

ARBORETUM UPDATE!

A Publication of The James M. Cox, Jr. Arboretum Foundation

Fall/Winter 2023



LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Supporters, and Volunteers,

The season of Autumn and Cox Arboretum are two of my favorite things. This fall brings the opportunity to enjoy both, as well as beautiful weather and the splendor of changing leaves. If you have not visited the Arboretum in some time, I encourage you to visit in the near future.

If we have not met, please allow me to introduce myself. I am in my first year serving as the Board President of the Cox Arboretum Foundation, and have a deep passion for our MetroPark. My wife, three children, and I love spending time at Cox, including hiking, enjoying nature, and taking event pictures. When I'm not spending time with my family, or at Cox Arboretum, you'll likely find me enjoying my leadership role at the University of Dayton. As our Foundation leader, I always welcome your questions, feedback, and suggestions.

2023 has brought increased opportunities to return to in-person traditions, including the return of member events. It was so great to see many of you at our Cox Arboretum Foundation Member Event on September 27. The event, which was attended by more than 90 Foundation members, was a great time to learn about ongoing projects and improvements, including the newly opened Nature Play area.

I'd like to thank two leaders who have inspired my involvement with Cox Arboretum and have completed a leadership role this year. Thanks to Becky Benná, who recently completed 13 years of outstanding service as Chief Executive Officer of Five Rivers MetroParks. It was an honor to host Becky's retirement celebration at Cox Arboretum on April 28. I'd also like to thank Alan Brown, who completed a very successful tenure as President of the Cox Arboretum Foundation earlier this year. Thank you, Alan, for your leadership through a challenging period of time and for encouraging so many people to become involved as supporters of our Foundation.

As always, thank you to the volunteers, donors, and everyone who has contributed to the beauty that you will experience when you visit Cox Arboretum. I hope our paths cross on our Red, Blue, or Yellow trails in the near future!

Japon C. Eckert

Jason C. Eckert Cox Arboretum Foundation, Board President

The ARBORETUM UPDATE! is published for the members of The James M. Cox, Jr. **Arboretum Foundation**

CONTRIBUTORS

Brenda Cox Jennifer Davit **Uriah Langmeyer** Pam Lyons Joe Morrison Andrea Newport JoAnn Pennington Erin Rowekamp

The James M. Cox, Jr. **Arboretum Foundation**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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> **EX-OFFICIO** Karen Hesser

BOARD LIAISON Alexis Larsen

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Barbara Kedziora Cox First Media, Director of Marketing

Barbara joins us from Cox First Media as the Director of Marketing where she leads marketing initiatives, community relations and communication strateaies.

Senay Semere Puff Digital Agency/Aurora, Partner/Lead Consultant

Senay joins us from Puff Digital Agency where is a partner and lead consultant identifying and assessing areas of improvement in matters relating to governmental affairs.



Anthony Pyle Pohlman, Talmage, Brown & Campbell CPAs, Client Manager/Partner

Anthony joins us from PTBC as a client manager and partner where he does accounting and financials services and tax planning for small businesses.

Kim Spurgeon CFO & Director of Operations at the Dayton Art Institute

Kim joins us through Leadership Dayton from the Dayton Art Institute as the CFO and Director of Operations where she oversees finance, facilities, IT, retail, and rental operations.



RETIREMENT



This past April we had the pleasure with the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation and Five Rivers MetroParks Foundation to throw a retirement party for Becky Benná after twelve years of service as Chief Executive Officer of Five Rivers MetroParks.

We would like to thank her for her leadership and wish her the best on her retirement!

INTRODUCTIONS

Five Rivers MetroParks CEO - Karen Hesser



Karen Hesser began her tenure as chief executive officer at Five Rivers MetroParks on May 1. She is no stranger to the agency, as she's been with MetroParks for more than a decade, serving as the director of park services and legislative affairs and most recently as chief of operations.

To read more about Karen and the path that lead her to her position at Five Rivers MetroParks www.metroparks.org/get-to-know-yournew-metroparks-ceo or scan the QR code.

Congratulations Karen on your promotion!



