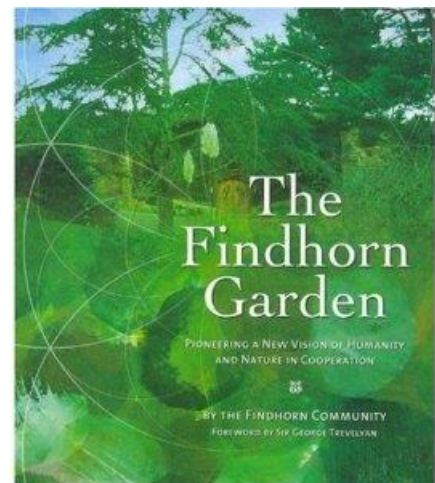


was first built in the early 1900s, but by the early 1950s, the gardens were not being taken care of by the maintenance staff. Children, including Sandy, would enthusiastically straddle the fence like Olympians, and play ball, tag and war games in the garden, compacting the soil to the point where there were no more flowers and grass, only broken shrubs and withering trees.

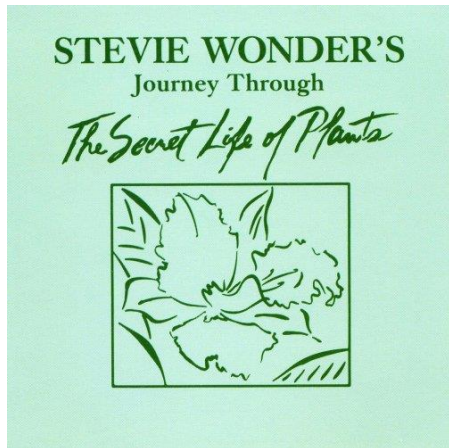
Thus, twenty-five years later, when Sandy saw the maintenance staff of Mitchell Garden Coop # 2 abandoning the gardens, he organized the coop members – seniors, adults, youth and children – to care for the gardens.

With his newly discovered joys of gardening and community development, Sandy began working for a global nonprofit across from the United Nations in New York, *Planetary Citizens*, started by world leaders including UN Secretary-General U-Thant and publisher Norman Cousins.

Sandy also learned of the beautiful gardens at *Findhorn*, an intentional community in Scotland, and had listened to Stevie Wonder's *Secret Life of Plants* album. These led him to the idea to start a worldwide movement to create children's gardens to help make the world a better place. He realized that all children needed love, and a garden is a beautiful expression of love. He had remembered the lyric by Joni Mitchell's in her song *Woodstock*...

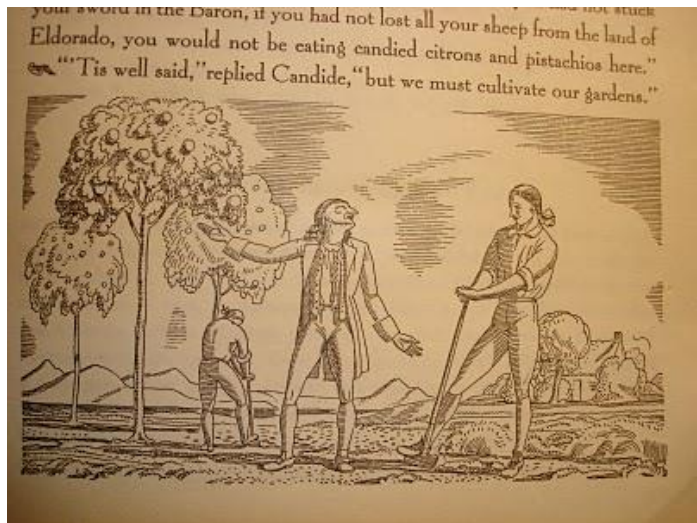


**“We are stardust,
We are golden,
We are ten billion year old carbon...
And we have got to get ourselves
Back to the garden.”**



He thought she was pointing to human's cosmic origin, as stardust/carbon atoms from the Universe, and the golden sun-like beauty, expressed in another lyric from the group *Earth, Wind and Fire* where they sang "*Everybody is a star...*" expressing each person's potential to access and unfold gifts and talents and creative goodness. He thought that through "*amazing grace*" – *a return to wholeness and wellness* – found in a garden, we could become the wonderful people we were meant to be.

Sandy had read many utopian novels in college, and remembered Voltaire saying at the end of *Candide* that we must each *cultivate our garden...* Sandy interpreted that to mean cultivating our *inner-garden* and our *relationship-garden* also, our human potential for goodness / Godness, appreciation, gratitude, peace, compassion, kindness and love – the true abundance that many miss, if we become lost in the material side of life – *Eldorado* – the City of Gold, as in *Candide*.



