Dear Friends and Supporters:

I think we should all be pleased as we look back over a year of healthy growth at Awbury. With your support, we have sustained successful programming, explored exciting new initiatives and partnerships and made significant improvements to the buildings and grounds of the Arboretum.

The photos and brief articles included in this report are only a sample of our 2018 activities. If you haven’t yet had a chance, I encourage you to take a look at this year’s newsletters, available online at www.awbury.org/leaflet. We have much to celebrate, and this work would be impossible without the ongoing partnership of our members.

This year, as I thank you for your integral role in our work, I must also ask for your help. In spite of our many accomplishments and continued growth, we have not yet achieved financial sustainability. While program revenues have been steadily growing, our social event rental business has not grown as quickly as we hoped. In addition, I anticipate the recent tax law changes could mark a decline in charitable giving, and this decline could impact Awbury Arboretum directly.

On behalf of the thousands who benefit from Awbury’s free and open landscape and our many educational programs, I hope you will consider increasing your support for Awbury this year. Our Annual Appeal letter will be arriving in your mailbox in just a few short weeks. If you can increase your support – even incrementally - every little bit will help, and be greatly appreciated. As a community-based organization, we receive no municipal support, and are only as strong as our members.

Again, thank you for your ongoing support, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming Annual Meeting on November 4th.

Sincerely,

Chris

Chris van de Velde, General Manager

Mission:
To preserve and interpret Awbury’s historic house and landscape, thereby connecting an urban community to nature and history.

Awbury Arboretum
One Awbury Road | Philadelphia, PA 19138
www.awbury.org

Thank You
To Our Generous Grantors:

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The Rosenlund Family Foundation
The Elizabeth B. and Arthur E. Roswell Foundation
Joseph Kennard Skilling Trust
The Tabitha Foundation
Tides Foundation
Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial

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We designated 2018 as the Year of the Pollinator and planned a busy schedule of related programs and events. Culinary offerings included a dinner made with plant ingredients foraged here at the Arboretum and a workshop featuring edible flowers. Artists, exhibitions included Karen Singer’s life installations representing local pollinators and Richard Metz’s outdoor environmental paintings of fantastical moth-men on trees. Additional classes and events included a seedball workshop, an herb workshop, a PHS foraging tour and tasting, and seasonal tours of the Pollinator Garden led by volunteers. Our first themed year was a great success, and we are looking forward to unveiling 2019’s theme — stay tuned!

Alongside pollinator-themed programming, we also offered classes in yoga, sculpting, photography, and jewelry-making. Other popular events included a Jazz Age murder mystery dinner, a sold-out Juneteenth dinner celebration, our first Arbury Live R&B summer concert in McNabbtown field, several nature culture classes in partnership with the Philadelphia Orchard Project, several Star Party astronomy events, five themed summer camps, and a partnership with Philly Goat Project, which has made its home in Awbury’s Agricultural Village. AdventureWoods, our natural playground in the Secret Garden, has played host to hundreds of children and their parents. Still to come this year: a dinner celebrating Indigenous People’s Day and featuring Native American cuisine, a Witch- and Wizard-themed dinner, a lecture on the role of sweets in various world religions, and a nature-themed photography exhibit by local artist Iman Jones.

On a day-to-day basis, we continue to offer field studies for visiting schoolchildren, after-school programs, and Teen Leadership Corps internships, as well as seasonal events like our Easter egg hunt, Harvest Fest, and, coming up at the end of the year, our annual Holiday Open House and Greens Sale. We hope to see you at an upcoming event, in a class or workshop, or at one of our festive, convivial dinners!

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This year has been a time of transformation, restoration, and rejuvenation across the grounds of Awbury Arboretum. Early this spring, the gardens surrounding our new bluestone patio were expanded and planted with native and historic Germantown plants, based on Edwin Jellet’s records from 1914. In addition, new pathways were installed around the patio, and the area directly adjacent to the Cope House was transformed into a garden with plantings that evoke a “formal woodland” aesthetic. The low, woody plantings create a picturesque setting as visitors approach the house and provide year-round interest with an array of flowers, scents, and seasonal colors.

In addition to work around the Cope House, our other major landscape focus for 2018 was the continued restoration of our wetland area. Many people are not aware that the Wingohocking Creek is piped under Washington Lane and resurfaces in our wetlands, or that most of the creek is underground and only appears aboveground at Awbury. Last year, we cleared the creek habitat and replanted over 300 native trees and shrubs. This restoration kicked off an extensive effort to revitalize our full wetland habitat, including the restoration of our historic watercourse. The watercourse, designed by Arthur Cowell and installed in 1920, consists of a stream connecting an upper and a lower pond. Those familiar with the Awbury landscape have a great fondness for the watercourse’s elegant blend of designed landscape and natural habitat. Unfortunately, in recent times, the upper pond had all but disappeared, and the lower pond ceased to hold water, becoming choked with weeds and grasses. The stream had disappeared — hidden beneath a mat of rapidly-growing invasive plants. This spring, Awbury’s landscape staff and many volunteers undertook the daunting task of clearing the invasive vines, trees, shrubs, and perennials that choked the watercourse. Partnering with Umar Mycka’s poison ivy removal team, we were able to clear large swaths of waist-high poison ivy, and the upper pond is now recognizably a pond.

This fall, additional restoration work, including tree plantings and the pruning of our State Champion River Birch will continue the momentum in this area. Plans for the near future include the restoration of the larger lower pond and replanting of the upper bog area.

Established in 1977 with the Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension, the Community Garden at Awbury Arboretum is the successor to Great Depression allotments and World War II Victory Gardens previously located on the site. The land is provided free of charge by Awbury Arboretum, and the garden is managed by an independent association — the Awbury Community Garden Club. Local residents raise flowers, fruit and vegetables and run community events that raise awareness about gardening and food. This year, through funding from the EMAN Community Fund, the garden was expanded from 60 to 71 plots by moving the garden’s fence an extra 10 meters outward on all sides. The project started back in April, when the Awbury landscaping crew put in new raised beds, and, with the help of volunteers, refurbished the woodland walk surrounding the Garden by covering it with woodchips, bordering it with stone, and planting nearly 100 new berry bushes and fruit trees along it.

The Community Garden is host to a large number of youth volunteers and also sponsors many community events: cooking demonstrations, soil emendation lectures, plant give-aways, and participation in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s City Harvest program, in which food is grown for families in need, to be distributed at local food pantries.

Our Community Garden is Growing

By the Numbers

We provided 33 summer Camp Scholarships

We mainted over 75 organizational Partnerships

We offered 3 living willow huts were planted in AdventureWoods

17 tree paintings Illuminated the Secret Garden

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