

**BEN FRANKLIN COMMUNITY GARDEN
OPERATING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT
2014**

February 2015

A - Garden Maintenance/Improvements

1. TREES: Two unidentified dead trees and a deceased Mulberry tree were removed due to safety concerns. Two other Mulberry trees were pruned; the branches were welcomed by the Zoo to be fed to the elephants.

We planted two English Oak saplings as well as a few additional fruit trees.

2. PLANTING: To attract and help sustain Monarch Butterflies a second Milkweed patch was started.
3. TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT: The Operating Committee has replaced almost all of the tools stolen during the November 2013 break-in. We also replaced garden tools due to wear and tear. Garden equipment, i.e. our tractor, chippers, shredder, lawn mowers, weed whacker, that had been inoperable are now back and functional.
4. TILLING AND PLOWING: As the Summer Sprout tilling contractor was unavailable when needed, the committee hired a local resident/business to perform the tilling; as we were well satisfied with the work, we also hired and paid him to do the fall plowing.

5. STORAGE BUILDING: For the first time in decades the two restrooms in our storage bay building have been painted.

We also were able to obtain the adjoining storage bay for our use.

Due to safety and security concerns, a new door was purchased and installed between our second bay and the school custodians' third bay.

The committee has purchased a new (second) refrigerator to store leafy produce and other perishable items.

The committee also obtained leaf humus and wood chips for gardens.

6. VOLUNTEER GROUPS:

Gateway Church volunteers worked on various garden projects, starting in April and continuing through the 2014 garden season.

In May, **Key Bank** employees worked on a number of different projects e.g. Garlic Mustard Weed, extending path through the wooded area, cleaning rain gutters on both brick buildings etc.

In September, the group from **MetroHealth** put in a combined 200 hours working on three major projects: Huegelkultur Raised Bed, mulching pathways and removal of grape vines and Prickly Thistle weeds.

In early October, **Scots in Service** performed a variety of family-friendly tasks such as tool sharpening, pulling and washing garden stakes and name boards, hauling dirt, painting picnic tables, weeding of fence lines.

Despite the work the above volunteer groups provided, there always remains more for our gardeners to pitch in. Your help is vital to keeping our garden functioning at an affordable level. In 2014, the total volunteer hours worked by our gardeners and the above groups amount to 1157 hrs.

B - Other Accomplishments

1. Our garden Kick-Off Meeting was held on 4/30/2014 at Brooklyn Senior Center. Free seeds were distributed to those attending.
2. First-time Garden Meeting was at BF Garden for new members on 5/10/2014.
3. Again, Ben Franklin Garden was one of the Pedal for Prizes destinations on 5/17/2014.
4. In June, artist Jim Ptacek donated a steel sculpture of a praying Mantis to our garden.
5. On July 10th we held a successful Ice Cream Social for our Gardeners and their families.
6. The Harvest Picnic was held on Sept. 9th, the weather cooperated, and the food was great.
7. Our exhibit at the Cuyahoga County Fair won a 2nd place Red Ribbon for the Best Community Garden, with a score of 97 out of 100.
8. The generosity of our gardeners continued in 2014, with 5000 pounds donated produce going to hunger centers and kitchens.

C - Fund Raising

1. Applied for and received a \$500 Community Leadership grant from Key Bank.
2. On 4/26/2014 held a successful fifth Annual Fundraiser at "Wings Warehouse".
3. The committee continues to raise money by conducting 50/50 Raffles, sales of Garden Recipes Cook Books and Garden T-Shirts, sales of hot dogs, soft drinks and bottled water.

Submitted by John Jenkins, Chair