

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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## MISSION

As a premier botanical garden destination, we connect people to nature and create life-enhancing experiences.

## VISION

We envision a world that celebrates nature as essential to the human experience.

## VALUES

Our values are what we stand for—what we believe—and how we behave. They inform everything that we do and how we interact with the community and each other.

### BELONGING

We strive to make all people feel valued, welcomed, and included.

### CREATIVITY

We encourage original thinking to solve problems and inspire growth.

### COLLABORATION

We use partnership, teamwork and diverse perspectives to drive shared goals and collective success.

### STEWARDSHIP

We practice responsible management and care to ensure sustainability and well-being.



**BRUCE A. HARKEY**  
President & CEO



**HEIDI YURKIW**  
2024 Board Chair

Dear Conservatory Friends,

If we had to choose a theme for the Conservatory in 2024, it would be “firing on all cylinders!”

Years of planning came to fruition this year. The North Star Project, completed in 2022 with your input, led us to a national search for a design firm to develop an all-new master plan, which was finalized and adopted by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2024. In this annual report, you’ll read about the plan and how community feedback shaped its development. The unveiling of the new North Star Master Plan on May 8th was met with excitement and anticipation for the future.

And we didn’t stop there. With input from key stakeholders like you, we completed a four-year strategic plan, supporting the master plan’s implementation. We are proud to be a national benchmark for thoughtful and strategic planning for the future growth of our region, with your needs and the community’s future at heart.

In 2024, we updated the Conservatory’s mission and values to reflect the directive of the North Star (see left). Internally, we focused on our team through the work of the BIOME council (p. 18) and developed a more robust professional development and training system. In 2024, we saw the highest staff engagement and satisfaction scores on record!

In this report, you’ll see how you made it possible for us to set new revenue highs for events like the *Field to Table* fundraising event and *Pumpkins Aglow*. One measure you may be proudest of—you’ve lowered the financial barriers to visiting the Conservatory for a record 25% of our guests! Together we ensured that individuals and families, of all abilities to pay, were able to access the benefits of time spent in nature and with each other.

Thank you for making 2024 an incredible year and for being the rocket fuel that provided the momentum toward our North Star.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Harkey, President & CEO and Heidi Yurkiw, Board Chair



## 2024 CONSERVATORY LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Heidi Yurkiw Board Chair	Chris Ahlum	Julie Exner	Lori Payne
Sandy Nesson Immediate Past Chair	Derek Anderson	Bill Gerhardt	Emily Sandman
Russ Hunter Treasurer	Ann Bair	Jeanna Hondel	Camille Seals
Toya Johnson Secretary	Barbara Brandt	Ben Kaiser	Laura Troup
	Paige Crane	Scott Kleinman	Amy Vertanen
	Jason Cromley	Su Lok	Lisa Whittaker

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bruce A. Harkey President & CEO	Carmen Boy	Garry Clarke	Jenny Pope
	Jim Butch	Jill Lukshin-Hoff	Heather Popio
	John Callahan	Karin Noecker	Hillary Thompson
			Jenn Wilson

*“Every visit since I was young has been a celebration of community and a space of growth, in both the plants and myself.”*

- 2024 Conservatory Visitor

## 2024 SUCCESSES



### ATTENDANCE

2022: 313,910  
2023: 346,069  
2024: 355,316



### MEMBERSHIP

RENEWAL RATE  
**65%**  
2022: 12,632  
2023: 12,934  
2024: 12,891



### HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

<b>PUMPKINS AGLOW</b> 34,362 ATTENDED \$497,328 IN REVENUE	<b>CONSERVATORY AGLOW</b> 58,997 ATTENDED \$871,317 IN REVENUE
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### EMPLOYEES

102 FULL TIME  
36 PART TIME



### HORTICULTURE

1,798 PLANT TAXA  
796 PLANT SPECIES  
45K+ SPRING BULBS  
2,526 POUNDS OF PRODUCE



### MAKING MEMORIES

107 WEDDINGS 68 CORPORATE/SOCIAL EVENTS  
111 PHOTOSHOOTS & PROPOSALS  
6,380 COCKTAILS AT THE CONSERVATORY ATTENDEES

*“I’ve been coming to the Conservatory since I was a child.  
I am now 30 and I frequently bring my daughter.  
It’s a wonderful tradition I am happy to share with her.”*

- 2024 Conservatory Visitor





## CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

### CREATING INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

#### ⬆️ 25% OF GUESTS VISITED THROUGH A FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE ADMISSION PROGRAM

The Conservatory's Access Programs aim to make our spaces and programs affordable for everyone in the community. In 2024, 71,557 of our guests were able to access the Conservatory at a free or reduced price, a 7% increase from 2023. Through monthly Community Days, Library Culture passes, Museums for All admissions, and Access memberships, individuals of all ages, backgrounds and socioeconomic circumstances were able to immerse themselves in the beauty and restorative power of nature.

These programs have a profound impact, creating new opportunities for members of our community to learn, engage, and connect with one another. The benefits of nature are limitless, and all people deserve the opportunity to experience them, regardless of their circumstances. The increase in Access Program usage is proof that there is a growing need, and the Conservatory plans to continue serving our ever-evolving community with enriching experiences that are accessible for everyone.

***“Thank you for the Community Day Sundays.  
Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been able to afford  
to take myself and my daughter. We appreciate it!”***

- 2024 Community Day Visitor



#### MUSEUMS FOR ALL

\$3 year-round admission for participants in SNAP, EBT, WIC or Medicaid.

⬆️ 23% INCREASE

2023: 21,203 2024: 26,068



#### LIBRARY CULTURE PASSES

Free circulating memberships available at several local libraries.

⬆️ 20% INCREASE

2023: 13,299 2024: 16,026



#### COMMUNITY DAYS

Free admission the first Sunday of every month for residents of Columbus and Franklin County.

⬆️ 11% INCREASE

2023: 23,718 2024: 26,288



## CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

### COMMUNITY IN MOTION

In 2024, the Conservatory held its inaugural Flutter Run 5K fundraiser and welcomed over 400 participants and spectators for a fun-filled morning.

Inspired by pollinators, 324 racers walked, ran or fluttered on a scenic journey through the Conservatory's grounds and Franklin Park. The event was a joyful celebration of the important role nature plays in our health and community.

Funds raised by the Flutter Run 5K directly supported the Conservatory's nature-based education programs and pollinator awareness. Race-day event "swag" was pollinator-themed, including a native-plant giveaway for all race participants.

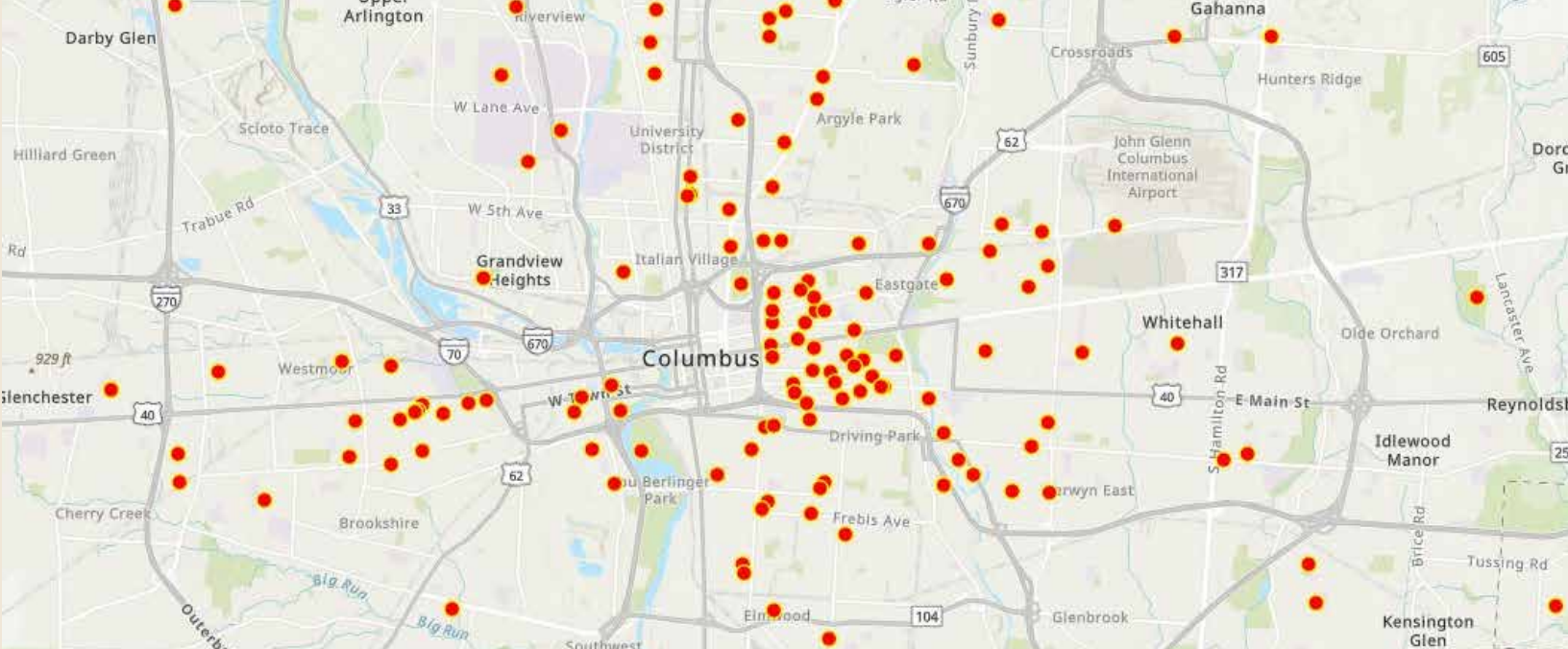
Special thanks go out to Flutter Run sponsor, Intel, for supporting the Conservatory's inaugural 5K!



**324 PARTICIPANTS**



**\$13,860 NET RAISED**



# MAPPING OUR GROWTH

Established in 2000, Growing to Green is the Conservatory's signature program to support, educate and advocate for community gardens throughout central Ohio.

In early 2024, Growing to Green undertook a program evaluation, which revealed that many community gardens operate independently and often lack resources for efficient communication. In an effort to dismantle siloes and increase collaboration among community gardens, Growing to Green launched the Franklin County Community Garden Mapping Initiative in collaboration with The Ohio State University Knowledge Exchange, the City of Columbus and other local partners. The map debuted on July 24, 2024, at Growing to Green's summer Community Garden Mixer. The GIS-based map features over 200 gardens throughout the city, including each garden's name, address, mission, amount of food produced, and volunteer opportunities.

The map effectively highlights the broader collective impact of community gardens; for example, in 2024, over 280,000 pounds of food were grown by local gardens in Franklin County! The map integrates local data and promotes ongoing dialogue and resource-sharing within Columbus' growing community.



## NEW FACES

In September, accomplished Longwood Fellow, Muluken Kebede, was hired as Growing to Green's Program Manager, bringing significant experience in urban gardening practices.

Muluken is the founder and managing partner of ZANA Landscape and Design Construction, a trailblazing landscaping firm in Ethiopia. Muluken's expertise in entrepreneurship, business development, green space and people development has already greatly contributed to Growing to Green's success.

Be sure to say hello to Muluken when you see him in the Scotts Miracle-Gro Company Community Garden Campus or out in the community!



**324 PARTICIPANTS**  
in the Communal Garden Series



**214 VOLUNTEERS | 428 HOURS**  
**24 COMMUNITY GARDENS**



**1,200 GARDENERS**  
connected through outreach events



# A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Conservatory's North Star Master Plan was shaped by many questions and many answers—from you. Input from a variety of stakeholders in 2022, including community members, neighbors, members, donors, corporate and foundation leaders and staff, informed our North Star position statement—a bold vision to guide our future growth.

Surveys and interviews posed questions such as: *“When you visit a botanical garden or cultural institution, what expectations do you have?”* *“What areas is Franklin Park Conservatory excelling in?”* *“What are its three biggest growth opportunities?”* This feedback helped define the Conservatory’s North Star statement: **to be a premier botanical garden destination, with a purpose to inspire a connection to nature, create life-enhancing experiences, and cultivate belonging.**

A national search led to the selection of MKSK, a landscape architecture firm, to develop the master plan. MKSK interviewed 139 people and stakeholder focus groups, asking: *“What are the beloved parts of the Conservatory that should be protected and enhanced?” “What do you want to get out of this version of the master plan?” “What are the critical items we must explore?”* This extensive community engagement revealed the desire for an emphasis on synergy with the community and enhanced guest amenities, a substantial increase in immersive gardens, and the renovation of the iconic John F. Wolfe Palm House.

The North Star Master Plan, a visionary 25-year plan to guide the Conservatory's future growth and community impact, addresses this feedback through transformational enhancements, including restoration of the Palm House as the first priority, new Grand Gardens and flanking Signature Gardens, a new visitor center with a signature restaurant and gift shop, centralized underground parking with rooftop gardens, two new biomes, the modernization of existing buildings and an expanded Greenhouse Operations Complex to support the significant increase in garden acreage.

An unveiling of the full North Star Master Plan was held for over 100 key stakeholders on May 8, 2024. The plan received accolades for its bold vision, and The Columbus Foundation announced financial support that day, adding credence to the Plan's feasibility. Since May, designs have been further developed, with the renovation of the John F. Wolfe Palm House and Dorothy M. Davis Showhouse being the top institutional priorities.

Thanks to your responses to many questions, the new North Star Master Plan is a meaningful plan that is resonating with the community, and promises to fulfill its potential to create an urban oasis that benefits central Ohio residents now and for generations to come.



**SCAN TO LEARN MORE:** [fpconservatory.org/north-star-master-plan/](http://fpconservatory.org/north-star-master-plan/)

## CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY





## LEARNING IS IN OUR NATURE

### LEARNING EVERYWHERE, FOR EVERYONE

Whether in a classroom, a garden bed, or somewhere in between, learning with the Conservatory takes place anywhere and everywhere! Programs range from standards-based lessons in schools and on field trips to nature-based learning outdoors and in the community—providing a continuum of formal and informal learning for all ages.

In 2024, our partnership with eight Head Start locations reached 550 children, ages 3 to 5, with developmentally appropriate learning experiences. For the youngest learners, lessons were embedded in storytime, songs and movement, where students wiggled like caterpillars and fluttered their “wings” as they learned about the butterfly life cycle.

In a new partnership with Fairwood Elementary School, part of the Columbus City School district, 30 students are enjoying once-weekly afterschool learning experiences as part of a pilot program for the 24–25 school year.

In the fall, students prepared their raised garden beds and planted cool-season seeds; made garden journals for weekly reflection and observations; learned basic plant science; and held weekly tastings of fruits and vegetables.

In contrast to classroom-based learning, the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children’s Garden is a space where “lessons” take the form of observation and self-directed learning, and where hands get dirty (on purpose!). In 2024, educators delivered over 130 informal nature programs and held 17 Let’s Grow Garden Club sessions, connecting children to gardening, wildlife, native plants and more.

School field trips and programs for homeschooled children served more than 21,700 students in 2024. Grants and individual donors supported full or partial scholarships for more than 4,400 of these students.

***“Meeting these students each week at Fairwood Elementary is a special privilege. I get to see them collect data, document their work, and learn new vocabulary.”***

– Cindy Maravich, Community Education Senior Manager



**555 STUDENTS**

8 Head Start locations



**26,358 PARTICIPANTS**

in Children’s Garden education programs



**510 SUMMER CAMPERS**

Ages 3–8



## TEENS PUT LEARNING INTO CLIMATE ACTION

The Teen Corps “Class of 2024” planted, watered and harvested. They were entrepreneurs (running their own produce stand at the Farmers Market), teachers (educating younger children about healthy eating) and they took steps toward self-sufficiency (learning to prepare nutritious meals using fresh foods). And in 2024, some of the participants also called themselves grant recipients.

The Teen Corps program, completing its ninth year, is an eight-week paid internship and learning opportunity that provides students with life and work skills through urban agriculture. They come away with experience in gardening, sustainability, entrepreneurship, customer service, communication and teamwork. Field trips and guest speakers introduce students to careers in the green industry.

This summer, following a presentation from the City of Columbus’ Youth Climate Action Fund, two youths submitted proposals and were awarded microgrants.

In one project, students will repurpose waste to create an art installation for display and community education. Another project, submitted by a former Teen Corps student-turned-educator, will produce a series of short, easily digestible sustainability videos for YouTube, including some of what he learned in Teen Corps: cooking without food waste, sustainability, urban gardening, and food safety.

***“It’s fantastic to see these students grow in just eight weeks from being timid and unsure to accomplished and empowered to take action in their communities.”***

– Jenny Pope, Director of Community Outreach & Education



**23**  
participating teens



**94%**  
of teens feel more confident in themselves after Teen Corps



**5**  
Teen Corps field trips to local businesses

# ROOTED IN LEARNING

At the Conservatory, learning extends beyond our visitor experience. Behind the scenes, our staff continuously develop their skills to provide the best experiences for visitors and to further our mission to connect the community to nature and create life-enhancing experiences.

In 2024, the Conservatory's teams visited other gardens and organizations for collaborative learning, developing skills in horticulture, informal education and community engagement at sites including Kingwood Center Gardens, Groovy Plants Ranch, CropKing, COSI, The WORKS, and Dawes Arboretum. These informative field trips allowed for collaborative information sharing and the opportunity to learn from our peers and see their work in action.

Among the horticulture team, three staff members obtained pesticide licenses and six earned forklift certifications, ensuring our staff continue to operate

safely and grow in their professions. In 2024, our Senior Horticulturist, Luke Varvarosky, became the Conservatory's first Certified Arborist, obtaining his International Society of Arboriculture Certification. This certification represents a professional level of knowledge and skill in the field of arboriculture that includes tree biology, diagnosis, maintenance and safety.

