



Atlanta Location Volunteers
Are Invited to the

Thanks for Giving Luncheon February 4

After a three year hiatus, the Thanks for Giving Luncheon saluting the Garden's Atlanta volunteer corps will be taking place on Saturday, February 4 at 11:30 a.m. in Day Hall.

Please RSVP to Josh Todd by January 23.

<https://atlantabg.wufoo.com/forms/thanks-for-giving-2023-rsvp>

Congratulations to these Volunteers Of the Month

September 2022
Stan Bokoski

October 2022
Denise Siegel

November 2022
Penny Crump

December 2022
Deedi Henson

And to Gainesville's Volunteers of the Quarter

Martha and Dick Rightmyer
Jana Flury

Major Garden Expansion Plans Announced

The Garden has been awarded a \$25 million gift from the James M. Cox Foundation toward the expansion of the Garden to the Atlanta BeltLine. This long-awaited, transformational project will allow the Garden to grow by about seven acres along Piedmont Avenue and the Atlanta BeltLine, making it the city's first cultural institution directly accessible from the BeltLine's 22-mile loop. With a Garden entrance directly on the BeltLine, guests can walk and bike right to the Garden's doorstep, creating a more livable urban environment.

There is much more to come, and much more to do! I am deeply grateful to all of you for being part of this historic opportunity to grow the Garden, expand Atlanta's greenspace and preserve it for generations to come.

With thanks,
Mary Pat Matheson
The Anna & Hays Mershon President and CEO

Meet the Volunteers of the Month

September 2022
Stan Bokoski



It was 2004 when Stan Bokoski retired from a career as a teacher and social worker with Fulton County School System and began to wonder what to do with himself. Wife Wanda, a Garden volunteer herself, wasted no time signing him up too. "She volunteered me to get me out of the house!" he says. For years, he was a regular GEM in Storza Woods, planting and weeding as needed while also joining Wanda to help at concerts, Garden Lights, give tours and pitch in as needed. Nowadays he is a weekly greeter, welcoming visitors with a hearty smile. A Centennial volunteer for years, he often logs more than 200 hours a year and is one of those valued stalwarts the Garden could not do without. The Garden gratefully spotlights Stan as September's Volunteer of the Month.

October 2022
Denise Siegel



It was 2012 when, on learning that a new grandchild was on the way in Atlanta, Denise Siegel and her husband left their New Jersey home and moved south. A gift of Garden membership from their daughter, and the suggestion that volunteering would help her meet people in their new city, soon brought Denise to the Garden where she almost immediately felt right at home. Since 2013 she's trained as a docent for both children's and adult tours and for Discovery Stations and has enlisted husband Randy to join her for volunteer duty with concerts and Garden Lights. Just this year she has led 27 tours and also now serves the Docent group by planning field trips. A Centennial every year since 2014, Denise is honored for her service as October's Volunteer of the Month.

November 2022
Penny Crump



Penny Crump knew quite a bit about volunteering at the Garden well before she retired ten years ago. Her husband Bob Holmes was already a regular helper in the Greenhouse by then. So it is little wonder that, once retired, Penny found her niche at the Garden as well. With a background in science, she was especially interested in working in the lab and soon the right slot opened up. Since then Penny has served in many other roles including Discovery Stations, with Cooking Camps, with the Fresh Plates Series, as a docent, a greeter and at many special events. These days, she primarily works in the Sheffield Library. Penny has proven to be one of the Garden's most devoted volunteers, and the Garden salutes her as November Volunteer of the Month.

December 2022
Deedi Henson



With a twinkle in her eye and a smile for everyone she meets, Deedi Henson makes the Botanical Garden come alive for visitors of all ages. "My job as a Garden volunteer is to make sure every visitor enjoys being here and wants to come back," she says, and she's been doing just that since 2009. A professional musician who came to Atlanta in 1965 to play the harp with the Atlanta Symphony, Deedi has given hundreds of tours through the years, 36 in 2022, but doesn't stop there. She's always ready to volunteer at the Garden's events, especially with Garden Lights. "I love this Garden and sharing it with people. I want them to love it too!" For sharing her love of the Garden with so many through the years, the Garden honors Deedi as December Volunteer of the Month.