Cox Arboretum Horticulturist

Name: Jennifer Davit

What made you choose a career in horticulture?



I have always been interested in gardening and plants. My mom is an avid gardener and growing up we always spent time growing both ornamental plants and some vegetables. During high school I worked at Groby's Garden Center here in Kettering (it has since closed), where I gained a true appreciation for perennial and annual plants. While pursuing my undergraduate studies at Wright State University, I managed the Wright State University Greenhouse, which primarily grew wetland plants for use in the Beavercreek Wetlands. After completing my degree, I pursued a number of internships at botanical gardens throughout the United States and then completed a graduate degree in public garden management at Cornell University. I have now been in the public garden field for over 20 years and was fortunate to work at some wonderful institutions including Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami, Florida and The Lurie Garden in Chicago's Millennium Park.

What brought you to the Arboretum?

I decided to return to Dayton after having children to be closer to my family. I worked for a local landscaping company and contributed to their design and landscape operations teams. While I enjoyed this work and loved the design aspect of my job, I was eager to return to the public sector and contribute to a place that engaged the public in horticulture and similar fields. I am thrilled to now be the horticulturist at Cox Arboretum and to continue my career in public horticulture. I am most excited to care for the diverse plant collections here-ranging from the Maimon Memorial Garden to the new Pollinator Habitat and existing tree and shrub collections. I look forward to meeting many of our members out in the Arboretum!



PARK ENHANCEMENTS

(YOUR DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK)

Pollinator Habitat

This past year, native plantings have taken place with 100 native trees and shrubs, along with the planting of the prairie south of the paver loop. A landscape design was created for the pollinator habitat that includes a lawn path (north end), a graded turf seating area (west end) for an educational classroom, and the planting of approximately 2,000 native plants.

The Pollinator Habitat encompasses the inside of the paver loop and outside the paver loop on the north, south, and east areas. The creation and expansion of this area into a pollinator habitat demonstrates how visitors can create pollinator habitats in backyards, while also offering additional native host and nectar plants to help increase pollinator populations.

In 2024, you will see the addition of interpretive signage to help educate on the different types of pollinator plants and the importance of having these habitats throughout the community.









Zorniger Campus Maintenance

The building facilities on the Zorniger Campus received a facelift this year. Wood repairs and painting were done to the Visitor Center, Resource Center, Kettering Learning Lab, and the Barbara Cox Center for Sustainable Horticulture pergolas. Additionally, the Visitor Center and the Kettering Learning Lab received concrete repairs along the foundations.







Trams

New trams are in, replacing the 10+ year old trams. The trams are used as part of programming tours at the Arboretum and to help transport wedding guests that may need assistance to get out to the Allée

or Maimon Memorial Garden wedding sites.



Additionally, the trams are used at Five Rivers MetroParks Wagner Subaru Outdoor Experience to help with transportation from the parking to the event.



PARK ENHANCEMENTS CONT...

(YOUR DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK)

Nature Play

In the fall of 2022, construction started on the new nature play. A contractor was hired to do the hard grading of the site and install the dry creek bed. The remainder of the site design and amenities were all built by Five Rivers MetroParks staff and volunteers. The Woodworker volunteer group did an amazing job, in constructing the two bridges, climbing wall, and the entry pergola. The remaining amenities were completed by in-house staff at Cox Arboretum along with the trail technicians. These items include the ADA trail, the logiam climber, installation of the slide, creating the loose parts areas, final gradings, and the installation of the prairie and landscape plants: It is because of these group's experience, knowledge perseverance, and teamwork that resulted in saving MetroParks thousands of dollars and stretch the money funded by the Foundation. This great amenity will be enjoyed by children and families for years to come.









Thank you to the Woodworker Volunteer Group and Five Rivers MetroParks staff for their time and talent in helping create this new feature for children in the community to enjoy and connect with nature!









Bulb Plantings

Thanks to the Zorniger Family Fund of The Dayton Foundation, Five Rivers MetroParks staff and volunteers planted thousands of bulbs throughout the grounds of the Arboretum and in containers for spring displays. This year one of the volunteer groups was a Boy Scout Troop. They planted bulbs in the new Nature Play.





