

# GARDENING FROM THE HEART

## HORTICULTURE THERAPY

In 1976 at the National Convention, Fort Collins, Colorado, the adoption of a horticulture therapy program was approved. The success of the Tucson, Arizona Men's Garden Club at the Arizona Children's Home, established the action of the convention delegates and the directors. Loren F. Peterson, Sr., Overland Park, Missouri coined the name for this program "Gardening From The Heart". For two years he was the first National Committee Chairman. John Ware (deceased) who had initiated the partnership in the Tucson Club, was the second National Chairman. In addition, he gave over two decades of leadership as his clubs GFTH Advisory Committee Chairman.

In 1986 the concept of outreaching therapy was expanded from youth only to include adults, residential seniors as well a service veterans in Medical Centers.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To establish club partnerships with local institutions serving youth or adults and provide support and encouragement in the field of horticulture therapy.

### **HORTICULTURE THERAPY**

Centuries ago the Egyptians learned persons that were ill, received therapy from walking in the floral gardens. Through the years, the concept spread until after World War I, the world famous Menninger Hospital and Foundation, based on extensive experiments, established the fact that gardening was supportive and for therapeutic readjustment. Dr. Carl F. Menninger, Topeka, Kansas, a pioneer in the treatment of persons with mental illness communicated the fact that **"gardening gives hope, promise, and satisfaction"**.

The use of plants improve the quality of life to persons with diverse physical and emotional challenges. Plants can involve all five senses. The vision impaired an touch, smell and taste plants. Those with hearing problems can enjoy the beauty plants provide. Arthritic hands can mix potting soil and use for planting. Handicapped persons gain so much when raised bed gardening is introduced. Emotionally disturbed acquire the pride of accomplishment from plant growth and care. The elderly find a new interest in the sunset years by caring for plants.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

In 1986 a partnership concept of a club with an institution was established. The first and most important step is to have club officers and advisors meet with the director of the institution to establish the team support needed. Weekly team meetings are recommended as many clubs maintain year around programs with clients growing plants under lights or window sills for spring planting. The ultimate success of a club partnership is the institution providing a horticulture therapist or a director that becomes involved with the program.

## **FUNDING**

Top management of the institution must be supportive, which results in the project becoming a long term part of the operating budget. Club members can easily provide plant cuttings, perennial plants and some financial support. Memorials and club contributions are the main source of income for the national organization. Grants are available upon request to clubs that wish to begin a program.

## **DIVIDENDS**

Club advisory team members receive special satisfaction in relating to youth and adult clients, as they advise them on planting and care. The institution director and associates more and more realize that the GTFH program helps to achieve therapeutic objectives. Elderly persons in health care or military homes (many in wheelchairs) grow plants on window sill, transplanting outdoor spring floral or vegetable gardens, utilizing raised bed gardens. Dividends are enjoyed by the community as well as the clients.

## **SUPPORT FOR TGOA/MGCA CLUBS**

Available for club use:  
GTFH Manual  
GTFH Partnerships  
Audio/Visual Program  
National Committee Involvement

"Gardening from the Heart represents one of the finest volunteer programs in America, which brings the joy of gardening to thousands of disabled, disadvantaged and elderly people. Garden clubs participating in the program give of their time, experience and resources and receive the rewards that are priceless."

Dr. Richard H. Mattson, Professor  
HTM, Horticultural Therapy,  
Kansas State University

For more information contact:

TGOA/MGCA National Office,  
P. O. Box 241, Johnston, Iowa 50131-0241

OR (See next page)

**Chairperson:**

Rosemary Borowitz

411 Plain Drive

Greenbay, WI 54305

(414) 497-8432

E-mail: rrborowitz@aol.com

**Committee Members:**

Dan Blackledge,

5350 Jamaica Drive,

Jackson, MS 39211-4057

(601) 956-6760

E-mail: danw27@Juno.com

Ron Heggen

911 Arthur

Des Moines, IA 50316

(515) 262-8635

raheggen@dwx.com

Bob Dore

5752 E. Burns Street

Tucson, AZ 85711

(520) 747-9926

E-mail: dore5@flash.net

Rex Walker

14606 E. 18<sup>th</sup>

Veradale, WA 99037

(509) 928-6162

Uel Puett

1217 W. 47<sup>th</sup> Street

Kansas City, MO 64112-1203

(816) 531-8092

Linda Hertel

324 NW Rolyan Rd

Topeka, KS 66617

lhertel5@att.net

William F. McCool

945 Park Lane,

Jackson, MS 39211-4126

(601) 956-2845

David Young

4285 Kent Rd.

Birch Hall, Apt 410

Stow, OH 44224

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**THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA**  
MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA