



BOXERWOOD
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2019 - JULY 2020

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Leisure

*What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare? –
No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep or cows;
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass...
(excerpt, William Henry Davies 1871-1940)*

When a friend recently sent me this poem, I was reminded of Boxerwood. The poem caused me to pause in the midst of my own cares and remember the boughs of the Great Oak, the magnolias behind the Lodge, the cedars near the wetland, and those of so many other rustling trees in our woodland garden. Grounded in Arizona since February, I have been able to work remotely, but I have also longed for the palpable peace found in the physical presence of Boxerwood's trees. Our worlds have been turned inside out by the pandemic and yet Nature carries on.

Our staff and board have responded thoughtfully yet nimbly to these challenging times. From the start, we knew that keeping the garden open would be a kind of "essential soul service." Since the earliest days, we have put all efforts in continuing to provide a place for community members to wander, wonder, or simply stand and stare. Although we had to put on hold many festive plans for our 20th Anniversary, there is still much to celebrate: the joy and work of our volunteers, our staff, and the hundreds and hundreds of children we serve.

In this annual report, we share major accomplishments of the past year and a snapshot of what may be coming this new fiscal year. None of it is possible without the sustained support of our donors and members. Thank you all for keeping us going...and may you each find time to see where the squirrels hide their nuts.



With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catrien". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Catrien van Assendelft, Executive Director

BOXERWOOD

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WHAT A YEAR!

Rain or shine, pandemic or no pandemic, there are two main ways that Boxerwood carries out its mission “to educate and inspire people of all ages to become stewards of the Earth:”

- ▶ We maintain a welcoming garden as a source of inspiration, restoration, and learning.
- ▶ We connect people to nature and its care through high-quality programming.

Boxerwood was rolling full steam ahead down both these tracks until the pandemic struck. Since then, we have had to put most programming on pause, but we kept the garden open. This accomplishment belongs to all of us: staff, volunteers, and supporters. So do the many achievements already accomplished this most unusual year.



GARDEN AND FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS

Ben Eland, Garden & Facility Manager

Nature offers seasonal rhythms regardless of what might be happening in the human world. Visiting Boxerwood is one of the ways to reconnect with that rhythm and the solace it brings. Sustaining a thriving garden remains our top priority. Below are some of the ways we carried out that essential work this past year.

1 MASTER PLAN

This year we reframed our Master Plan with environmental stewardship at its core. Upcoming projects include creating a new pollinator corridor beneath the power lines, transitioning to a green driveway, and installing a solar array to power the Lodge.

2 WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP

As citizens of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, managing stormwater and associated run-off into our creeks is an ongoing effort, especially at Boxerwood. Last fall we successfully secured a grant to install an improved grate for diverting runoff from the driveway into our demonstration rain garden. We also introduced dozens of new plants in the rain garden to improve absorption and filtration – and increase beauty.

3 LODGE

A generous grant from Rockbridge United Way enabled Boxerwood to get a new roof in Fall 2019, sparing us from leaks during heavy rains. This much-needed upgrade protects the building that houses our offices, education programs, and public facilities.

4 INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

In keeping with BEA's educational mission, we added interpretive signs around the garden -- for the Rain Garden, Pollinator Garden, and Native Plant Sanctuary. A partnership with the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust also enabled us to develop a new interpretive walk (and signage) for ten of our notable “Trees of Stature.”

5 GARDEN PARTNERS

The Rockbridge Area Master Gardeners continue to be essential partners in the upkeep of the garden. Volunteers from RAMGA contributed 1200 hours of service this year, and the Pollinator Garden and Rain Gardens are thriving thanks to their work. Likewise, volunteers from the Upper James River Native Plant chapter are caring for the Native Plant Sanctuary, and our “Wednesday Weeders” have been working hard every week (even now) to keep Boxerwood beautiful and inviting. All these efforts have helped us meet a community need in midst of the pandemic. Together, we have been able to keep Boxerwood open as a place for much-needed recreation and renewal. Thank you, partners!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Elise Sheffield, Education Director

Below are some of the ways we have “walked our talk” in 2019-20. The pandemic is reshaping what and how we will deliver programming this upcoming year. In midst of uncertainties, however, we are excited about several emerging initiatives (stay tuned!). Whatever comes to pass, be assured whatever Boxerwood brings forth in the next twelve months remains rooted in the core concepts highlighted here.