What's Growing in Gainesville

By Jenny Stephens
Gainesville Volunteer Coordinator

Happy New Year from all of us at the Gainesville Garden! We wrapped up 2022 in a big way, celebrating the season with our Holiday Tree Trail. We had more than twenty trees throughout our main garden that had been decorated by community members, businesses, and even staff and volunteers. This year's theme for the trail was *Fairytale Forest*, and it was truly a magical time of year in our Fairytale Forest!

As part of our seasonal activities, we hosted a class titled "Hops & Holly" and tickets sold out almost immediately for the class. Led by our Horticulture Manager, Ethan Guthrie, the class learned to make wreaths from natural evergreen branches, foliage and seed pods while enjoying a hoppy beverage. The sound of laughter and Christmas tunes could be heard from the event room. Everyone had a wonderful time! Who knows? It may become an annual event.

Our GEMs (garden essential maintenance volunteers), along with our Horticulture staff, are hard at work getting the tulips planted for the colorful bloom of spring. There is so much to do around here to get ready for that season of "rebirth" and "renewal." Expansion is now underway on the parking lot. This means bigger and better things for our Gainesville Garden. While it is going to take some time for completion, we can't wait to see what comes next.

No matter the time of year, there is always something amazing to see at Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville. We hope to see you soon!



News from the Volunteers at

Atlanta Botanical Garden, Gainesville

By Diane Korzeniewski



Volunteers have been busy at ABGG, wrapping up the old year and getting ready for the new year. The year 2022 brought growth and changes to our Garden:

- We have a new Volunteer Coordinator, Jenny Stephens!
- We have a new recording system for our hours.
- Wayfinders now walk the Garden greeting visitors, offering help and answering questions.
- Reading the new plant tags now offers a great opportunity to educate oneself.
- Volunteers are also participating in the conservation and plant collection areas.
- We have trained a new docent class, so we now have about a dozen new docents ready to do tours in the spring.
- We had a wonderful volunteer appreciation event with live music, Cuban food, and prizes. What a good time! We barely recognize each other when we are cleaned up.

Volunteers were also represented by a scarecrow and Christmas tree during our annual displays. Many of us visited Holiday Lights in Atlanta on volunteer/staff night. For us as volunteers, it just gets better every year. We look forward to seeing what 2023 will bring!

Volunteers are not the only busy ones at ABGG. Greenhouse and Garden staff are super busy during seasonal changeout, and volunteers try to do as much as we can to lighten their load. Visitors frequently make interesting comments to us as we are working. Just recently a large group was planting bulbs and a visitor asked us if we were on "work release." Another time we were digging soil out of a very large pot and someone inquired who we were burying in there. Always some good laughs between volunteers, visitors and staff!

Here's to the new year!

Saluting the Gainesville Garden's Volunteers of the Quarter

By Jenny Stephens
Gainesville Volunteer Coordinator

Martha and Dick Rightmyer



Dick and Martha Rightmyer have been GEMs at ABGG since 2017, although from 2012 to 2015, Martha got a head start, volunteering in the greenhouse during summers before retiring after 37 years of teaching kindergarten. Both life-long learners, gardeners, and serious Hall County Master Gardeners, "We volunteer to learn from the staff horticulturists about the identity, care and maintenance of the plants here. We also enjoy working with the other volunteers, earning some sweat equity outdoors and observing the Garden's continued growth." Gainesville residents since 1985, they work hard to make the Garden a place for the community to be proud of. "They are joys to have on the horticulture volunteer team," says staff member Tori Powers, "and they always have a smile!" Thanks to this dynamic duo for all they do!

Jana Flury



Jana Flury first visited the Gainesville Garden last April. "At that time, I felt like I had been spoken to from a higher being saying, 'You need to be in this place,'" she says. By July she had started volunteering in a big way, in roles from garden maintenance to Discovery to events, always with over-the-top enthusiasm, a smile and a kind word for everyone she meets. By the end of the year, she had tallied over 50 volunteer hours. "The greatest gift to an organization is a volunteer who is willing to wear many hats," says Cyndilyn Loudermilk, Gainesville's Visitor Services Manager. "Jana has worn a lot of hats since joining us this summer and even made a Gnomecrow for our Scarecrows in the Garden exhibit! We appreciate all that she brings to the Garden." Thanks, Jana, for making the Garden a brighter place for everyone.

