



# IMAGINE

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## A MESSAGE FROM Bruce Harkey

Today's Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has been built on the imagination of past and present donors, board, staff, volunteers and community partners.

The new and yet to come facilities and impactful programs that serve our community came about because as a group we were able to imagine a new Conservatory. So when we decided to create a newsletter that celebrates our donors and volunteers, and the impact you help the Conservatory make, **IMAGINE** seemed like the perfect name for it.

Three times a year, *Imagine* will share stories about what our collective imagination and work have achieved.

You will learn about the Conservatory's donors and what motivates them, the programs and the positive results made possible by their generosity, and what is on the horizon for the Conservatory.

I hope that *Imagine* will inspire you to imagine what tomorrow's Franklin Park Conservatory will look like and how you can help make it a reality. I imagine that together we will achieve great things.



In 2004, when Bill Gerhardt was looking to make a community connection for his company, GreenScapes Landscape, he reached out to the Conservatory. "What impressed me was that they asked me what I would like to do and how I would like to be involved at the Conservatory," said Gerhardt. "It was about developing a relationship, not just raising money. Ellen Grevey, VP of Philanthropy, her staff and everyone at the Conservatory think the same way."

Initially GreenScapes primarily donated materials and services, but that changed after Bill Gerhardt attended his first Growing to Green Awards. "Hearing firsthand how community gardening was having a tremendous impact on people's lives confirmed to me that I needed to be more involved at the Conservatory."

Bill Gerhardt became a major donor to the Growing to Green Program in 2006 and joined the Board of Trustees the same year. He has been the lead donor for horticulture shows at the Conservatory (both *Columbus Blooms* and *Harvest Blooms*), chaired the Master Plan committee, and made significant gifts to both capital campaigns – all while continuing his support of Growing to Green.

Bill Gerhardt served as the Conservatory board president in 2014 and 2015. Maybe the question should have been, "What won't you do for the Conservatory?"

## RECOGNIZING Bill Gerhardt



## THE BIG GIVE October 10, 2017

**Go Big – Be Kind** is the theme for The Columbus Foundation's 2017 Big Give. Show your Columbus spirit by supporting Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens during this 26-hour online giving event.

Your gift will have a greater impact thanks to the generosity of The Columbus Foundation, its family of donors and community partners contributing to a \$1.3 million+ bonus pool. Everyone who gives Tuesday, October 10 from 10am through Wednesday, October 11 at noon will have their donation amplified.

Gifts must be made using a credit card via the Giving Store, the Foundation's new digital marketplace, or by suggesting a grant through your Donor Advised Fund or Support Foundation. Donations via check,

cash or stock will not be accepted. All credit card fees are covered by The Columbus Foundation, allowing 100% of the donation to go to the Conservatory.

The Conservatory is listed in the directory as Franklin Park Conservatory Joint Recreation District, under the categories "Arts and Culture" and "Environment."

The Conservatory is dedicated to spreading horticulture knowledge and appreciation beyond the confines of the park. Together we can expand community outreach, increase school programs and provide horticulture and landscape training to teens and young adults.

For more information please visit [fpconservatory.org](http://fpconservatory.org) or follow #BigGive on social media.



## APRIL FLOWERS BRING Harvest Blooms

Over the past several years, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has placed a renewed emphasis on horticulture as it strives to become one of the country's best botanical gardens. Since 2015, this focus has been exemplified in the spring with *Columbus Blooms* and in the fall with *Harvest Blooms*. And the driving force behind *Columbus Blooms* was none other than 2014 Board President, Bill Gerhardt.

"I saw a presentation by a representative from the Cincinnati Zoo about its Zoo Blooms and the tulip display," said Gerhardt. "While the show is beautiful, what really stood out to me as Conservatory Board President was the tremendous attendance during the show. I knew in my heart that a tulip show at the Conservatory would have the same impact." So in the spring of 2014, Gerhardt took a truck load of Conservatory staff down to Cincinnati and even though it was a rainy, overcast day, the crowds were out in full force.

***"I knew in my heart that a tulip show at the Conservatory would have the same impact."***

In 2015, Conservatory staff and volunteers planted 70,000 bulbs within the interior courtyards and in park entrance beds—and *Columbus Blooms* was born. The number of bulbs grew to nearly 100,000 in 2016 and more than 100,000 this year. Bill Gerhardt's heart proved prophetic as admissions to the Conservatory increased by more than 30% in 2015 compared to the same time the prior year. The popularity of *Columbus Blooms* continues to grow, with 2017 admission revenue up 67% from 2014.

*Harvest Blooms* also began in 2015, featuring mums and other fall blooms. This year Horticulture Exhibition Designer Gareth Martin plans to grow the show and embrace the harvest in *Harvest Blooms*. In addition to the sea of color created by more than 3,000 mums and ornamental kale, *Harvest Blooms* will feature 3,000 pumpkins and gourds. "We are excited about this year's show and feel the pumpkins will help elevate the show to the level of *Columbus Blooms*," said Martin.

The Conservatory invites you to come experience *Harvest Blooms* and celebrate its growth at a reception on September 28 from 6–7pm in the Sculpture Garden Courtyard. The program will include remarks by Gareth on the design of *Harvest Blooms*, and a featured artist in the Central Ohio Woodturners juried show on display in the Cardinal Health Gallery.

**RSVP by September 22** to Leigh Ann Miller, Development Officer for Donor Stewardship at [lamiller@fpconservatory.org](mailto:lamiller@fpconservatory.org) or 614.715.8042.







## **GET INSPIRED** by Growing to Green

Since 2000, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens' largest outreach program – Growing to Green – has helped start more than 300 community gardens throughout Central Ohio. Growing to Green provides expertise and resources to individuals and groups interested in starting, strengthening and sustaining community and school gardens. “All that goes into creating a community garden can be daunting,” said Bill Dawson, Growing to Green Program Coordinator. “So my job is to meet with groups and help them create a garden that best meets their goals and make the garden happen.”

Today, community gardening is much more than just creating a greenspace in a neighborhood or a place where residents can grow food. Community gardens are meeting places that bring residents together and catalysts for community development, while providing food for low-income residents and pantries, educational opportunities for children and job training for adults.

“What drew me to Growing to Green as a donor was hearing residents talk about the impact these gardens have on their neighborhood and themselves as individuals,” said Bill Gerhardt, owner of GreenScapes and a donor to the program. “Growing to Green is changing people’s lives – especially young people’s lives.”

Not only is Growing to Green known as a community garden leader in the area, but its reach is national and international. Through the Scotts Miracle-Gro Company’s Gro1000 initiative, Dawson has traveled across the United States and Mexico to help communities start gardens. “The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company has been such a tremendous partner,” said Dawson. “It has been the lead sponsor of the program since nearly the beginning, has a grant program to support community gardening and provides product to gardens. Community gardening wouldn’t be what it is locally and nationally without Scotts’ support.”



## **IMAGINE** What Will **YOUR** Legacy Be?

You can make a significant and lasting impact on Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens by giving a legacy gift that will celebrate your spirit and achieve your philanthropic goals. Become part of the Heirloom Society, a special group of individuals who have included the Conservatory in their estates through planned giving.

Planned gifts provide focus and flexibility in addressing important issues in the areas of community gardening, child development, health and nutrition and ensure horticulture sustainability for generations to come. The Conservatory welcomes a team approach to planned giving and encourages you to have family, legal and financial advisors take part in choosing the right vehicle for you.

For more information about making a planned gift, please contact:

Leigh Ann Miller, Development Officer for Donor Stewardship at 614.715.8042 or lamiller@fpconservatory.org.