Learning and development are embraced at every rung of the ladder. In 2024, Bruce Harkey, President & CEO, served as Board President for the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), the leading professional organization for the field of public horticulture. APGA connects nearly 600 gardens through conferences and learning opportunities, association programs, advocacy and funding opportunities. Bruce's leadership with APGA demonstrates the Conservatory's goals to serve as a champion for the field of public horticulture and promote learning for all.

***“My whole life I have gazed upon trees in awe of their rugged beauty and adaptability. Achieving this certification is a lifelong goal and a token of my admiration for life on this incredible planet.”***

- Luke Varvarosky, Senior Horticulturist & ISA Certified Arborist

## LEARNING IS IN OUR NATURE



# NATURE AND THE NUTCRACKER

Red velvet curtains part to reveal a sumptuous larger-than-life tree bedecked for a Christmas party, an ethereal snow scene, the land of the Sugar Plum Fairy, and a defiant Mouse King ready for battle.

Visitors to this year's *Holiday Blooms* were transported to scenes from the iconic ballet "The Nutcracker", interpreted through a horticultural lens by Associate Director of Horticulture, Amanda Bettin. The immersive display featured more than 1,200 poinsettias, frosty garlands, decorated cut trees, and a ballerina tutu made of tillandsia (also known as air plants), among 1,000 other complementary foliage plants and fanciful props.

Design work began a full year in advance, allowing specific poinsettia varieties to be custom-grown; meanwhile, plans were hatched to design and fabricate a 6-foot-tall moss topiary Mouse King on site. Bettin carefully selected complementary plants based on their height, form, texture and color to bring interest and variation to each scene's design.

Seamlessly integrating the music from Tchaikovsky's beloved score, visitors followed Clara's fantastical journey, with each alcove of the Dorothy M. Davis Showhouse transporting guests through five classic scenes of the ballet in a highly creative marriage of nature and art.

***"Designing with plants is creating art with a living canvas... with the additional challenge that the design will evolve as the plants grow; the medium is alive! It requires a very layered approach, but it's a fun and creative challenge to have."***

- Amanda Bettin, Associate Director of Horticulture

## WHERE NATURE & CULTURE CONVERGE





## WHERE NATURE & CULTURE CONVERGE

### BRINGING NATURE TO LIFE

In 2024, visitors had the opportunity to experience two exciting new exhibitions: *Through the Vines: A Seasonal Journey* and *Color, Fly, Butterfly*. Both showcased the vibrant connection between nature and art. *Through the Vines*, a commissioned installation by the artists at Applied Imagination, featured 12 towering vine arches, each capturing the essence of a different season. As visitors walked beneath the arches, they were enveloped by vibrant visuals, ambient sounds and carefully curated wildlife, all reflecting the cycle of the year.

Meanwhile, within the Cardinal Health Gallery, *Color, Fly, Butterfly* invited visitors to become creators themselves, allowing them to design and color their own butterflies, which then came to life digitally and fluttered across

the gallery walls in an inventive fusion of artistic expression and interactive technology.

These captivating exhibitions were made possible through the generous support of the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC). As a long-time partner of the Conservatory, GCAC has played an instrumental role in supporting and elevating the arts and cultural expression of Greater Columbus. Thanks to their assistance, we acquired these installations as part of our permanent collection. The Conservatory is proud to be part of a community that nurtures the arts, and we are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of GCAC in making these exhibitions possible.

***“At GCAC, we are proud to support the Conservatory’s mission to connect art and nature in meaningful ways. Through collaborations like *Through the Vines* and *Color, Fly, Butterfly*, we help bring immersive experiences for the entire community, enriching the cultural landscape of Columbus.”***

- Tom Katzenmeyer, President and CEO, Greater Columbus Arts Council



## ARTISTS, ARTISTS, EVERYWHERE...

Franklin Park Conservatory is unique in the public garden world for its dedication to showcasing local and national artists. From our renowned Chihuly collection to exhibitions by local talents, the Conservatory integrates artistic expression throughout our offerings.

Franklin Art Glass celebrated its 100th anniversary with us in 2024, in a curated 17-week-long exhibition showcasing works from throughout its century-long history. In April, Jonathan Capps, an OSU Associate Faculty Lecturer who recently competed in the fourth season of the Netflix reality series *Blown Away*, spent two days at the Conservatory as a guest artist, captivating hundreds of visitors with his glassblowing skills.

