THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA

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PRESS RELEASE

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THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA ANNOUNCES 2020 FOUNDERS FUND GRANTS

GARDEN CLUB OF MADISON, MADISON, NJ, RECEIVES A $10,000 GRANT

TO SUPPORT GROWING IT GREEN IN PATERSON, NJ - PUBLIC SCHOOL RAIN GARDEN

Garden Club of Madison, Madison, New Jersey has been named a 2020 recipient of The Garden Club of America (GCA) Founders Fund grant. The $10,000 grant was announced last month at The Garden Club of America Headquarters in New York.

The Garden Club of Madison (GCM), in collaboration with the Great Swamp Watershed Association (GSWA) and Rutgers University, supports the expansion of a GSWA transformational student rain garden program, established in Paterson, NJ in 2017. This environmental program is a hands-on educational experience, giving the students an opportunity to connect with nature. In addition to financial support from the Founders Fund grant, The Garden Club of Madison, under the supervision of the GSWA, will provide volunteers to lead workshops for students who will be learning how to plan, design, and build rain gardens. Previously, the club gave a $1,490 grant to the GSWA to purchase educational materials for this program.

Studies have shown that children's connection to nature positively impacts their physical, academic, social, and psychological health. Through the rain garden project, students learn how rain gardens provide solutions to local stormwater runoff and water pollution issues in their own community, nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards.

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One in twenty-one municipalities in New Jersey has a Combined Sewer Overflow System (CSOS). With just light rainfall, Paterson's CSOS, which combines stormwater runoff in the same pipes as untreated sewage, easily exceeds load capacity, sending huge volumes of untreated sewage directly into the Passaic River. The overflows are devastating to the health and quality of life in Paterson and areas downstream on the Passaic.

The Great Swamp Watershed Association is a founding member of Paterson SMART (Stormwater Management and Resource Training) which focuses on reducing negative stormwater impacts to the city and the Passaic River through the use of Green Infrastructure (GI) projects. Public schools in Paterson are leading the charge in stormwater management solutions through the implementation of GI projects like school rain gardens. GSWA and its engineering partner Rutgers University have already successfully completed four rain garden projects in Paterson. School resource reports state that the four rain garden projects completed have had a huge impact on students' understanding of stormwater management issues and that ongoing maintenance of the gardens has been incorporated into each school's curriculum.

GSWA and Rutgers wish to expand this program with the development and installation of an additional rain garden in Paterson this fall. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, this plan may be delayed.

The educational component provides both in-class and in the school-yard teaching sessions that focus on the need, benefits, design, and plant material selection for the rain gardens. An Outdoor Experiential Learning Opportunity takes students to GSWA's Conservation Management Area (CMA) in Harding or to the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in New Vernon, NJ, building an awareness of the upstream-downstream connections of the river and exposing them to wildlife habitats outside the city.

Additional Grants
The GCA has awarded additional grants. Perennial Planters, Providence, Rhode Island, received $10,000 and will use the funds to support its community project, **CheerMobile: What Cheer Flower Farm on the Rhode.** CheerMobile is a "What Cheer Flower Farm" educational outreach program. The CheerMobile van will carry educational programming, including flower arranging and art classes to those who cannot travel to the farm located in Providence.

Twin City Garden Club, Winston-Salem, N.C. was awarded a $30,000 grant and will use the funds to support their community project, **Permaculture Sanctuary: Promoting Trauma Resilience Through Regenerative Gardening at Crossnore School & Children's Home in Winston-Salem, N.C.** This sanctuary, on a 212- acre urban campus, brings together the children that Crossnore School & Children's Home serves, with the community by restoring souls through soil. Crossnore's campus houses 45 foster children and serves over 450 others daily through Kingswood alternative public school, outpatient therapeutic services, Youth in Transition, soft skills job placement, and after-school programs.

Founders Fund
The Founders Fund was established in 1934 to provide monetary awards to projects proposed by GCA-member clubs in partnerships with community organizations. The award was endowed in memory of the GCA's first president, Elizabeth Price Martin (Mrs. J. Willis) of Philadelphia, who served from 1913-20. Generous gifts from clubs and individuals since have augmented the fund.

The first award of $700 was presented in 1936 for an English-language publication of the oldest known American herbal, the 1552 Badianus Manuscript, by Johns Hopkins Press; a book about plants with reference to their medicinal properties. Since then, 90 Founders Fund winners and runners-up have received more than $1.5 million to save thousands of acres of land and innumerable trees, restore historic landmarks, establish civic plantings, and conduct research and educational projects across the country. Projects are proposed annually by garden clubs that are members of the GCA.

The GCA is a nonprofit national organization composed of 201 clubs with nearly 18,000 club members who devote energy and expertise to projects in their communities and across the United States. Founded in 1913, the GCA is a leader in horticulture, conservation, creative arts, historic preservation, and environmental protection. *www.gcamerica.org*