EQUITY & ACCESS

► We secured and coordinated 13 funding sources to ensure more than 2,000 young people could participate in Boxerwood school-day programs regardless of income or background.

► We provided year-long afterschool programs for schools serving low-income communities.

► We awarded need-based scholarships for 7th graders attending our annual 3-day program at the Chesapeake Bay.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

► We started youth/adult sustainability councils at two middle schools and gathered 60 youth for the first NEST FEST Environmental Summit.

► We launched a student-generated video project and a student-led school food waste study with nearly 100 RCHS students.

► We sustained a Hiking Club for middle school girls from Buena Vista.

IMPACT

► We presented Boxerwood best practices at five environmental education conferences (in person and virtual), sharing our story with hundreds of educators across the country.

► We co-developed a 5-Park Clean-Up project with 200 7th graders from MRMS.

► We convened the first pandemic planning collaboration between area pre-schools.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

► We sustained and grew programmatic connections with organizations as diverse as the Rockbridge Bird Club, the YMCA, RATS, Natural Bridge State Park, WLU Hillel House, and Kendal.

► We extended opportunities for adult and family learning through Walk & Talks and other special events.

► We convened the inaugural meeting of the local Waste Reduction Roundtable.



OUTREACH

PRE K - HIGH SCHOOL
August 2019 – March 2020



STUDENTS & SCHOOLS

2,197 unique individual students participated in at least one Boxerwood-led program

27 school partners (including 17 preschools)

SUPPORT

\$45,433 total program fee subsidies secured for high-need schools

13 foundations, grants, businesses, and organizations providing subsidies

80 individuals providing subsidies (through Project NEST Fall 2019 Appeal)



PROGRAMS

237 Project NEST programs provided

114 additional nature-based afterschool programs provided

351 total school outreach programs provided this year

0 full-time Boxerwood instructors

6 part-time Boxerwood instructors & seasonal contractors

15+ trained volunteer instructors



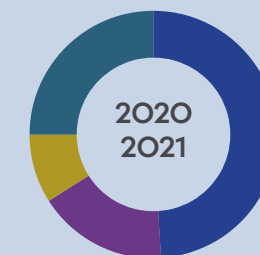
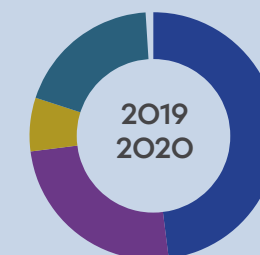
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Although this past fiscal year has been a tough one globally due to the pandemic, Boxerwood remains strong. Through sustained community support this spring and the timely Payroll Protection Program loan via the CARES Act, we were able to meet budget shortfalls and bridge the gap from lost program revenue.

We have started this new fiscal year with an even more stream-lined budget, anticipating the on-going challenges of pandemic-fueled programmatic cuts. At the same time, we are working diligently with our Rockbridge partners to deliver new, safe programs. In addition to facility improvements, heightened accessibility, and stewardship projects, we are carefully considering ways to launch much-needed initiatives that will help support a green local economy. We thank all our partners, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and visitors who inspire this valuable Earth work.

REVENUE

	JULY 2019 JUNE 2020	ANTICIPATED 2020-2021
CONTRIBUTIONS & FUNDRAISING	\$151,000	\$140,000
INCOME ► PROGRAM FEES & CONTRACTS	\$79,000	\$47,500
INCOME ► GARDEN, FACILITIES, & EVENTS	\$22,000	\$26,000
GRANTS	\$60,000	\$72,500
SUB-TOTAL	\$312,000	
ADDITIONAL REVENUE PPP LOAN (NOT IN CHART)	\$43,800	
TOTAL	\$355,800	\$286,000



EXPENSES

	JULY 2019 JUNE 2020	ANTICIPATED 2020-2021
ADMIN, COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING	\$84,700	\$72,400
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	\$116,400	\$92,000
GARDEN & FACILITY CARE	\$83,400	\$78,800
MORTGAGE, UTILITIES & GENERAL EXPENSES	\$52,800	\$45,800
TOTAL	\$337,300	\$289,000