The Conservatory also nurtures local creatives through direct employment—our permanent staff of talented gaffers amaze visitors with daily demonstrations in the Hot Shop and sold-out glassblowing classes. Local artists sell their work in the Botanica Gift Shop, 11 teaching artists led adult fine arts classes at the Conservatory in 2024, and 54 individual performing artists were featured at events throughout the year. In addition, an estimated 24 self-identified artists were on staff in 2024, often working in roles not related to their craft, including photographers, painters, and jewelry makers.

The Conservatory is proud to provide a nurturing environment that allows artists to flourish, and a platform for the public to experience the creative intersection of art and nature.



**23**

local artists featured in Botanica

**\$86,936 IN SALES**



**166 Hot Shop Classes**

942 Class attendees

**\$144,667 CLASS REVENUE**



**73 Performances**

54 INDIVIDUAL PERFORMERS

**19 GROUP PERFORMANCES**



## GROWING STRONGER, TOGETHER

### VOLUNTEERS BRING *PUMPKINS AGLOW* TO LIFE

Volunteering at the Conservatory doesn't always mean getting your hands dirty, but during the month of October, it's all but required! Volunteers are an essential part of our behind-the-scenes work to ensure that hundreds of freshly carved pumpkins are ready for their glow-up as part of the evening *Pumpkins Aglow* experience.

Corporate volunteer groups have become integral to the effort; in 2024, 15 local companies provided volunteer carvers. As *Pumpkins Aglow* has grown, so has the interest, enthusiasm, and participation of corporate groups—with companies reaching out year-round to add their names to the list of willing partners.

For some groups, pumpkin carving at the Conservatory has become a much-anticipated annual event. One such group is from White Castle, where the word has spread throughout the company about how much fun it is to volunteer at the Conservatory. Multiple White Castle teams now join us each year to show off their carving skills.

It's a true team effort to create the stunning displays of lighted pumpkins during *Pumpkins Aglow*—one that we couldn't accomplish without the help of hundreds of volunteer carvers.

***“Pumpkin carving at the Conservatory allows our team to be festive and creative while contributing to the success of Pumpkins Aglow, which benefits all of central Ohio. It's one of our favorite volunteer activities!”***

- Jason Suitt, White Castle Management Co.



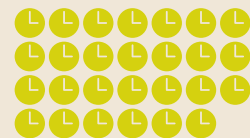
**225**

volunteers carved 450 hours



**600**

pumpkins carved



**18,927**

total volunteer hours in 2024



## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF FUNDRAISING & FELLOWSHIP

The Franklin Park Conservatory Women's Sustaining Board marked its 40th birthday in 2024. Founded in 1984, this remarkable group of volunteers and fundraisers predates the formation of Franklin Park Conservatory as a non-profit organization after AmeriFlora '92.

Established to broaden the Conservatory's base of support in the community, the Women's Board of 40 years ago bears a key similarity to the group today, according to Beth Hamilton, the first "official" president: "The women were go-getters" — and still are today!

Lesley Schaab, 2024 President, and members of the Directors Council incorporated 40th birthday celebrations throughout the year, and made a

point of including the number "40" in their record-breaking \$434,040 donation from *Field to Table* event proceeds.

With a thoughtful mix of volunteerism, lifelong learning, leadership opportunities and a welcoming atmosphere, the Women's Board's secret sauce is to incorporate a healthy dose of fun and friendship in everything they do. According to Hamilton, volunteering at the Conservatory with the Women's Board was "warm and welcoming, there was a job for everybody (or 2, or 3, or 4)," she joked. "It was fun, and there was joy in working with other women to support such a gem in our community."

***Happy 40th birthday, Women's Board!***

***"It was a wonderful feeling that every time I went, I was needed."***

— Beth Hamilton, 1984 Women's Board President



**265 MEMBERS**

21 Lifetime members



**3,589 HOURS**

volunteered in 2024



**\$5.5M+**

raised throughout 40 years



## GROWING STRONGER, TOGETHER

### THREE CHEERS FOR OUR CHAIRS!

The Conservatory's long-running fundraising events, *Hat Day* and *Field to Table*, are well-established bookends to the warmer months. But lesser known are the year-round planning and attention to every detail that are the work of each event's esteemed volunteer leaders.

Under the leadership of Chair, Debra Hadley, *Hat Day* 2024 featured a creative stage program that married works from the Conservatory's Chihuly collection with the ingenuity of local floral designers, who made wearable, botanical hats inspired by Chihuly glass. Modeled on the runway by 20 hand-picked community leaders, it was a fitting integration of the Conservatory's Chihuly collection, *Hat Day*'s fashion-loving crowd, and our horticultural purpose.