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EDUCATION AT THE ARB

(YOUR DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK)

OUTstanding Teacher Award Winners

Five Rivers MetroParks' Outdoor Education Team continued its annual recognition of extraordinary teachers in our region who have gone above and beyond to engage students with inspiring outdoor experiences that shape positive attitudes toward nature. This year's award winners are truly OUTstanding. Each has taken learning beyond classroom walls to the schoolyard, integrating nature-based activities into their lessons to enable their students to reap the academic, physical, social, and emotional benefits of spending time outside. Award winners receive prizes to support their efforts to connect students with the outdoors, including one-year memberships to the Cox Arboretum Foundation and the Environmental Education Council of Ohio, registration fees for the "101 Alternatives to the Chalkboard" teacher conference at Camp Kern, a plant kit for their school, transportation for their class to take a field trip to Cox Arboretum, and outdoor education supplies. Funding for the OUTstanding Teacher Award is provided through a generous grant from the Virginia W. Kettering Foundation.

Congratulations to the 2022 OUTstanding Teachers!

Lifetime Achievement (20+ years): Steve Huff, Stingley Elementary School



When Stingley staff need to locate Steve Huff's class, the first place they look is outside! As a fourth-grade teacher of mathematics, Steve will naturally integrate math skills such as mapping, plotting, and measuring into outdoor authentic experiences for his students.

Recently, Steve led the development of a new meadow space on school grounds with input and support from students and community partners. As a member of Stingley's Nature Team, Steve supports his fellow teachers in using this special habitat for outdoor learning.

Steve's work to promote outdoor education extends well beyond Stingley. From 2000 through 2013, Steve served as an outdoor educator for a Centerville City Schools nature program that he created with the Centerville-Washington Park District. Stingley Elementary principal Katie Thornton, who nominated Steve for the Lifetime Achievement award, wrote, "so many classrooms were able to live and learn about nature, teamwork, our responsibilities to the earth and how to love the great outdoors. The impact he had on THOUSANDS of students is immeasurable."





Leader (10-20 years): Casey Potts, Piqua High School



As a Spanish teacher, Señor Casey Potts identifies cultural connections to nature to engage his students in outdoor learning. His "Mariposa' project at Piqua High School centers on monarch butterflies and their cultural significance to the indigenous cultures of Mexico. Casey developed an experiential curriculum around the annual monarch butterfly migration to Mexico. Through this curriculum, butterflies hand-crafted by his students are mailed in a symbolic



"migration" to other students across North America, inspiring them to get outside to appreciate butterflies, their natural habitats, and their cultural importance.

When the pandemic hit, Casey worked with Piqua High School students and volunteers to design and plant a Monarch Watch Butterfly Waystation at the school. The Waystation has become an outdoor classroom for identifying colors, objects, and natural wonders in Spanish. Casey's friend and nominator Rob Short is excited that the award provides bus transportation, so Casey's students can resume their annual migration from Piqua High School to Cox Arboretum MetroPark, where they practice Spanish while studying butterflies.

Rising Star (< 10 years): Katie Guirnalda, Primary Village North



As the Nature Specialist at Primary Village North, Katie Guirnalda brings outdoor learning experiences to around 600 kindergarten and first grade students each week! Katie infuses nature in lessons based on state standards for science that incorporate reading, math, physical activity, and art. Outside of her class time, she works with her fellow



Her classroom is equipped with outdoor gear for her students, so they can get outside no matter what weather Mother Nature brings. Through a collaboration with the Centerville-Washington Park District, Katie has made Village South Park her main classroom where students peek under logs, investigate mud puddles and search for wildlife. Nature-based educator Meredith Florkey recognized Katie as rising star in the field and submitted her nomination, noting the joy, belonging and confidence Katie brings to her position and her tremendous impact in fostering an atmosphere where nature is valued in the school community.







who gets students outside, and brings nature into the classroom?