Sandy created a proposal to foster children's gardens all around the world. In 1980, he sent his idea for *Children's Universal Gardens* to Dr. Robert Muller, then an Assistant Secretary-General at the United Nations, who changed the name to *Universal Children's Gardens*.



By 1981, Sandy had designed and disseminated educational and public relations materials to schools and civic organizations – locally, nationally and internationally – and the program was affiliated with the United Nations Department of Public Information. He fostered the development of 135 children's gardens in 17 nations to help children to learn to grow food, beautify their communities, plant trees and communicate with other children around the world.

While working hand in hand with UN personnel, as a volunteer, he helped the United Nations Environment Program with World Environment Day events and the *UN Tree Project* for the International Youth Year. He created a proposal to develop the *Concert for the Earth* with Paul Winter, which was recorded at the UN.



In 1984, after having helped start children's gardens around the world, including local garden projects in the Bronx, the Lower Eastside and East Harlem in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, New York, Sandy began working for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation

In 1994, as Chancellor of the United Nations University for Peace, Dr. Muller sought to have James Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF, adopt UCG. He wrote Mr. Grant:

"I do not hesitate to draw attention to the proposal of a dear friend of many years, Sandy Hinden, to create Universal Children's Gardens. It would be a project worthy of UNICEF in the wake of the Rio Conference. How marvelous it would be to see Children's Gardens flourish all around the world. What a change it would make. ... Can you imagine what inspiration it would be to have UNICEF Children's Gardens all around the world. I pledge myself to start one at the little sixth grade school run by one teacher next to the UN University for Peace...."

Universal Children's Gardens was developed at the *Albert Schweitzer Center* in Great, Barrington, Massachusetts, USA. It was written about in the December 1982 issue of *The Rotarian*. It can be [read here](#).



Above: Treasures for the teacher from the wonderful world of growing things: young gardeners Tucker and Jonah Gillooly show Iso Edwards some "crops" (Tucker's term) they have gathered. Iso is a staff member of the Great Barrington, Massachusetts, garden.

Right: Jonah Gillooly (second from left) draws a straight furrow for the planting of seedlings in the Great Barrington garden. His fellow workers are (left to right): Jesse Anderson, Jonas Kerseru, Adriana Kerseru, and Lise Vollmer (foreground).

PHOTO BY KATHA



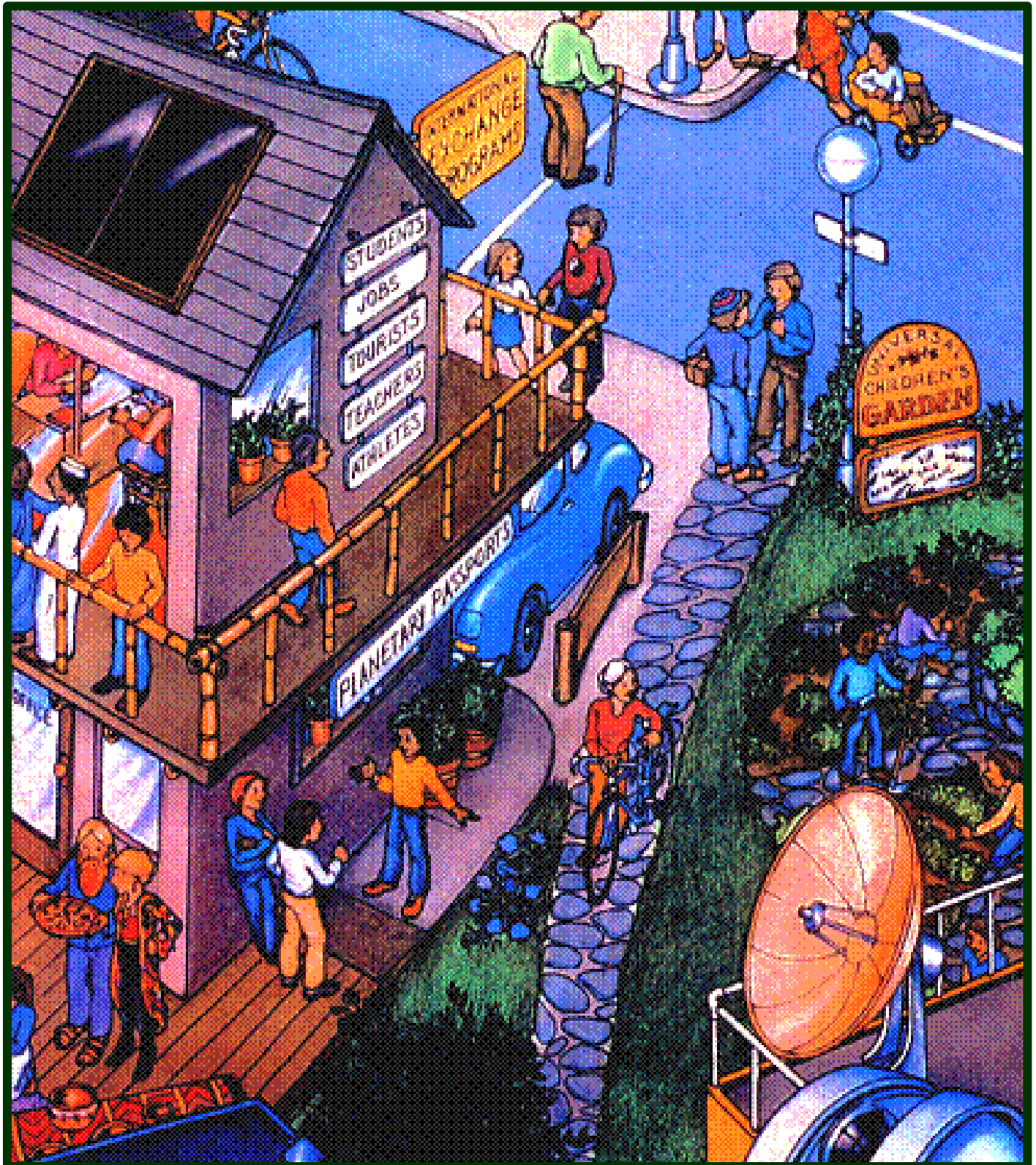
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From the book is