Conservatory leadership honored longtime trustee, Bill Gerhardt, with the 2024 Ann Isaly Wolfe Award, capping this fun-filled event with a meaningful tribute.

*Field to Table* 2024 featured a Provençal-inspired menu highlighting local, seasonal ingredients donated by dozens of local farms and producers, and concluded with a festive fireworks display. Event Chair, Jessica Joseph, supported by a dynamic committee, worked hard to secure corporate sponsors, energize a successful peer-to-peer fundraising effort, and source dozens of in-kind partners and donations to defray event costs.

Together, the two events netted proceeds of more than \$743,000 to support the Conservatory's mission and community impact. Now that's an accomplishment to celebrate!

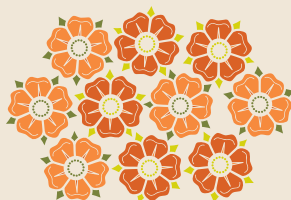
***"It has been so rewarding for me to help give back to an organization that not only has given my family so much, but also the community."***

- Jessica Joseph, 2024 *Field to Table* Chair



**1,281**

attendees



**10**

participating *Hat Day* florists



**46**

in-kind donors to *Field to Table*



## BUILDING INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

In 2024, the Conservatory's BIOME Council—Building Inclusive Opportunities for Meaningful Employment—officially commenced its work of promoting inclusion and belonging across the organization's workforce and workplace.

Made up of nine employees representing different departments, the BIOME Council supports staff in living our mission, vision and values, and examines policies, procedures and culture through an inclusive lens.

The Council uses staff surveys and tracks workforce and workplace metrics—such as demographic data, retention and turnover rates, and training participation rates, with goals to support employee growth and relationship-building in an equitable workplace.

In 2024, the BIOME Council recruited new members, launched the first annual BIOME survey, supported the identification of new organizational values (see p. 1), hosted all-staff trainings, collaborated on a new learning management system for all staff, and launched an internal newsletter.

All of these accomplishments helped increase staff satisfaction, making the Conservatory a great place to work.





## IN MEMORIAM

### CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF BILL DAWSON

The Franklin Park Conservatory family mourns the 2024 loss of Bill Dawson, a beloved figure who dedicated 30 years of his life to the organization before retiring in 2022.

Bill was most known for his leadership of the Growing to Green program, Columbus' largest community gardening initiative. Under his guidance for 21 years, Growing to Green flourished; Bill worked with over 300 garden projects and helped thousands of gardeners, young and old, realize their dreams.

Bill's legacy is one of growth, resilience, and community. His passion for nurturing both plants and people left a lasting impact on all who knew him.

During his tenure, which began with AmeriFlora in 1992, Bill wore many hats, contributing as a horticulturist, community garden developer, and mentor to countless gardeners.

His accomplishments include traveling with the Scotts Miracle-Gro GRO1000 program, which developed community gardens and public green spaces throughout the nation.

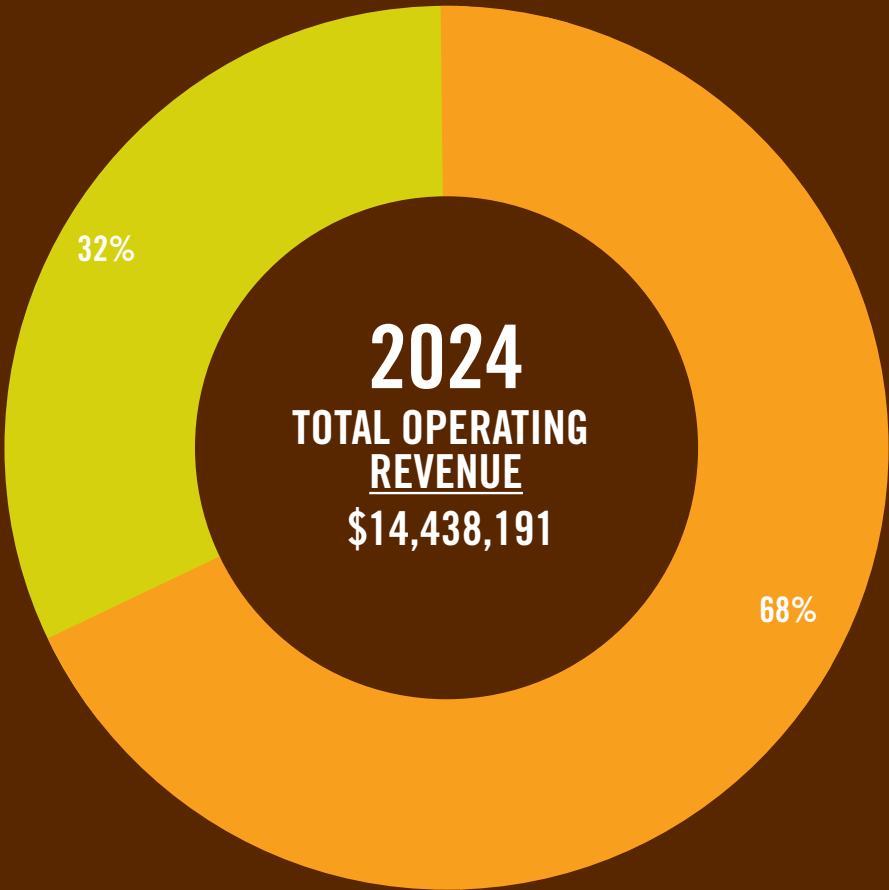
He supported garden leaders with the resources to succeed through the Urban Garden Academy, and he gathered gardeners from across Ohio for networking and learning at the We Dig Community Gardening Summit.