NOMINATE THEM FOR THE OUTSTANDING **TEACHER AWARD!**

> **Nominations Due** January 31, 2024



METROPARKS.ORG/OUTSTANDING

EDUCATION AT THE ARB 2023 STATS

(YOUR DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK)

Conservation Kids

Provides programming for children, ages 3-13, and families to inspire and create knowledge to get outside, play in and explore nature - and ultimately become stewards of the environment and advocates for conservation.



51 PROGRAMS

Total Attendance

464 Youth

396 Guardians

73 Program Hours

7 Graduates





Quotes from Attendees

"...team of helpers were awesome"

"It's excellent to see not only your instructors, but volunteers and learning teens"

"Memories were definitely made.."

"We had fun exploring nature together"

"MetroParks are a local treasure"

Conservation Leaders

An extension of Conservation Kids, for ages 10-17, in addition to programming Conservation in Action Opportunities are offered, where youth work alongside Five Rivers MetroParks conservation staff.

CONSERVATION LEADERS PROGRAMS

18 Programs

Total Attendance 139 Teens 112 Guardians

Program Hours 41







CONSERVATION IN ACTION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

8 Opportunities

Total Attendance 44 Youth 35 Adults

Volunteer Hours 133.5 Youth 101.5 Adult

Quotes from Conservation Leaders

"I would definitely recommend the conservation classes to other people, because I enjoyed my

"We go to all the Conservation Leaders programs we can..."

"...fun and a great learning experience!"

"I enjoyed applying my knowledge in a different and challenging way"

MEMBER EVENT

Celebrating 60 Years

On Wednesday, September 27 the Foundation board was excited to once again host our members after three years of not being able to get together. Members were given an overview of upgrades and features added over the past three years, along with tram tours out to the new pollinator habitat and nature play area.

Additionally, this year we celebrated 60 years of bringing green space to the community thanks to members and donors like you! Each feature you see at the Arboretum was made possible through people's generosity, from the Red Oak lined entrance as you enter the Arboretum, to the paver loop path, Allée and Arbor, Tree Tower, Monet Bridge, Zorniger Education Campus, Bell's Children's Maze, Maimon Memorial Garden, and so much more.



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Elizabeth Durig

This past spring our board president, Jason Eckert, and past board president, Alan Brown, had the pleasure of sitting down and talking to longtime member, Elizabeth Durig, along with Five Rivers MetroParks marketing & public engagement specialist, Lauren Lemons.

Elizabeth has been a member of Cox Arboretum Foundation for 32 years. In addition to being a foundation member she volunteered her time to help on the grounds. Elizabeth shared she grew up beside the Arboretum before it was the Arboretum and once she was married she and her husband purchased

a house near the Arboretum. She has had the pleasure of seeing the Arboretum go from farmland to the community treasured park it is today for everyone to enjoy.



Elizabeth Durig, and Jason Eckert.

Pictured to the left: Alan Brown, Elizabeth Durig, and Jason Eckert.



Leave a lasting legacy for generations to come with a planned gift to the Cox Arboretum Foundation.

PERENNIAL SOCIETY MEMBERS Barbara Anthony*, Margaret Barnhart*, Martha Boice, Jane Compton*, Lewis & Ruth Cummings*, Patricia Edmonson, John & Louise Haley, Lou & Millie Homan, Bruce & Sue Howorth, Samuel Maimon*, Markita Murdock, Charles Niehaus*, Cynthia Shook*, Edda Wagner*, Alma Walther*, Joyce Wolfe*

*denotes deceased

The Perennial Society are members who have named the foundation in their estate plans or will. For more information call (937) 274-438

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Woodworker Group

For more than 20 years, woodworking volunteers at Cox Arboretum MetroPark have used their skills to support the work of Five Rivers MetroParks staff. Building anything from bat boxes to benches, these volunteers meet once a week to work on projects, learn from each other and build camaraderie. While each woodworking volunteer must have a basic skill set, they all have a wide range of woodworking experience, from newer hobbyists to life-long contractors.