Peace Trek Family Coloring Book

by Joel and Diane Schatz, Art by Diane Schatz

See a Universal Children's Garden in the right upper corner of the image.

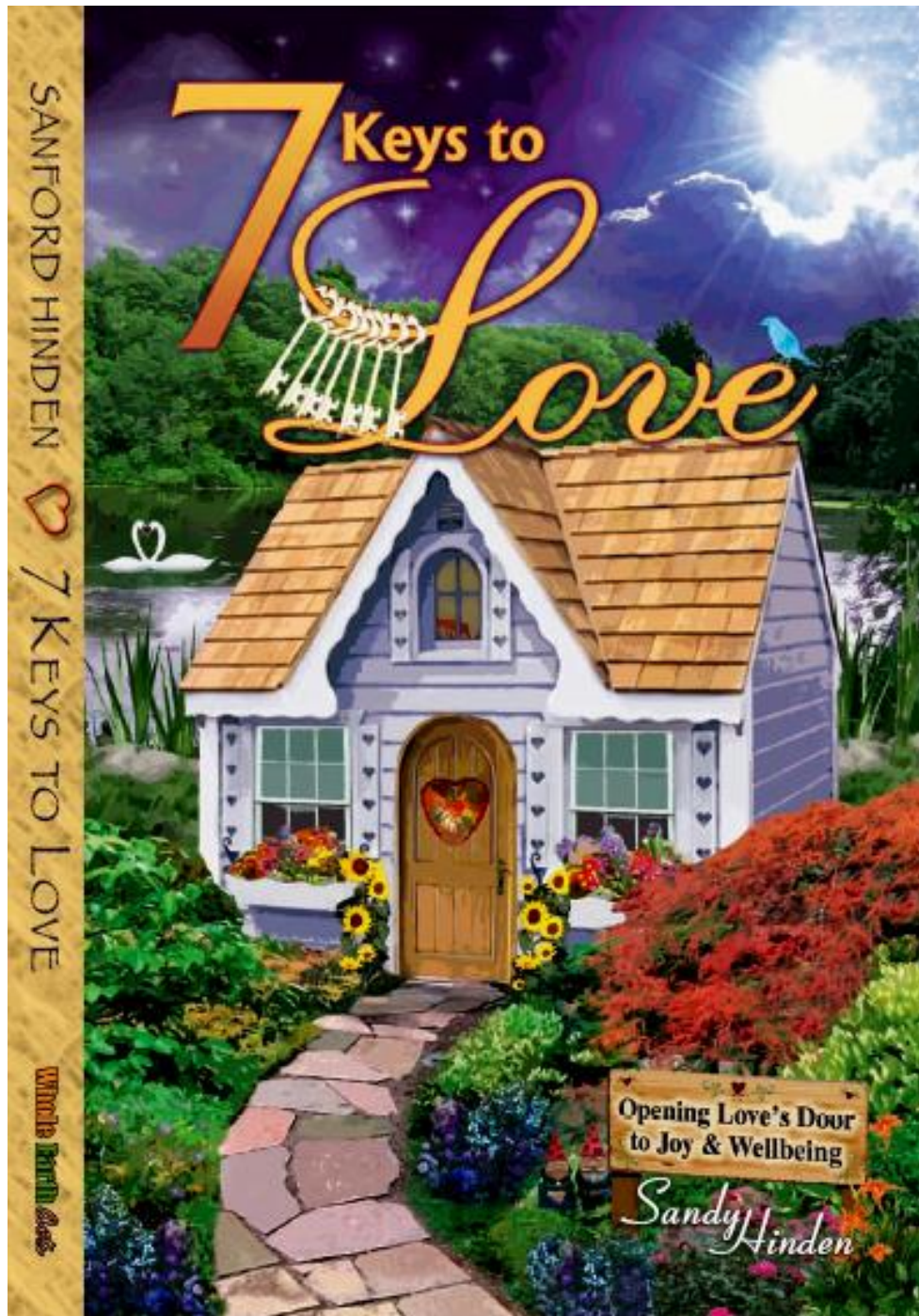


UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S GARDENS

in

7 Keys to Love, by Universal Children's Gardens founder Sandy Hinden,
pages 69-72, Whole Earth Arts, Inc. (2009)

available from the author at sanfordhinden@verizon.net



Growing Love around the Planet . . . One Garden at a Time

One of the best ways to feel physical love for life is to grow a garden. Adults and children can find inner peace, love for nature, and understanding of how earth, nutrients, air, sun, and water— how needs, seeds, weeds, and deeds—interact to create a bounty.

Universal Children's Gardens

Mission

To foster the growth of
food, flowers, veggies, peace, hope, friendship
& love for nature...

To protect the earth, trees, air and waters of the world...

To support the growth of sustainable families,
sustainable communities, and a sustainable planet...

*My garden is my
most beautiful masterpiece.*

- CLAUDE MONET

*Kind hearts are the garden,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits,
Take care of your garden
And keep out the weeds,
Fill it with sunshine
Kind words and kind deeds.*

- HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

*The Eastern tradition of aesthetics and ethics
places nature and its environment at the
same level the Western counterparts do for their
religious/spiritual and historical scenes.
To the Chinese or the Japanese artist,
the placement of a rock in a garden or in
a painting touches upon the divine.*

**- MANKH (WALTER E. HARRIS, III)
HAIKU TEACHER, POET, AND ESSAYIST**

Physical love can be expressed through the joy of gardening with family, friends, and neighbors in a garden on a farm for inner city children to visit, in community gardens in urban neighborhoods, in backyard gardens in the suburbs, in a school garden, in a religious education program garden, or in an apartment near a window. Wherever you grow your garden, let it be a magical expression of your love for yourself, others, and the whole world. The healing magic will be felt within your heart and show up as a twinkle in your eyes.