Bill will be remembered for his warmth and dedication, his inspiring leadership, and his profound contributions to the Conservatory and the broader community.

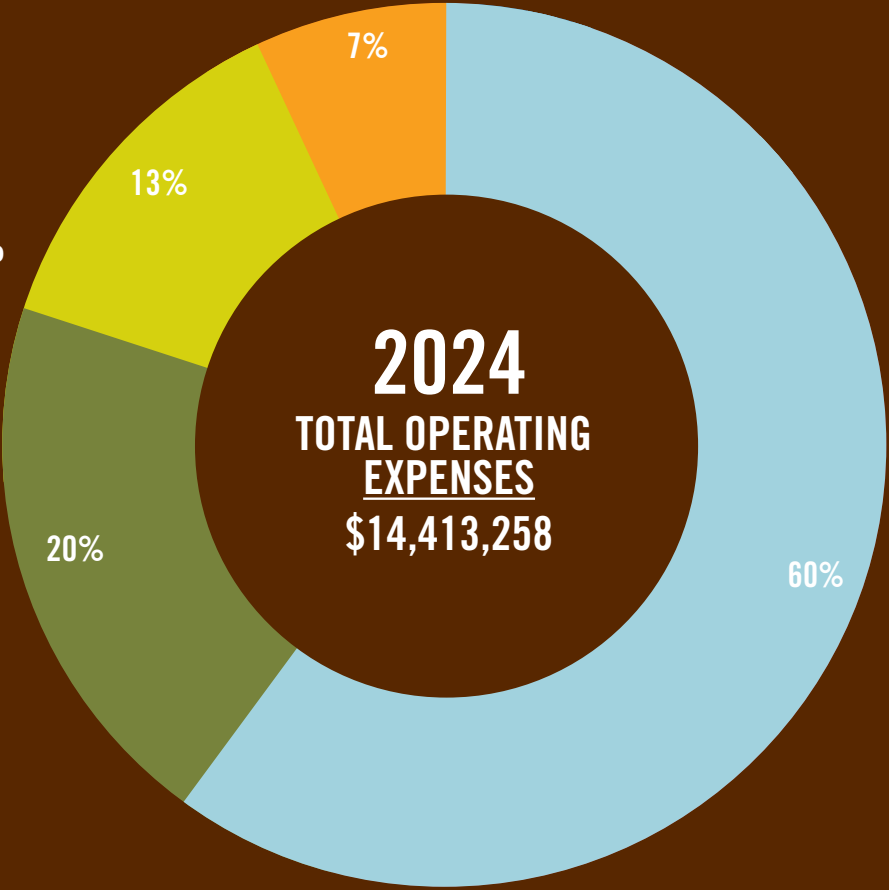
Bill had a way of making each person he spoke to feel special, and he will be greatly missed by his colleagues, the gardening community and all those whose lives he touched.

# 2024 FINANCIALS

- EARNED REVENUE
- FUNDRAISING:
  - GOVERNMENT
  - DONATIONS
  - GRANTS



- PROGRAMMING EXPENSES
- SPECIAL EVENTS, CAFÉ & GIFT SHOP
- MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION
- FUNDRAISING



# OUR GRATITUDE TO THESE 2024 DONORS

Every attempt has been made to include all gifts received by Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in 2024. Please advise of any omissions in an email to [development@fpconservatory.org](mailto:development@fpconservatory.org).

## \$1,000,000+

Greater Columbus Arts Council

## \$500,000–\$1,000,000

Franklin County Board of Commissioners  
State of Ohio

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