"I've learned a lot since I joined," said volunteer Don Erwine. "Before I joined, I would do some repairs around the house, and I have an old pull barn that's always needing repairs, but I wasn't doing anything near what I'm able to do now." Recently, Erwine and his team of woodworkers - led by MetroParks park technician Uriah Langmeyer - completed their largest project to date: portions of the nature play at Cox Arboretum MetroPark.

Cox Arboretum MetroPark's nature play opened this fall 2023. The woodworking volunteers constructed two bridges, a sloped climbing wall and the pergola - resulting in considerable time and cost savings. The group spent 850 hours completing these structures, which would have otherwise been built - and billed - by contractors.

Langmeyer is especially proud of MetroParks' staff and the volunteers' accomplishments. Staff spent nearly 3,000 hours on the project, much of it working side-by-side with volunteers. "Teamwork makes the dream work," said Langmeyer, who values the woodworking team's collective learning experiences and process more than simply completing a project. "We're all learning together," he said. "Each person gets the chance to participate in everything that's going on. We problem solve together. We come up with ways do things by talking with everyone about it, and then evaluate the best approach." While building the nature play was, indeed, a challenging project, it also required a very collaborative approach. "On the pergola build for the nature play, volunteer Rex Miller was instrumental in getting the project finished," Erwine said. "The climbing wall was very meticulous, and volunteers Gary Drake and John Baldwin were phenomenal in getting that done because of their woodworking experience." With great challenges come great rewards: The woodworking volunteers and MetroParks staff are thrilled to see the community's reception to the project. "It's a wonderfully unique experience to be able to build a playground," Langmeyer said, "then get to watch kids of all ages enjoy it every day you go to work."

The Nature play features structures created from natural materials that encourage kids to explore nature and connect to the natural world. John Kennedy elementary was the first school group to enjoy this new feature just as it was opening to the public. The students were excited by the new feature, and one was having so much fun, she shared with her teacher that "this is so much better than the playgrounds at school."

Thank you to the Cox Arboretum Woodworkers for your outstanding commitment, dedication, and service!

Woodworker Volunteers: Gilbert Aguilar, John Baldwin, Frank Beitel, Peter Bertolini, Dori Dick, Gary Drake, Don Erwine, Terry Kutter, Brian McNicholl, Rex Miller, John Szelog, Larry Turner, Jim Wafzig, and Paul Westhafer!

Make a Difference Day

Cox Arboretum celebrated Make a Difference Day this past October with volunteers helping to remove invasives of Honeysuckle, Buckthorn, and Autumn Olive along the nature trails. *Thank you to everyone who came out and gave of their time to help remove these invasives.*







HORTICULTURE NEWS

Tree Health

One of the first priorities Joe Morrison and Jennifer Davit discussed upon beginning as the horticulturist at Cox Arboretum was beginning a plant health care program for Cox Arboretum's trees. By definition, an arboretum is a place where trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and educational purposes. It's part of our job to make sure these trees are cultivated properly and in good health.

In recent years, a fungal pathogen known as Oak Wilt has been detected in Ohio and before initiating a fertilization program, it was crucial that the oaks were tested to make sure they didn't have Oak Wilt. A few physical signs indicated that Oak Wilt could be a possibility. Austin Lathrop and Jennifer collected samples from five different trees and overnighted the samples to Ohio State's Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic. They were thrilled to receive the good news that all five samples were negative for Oak Wilt, as once it is detected in a nearby tree, it is difficult to prevent spread to neighboring trees. Some of the physical symptoms in the oaks are likely related to drought stress and nutritional deficiencies. Jennifer and horticulture staff will now begin fertilizing our trees in stages this fall, as we make every effort to care for the trees that make Cox Arboretum so special.



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SOCIETY

Joe Bockelman and Barbara Driehaus Jana Collier Stephen and Rose Fryburg Sonja Gegel Janet Graul Margaret Klein Steve and Lou Mason Ken and Darrell May Ruth Mead Barbara Nichols O'Hara Marvin and Christine Olinsky Caryl Philips Don and Joyce Porter Carole Remick Rick and Jane Schwartz Carole Stephens

The Founders Society are members who are committed to the longterm goals of the Cox Arboretum Foundation, and give an annual gift of \$1,000 or more.