*We are stardust,
Billion year old carbon,
We are golden,
And we've got to get ourselves
back to the garden.*

- JONI MITCHELL, "WOODSTOCK"

We must cultivate our garden.

- VOLTAIRE, CANDIDE (1759)

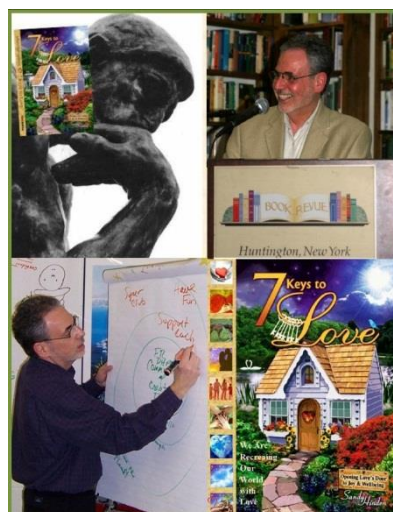
*To know of someone
here and there whom we accord with,
who is living on with us, even in silence—
this makes our earthly ball a peopled garden.*

- JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

*Our garden ... is my world.
Mine, the hills, the seas.
Mine is the whole world!
To chase! To skip!
To roam! To loll!
To soar like a dove!
To dance! To love*

- NINA GLEKIVA, A RUSSIAN CHILD AGE 6, 1999

BIO: Sandy Hinden works locally, nationally and globally developing organizations and programs for peace, the environment, health and human services, and the arts. He fostered and developed many projects and programs to help children, teens, adults and seniors, families and communities, locally in New York City and Long Island, nationally, and in the world. He helps movements for political, economic, and environmental sustainability. You can view the Commonwealth for Earth & Humanity YouTube Channel. Sandy was executive director of the *Dix Hills Performing Arts Center* and the *John Lennon Center for Music & Technology* at Five Towns College, connecting artists and audiences for mutual enjoyment and benefit. He was creator of *Universal Children's Gardens* and *The Concert for the Earth*, and affiliated the *International Network of Museums for Peace* with the UN – more than 50 peace museums worldwide.



Sandy Hinden is author of *7 Keys to Love* and a workshop leader in personal development, relationships and communication, and social and global development.

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