Meet the Gainesville Garden's New Volunteer Coordinator:

Jenny Stephens

"I began my journey with the Garden at the end of March 2022. I started in Visitor Services and from day one, this place drew me in. The more time I spent here, the more time I wanted to spend here. The beauty and peace of our small Garden and the friendliness of the staff, volunteers, and guests is nothing short of amazing. It's so rare to come across someone who isn't happy while here. When an opportunity opened up to help with events in July, I jumped at the chance because it meant more time at the Garden and another way to be involved. There's nothing like hearing a client's good reviews when their event has been all that they've wanted and more. In October, another opportunity presented itself: Volunteer Coordinator. While I was anxious about the role, as it is something completely new to me, I just knew that I wanted to do it. It's been quite an adjustment, but I'm enjoying the challenge. Getting to know the volunteers and seeing how much they love to give back to our Garden and community is so inspiring.

I've been married to my husband, Matt, since 2016. We live 20 minutes away from ABG Gainesville. I have two beautiful and determined adult daughters---Kanecia, 23 and Kalina, 21. We also have two fur babies named PePe and Millie.

I want our volunteers to know that my door is always open. I'm a phone call, email, or just a few steps away. I appreciate every single one of them and what they give to our Garden. As we are preparing for more expansion here, recruitment will be key for us to expand our volunteer force. The parking lot expansion will lead way to more and larger events. Volunteers play a major role in making events go more smoothly; making the Garden more beautiful; making our guests smile. They are vital to our success!"



NOTES FROM MARY PAT

INSIGHTS FROM MARY PAT MATHESON
THE ANN AND HAYS MERSHON PRESIDENT & CEO



I noticed how excited people gathered together this holiday season, reminding us all how fortunate we are to return to a more normal life thanks to the remarkable work of the world scientists and doctors in developing an effective vaccine against Covid. And I am certain that we will all be smiling and celebrating on February 4th when we come together at the Thanks for Giving Luncheon after a three year hiatus! We have truly missed you all and the camaraderie that fills the room during this wonderful event. I can't wait to see you there and to celebrate the important work that our volunteers have achieved over the last three years, we couldn't have kept this Garden moving forward without you!

Atlanta Botanical Garden, Gainesville

After many years of planning and several very generous donations, we are finally underway with expanded parking at the Gainesville Garden. The new parking project includes terraced parking bays separated by beautiful plantings and fruit trees suitable for our growing conditions. Almost twenty years ago, we had the forethought to quietly purchase the small houses that were adjacent to the Garden. The purpose was to assure that our borders never included large retail centers or subdivisions. It was a fortuitous decision as those houses are now being razed for the expanded parking garden. With an additional 250 spaces, we will be able to expand programming in the Doug and Kay Ivester Amphitheater offering more concerts, festivals, plant sales and other activities. The additional parking will also support growth in visitation and membership and assure easy parking for the many new guests that we expect in the coming years. As we learned from Atlanta, parking is key to our future success and I am delighted with the design of this terraced parking garden as it showcases how to incorporate cars and gardens and retain shade and beauty. All going well, the new parking will be open in a year.

Garden Expansion

One day we will document the many hurdles taken to position the Atlanta Botanical Garden for expansion onto the Atlanta Beltline. But today, I want to focus on the excitement and opportunity that such an expansion presents. After six long years, we have announced that the Garden will develop a new entrance on the Atlanta Beltline immediately to our north. The site for the expansion includes the existing retail center next to the Garden as well as the Public Storage facility. Plans are underway to hire a nationally recognized landscape design firm to develop a master plan for a new visitor center and entrance, display gardens, water features and walkways linking the new site to Storza Woods. This additional 8.8 acres presents us with a transformational opportunity to present the Atlanta Botanical Garden directly to Beltline users, offer a walking/biking entrance and assure a new approach to sustainability by having a new front door on the Beltline. I am beyond excited by this amazing opportunity; the Garden will be a major anchor on the Atlanta Beltline and the only cultural institution directly on the Beltline. Just as the Whitney Museum is the cultural anchor on the Highline, the Garden will be the cultural anchor on the Atlanta Beltline. Stay tuned as designs are developed, a timeline established and fundraising continues. I have no doubt that Josh and others will put together some walking tours for those who want to see the new site and understand how it all fits together. I look forward to sharing more plans with you next year!

Digging In is published for the volunteers of the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

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