Nancy Zeller

FOUNDERS MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

50 Years

Dorothy E. Muhlhauser

45 Years

Mary Ann Henz

35 Years

Mary and Neil Gamstetter

30 Years

Don and Julie Ames Jack & Carlyle Barnard Stephen & Rosemary Fryburg Ruth Przyborowski Robert Burnell

25 Years

James L. Medzviega

20 Years

Jean Burton Kendall and Cindy Clay 20 Years Cont...

James P. Jean M. Graham Laure and David Leach Pamela Murn Donald and Carol Weckstein

15 Years

Linda H. Curtoys Clair and Jan Dobson Joan Hielm Barbara Kedziora Carole Remick Beverly F Shillito

10 Years

Bob and Susan Brown Patti Russell-Campbell Julie Stoller Phyllis D. Strayer

5 Years

Paul Schlottman

Thank you for your longtime support!

NEW MEMBERS

November 2022 - October 2023

Jacob Amann Samantha Barnett Justin Bishop & Paige Matteson Bonnie Blankenship Carmen Bostic Ashley Lobaugh & Matt Cotter **David Crist** Ryan Dunaway Roy and Becky Edgren Kylie Kehrman Karen Hesser Debra Jansina Walter and Charlotte Langen

Jean and Shaun Morris Shem Nyachieo Pamela M. Parker Kristin Jolley & Brandon Phelps Anthony Pyle Jake Rhinehart Jessie Schweitzer Sona Sheth Jen Ptacek & Allen Snyder Kimberly and Roger Spurgeon Sarah Valentine Suzanne Wilds

TRIBUTES

November 2022 - October 2023 *Indicates Tribute Tree or Bench

In memory of Gretchen Baber* Jeffrey Baber

In memory of Caleb Baker* Tammy Baker

In memory of Christopher Bricker Charles Bricker

In memory of Ken Charles Bob and Nora Newsock

In memory of Melanie Chatterji Pandya* Dr. Atindra Chatterii

In memory of Patricia Greene Dawn Wojcik

In honor of YWCA Woman of the Year Susan Gruenbera Bob and Nora Newsock

In memory of Lois Hanek Charles Bricker

In memory of Colleen Kildea Henn* Holger Henn

In memory of Alysha Miller Marcus Lanning

In memory of Elly Mullen Judith Thorn

In memory of Eugenia Plattenburg

Cassady Schiler Wealth Management Don Denison James Falter Glennon Family Foundation Patty Olbright Susan Pacheco **Waverly Partners** Eric Peterson William Sherk, Jr.

In memory of Ken Snavely Mary Jane Raymond

In memory of Carolyn Talbott

Tracy Arndts Sarah Valentine Mary Desch John Gala Kenneth Kirchmayer Kathy Valentine

In memory of Susan Kay Toole Linda Davis

In honor of Zorniger's new grandson Henry Bob and Nora Newsock

In memory of Betty Uhlman*

Ronald Alexander Dane Axen Annette Boose David Dykes Kevin Fodor James Gilbert Linda Green Steven Hamilton **Robert Howard** Jay Johns Wade Lawson Michael Littleton Reging Moorman Annette Retter Lisa Rodenfels **Edward Seiber** Mark Spivey **Beth Thieman Robert Thomson**

Paul Uhlman Christopher Vance Matthew Whaley Samuel Whaley Sandra White





The James M. Cox, Jr. Arboretum Foundation 6733 Springboro Pike Dayton, OH 45449

Non-Profit
Organization
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Dayton, OH
Permit No. 609

PARK HOURS

APRIL - OCTOBER 31 8am - 10pm NOVEMBER - MARCH 31 8am - 8pm

ZORNIGER VISITOR CENTER HOURSMONDAY - FRIDAY 8am-5pm
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 11am - 4pm

MISSION

To support educational, scientific, civic, and cultural programs and activities relating to the advancement of arboriculture, horticulture and related fields by providing support for the Cox Arboretum as a free arboretum/museum for the benefit of the general public.

