



THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA

14 EAST 60TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10022-1006

212.753.8287 / GCAMERICA.ORG

Dear Awardee,

Please accept my best wishes and congratulations on the receipt of this award.

For over 106 years, a priority of The Garden Club of America has been to recognize and encourage those who have made – and are making – exceptional contributions. You are one of those.

We are honored to acknowledge talented leaders who promote the knowledge and love of gardening and restore, improve and protect the environment. Thank you!

The members of the Executive Board and Awards Committee join me in applauding you on this very special occasion.

Sincerely,

Debbie Oliver
President

Enclosure

February 25, 2023

Conservation Committee
The Garden Club of America
14 East 60th Street
New York, New York 10022-1006

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson, I am writing to propose the **Greenburgh Nature Center** for the **GCA Club Conservation Commendation**. This non-profit has become a beacon for youth education, conservation and sustainability in the greater New York area particularly under the current leadership of Executive Director Alix Dunn. The Center was founded in the mid-1970s through the acquisition of the 33-acre Hall Estate for the purpose of preserving wildlife and providing regional educational programs. Since then its activities and resources have grown exponentially to educate the community about the environment and to teach by example in adopting the best sustainable practices.

The first experience for many families who visit the Nature Center is the opportunity to explore the live animals exhibit on the second floor where staff and volunteers encourage children to touch the snakes, hold the ferrets, observe the tortoises and lizards and learn about these and other animals. They also walk the grounds to visit the birds of prey and the Barnyard and its resident goats, sheep and chickens, as well as explore the Native American Village or walk on the trails perhaps searching for salamanders under the rocks.

Over the last few years the property has truly come alive for visitors with the design and installation of a Native Plant Meadow and Butterfly Arbor, donated by GCI's own Cathy Ludden. The staff has created and maintains an organic vegetable garden, beehives and a hydroponic garden in the greenhouse. GCI and friends of a former member also contributed a large Pollinator Garden bordering the Great Lawn. These resources allow families to observe and learn about nature up close throughout the seasons.

With resources such as these, the young, talented and passionate GNC staff has created a wealth of programs for all ages, but particularly school-age children. They lead a series of Back to Nature programs such as maple sugaring, winter birds, night hikes and pond exploration. They also direct Spring and Summer camps and school-visits year around as well as special events during vacations. The school/adult programming includes creating a school garden, planting a green home garden and sustainability projects such as organic gardening, vermiculture, hydroponics, beehives, composting and recycling. The Nature Center is part of the Green Business Partnership of Westchester. The Nature Center also now publishes a blog called "Around the Grounds." It is written weekly by Cathy Ludden and discusses the flora on the property.

The Nature Center has been a wonderful partner to the Garden Club of Irvington. The GCI Horticulture/Greenhouse committee propagates cuttings in the Manor House greenhouse and sells them at a Mother's Day Plant Sale. The sale also features homegrown perennials and native plants. We anticipate that club members will become more involved in the programming as time goes on. The club decorates the Manor House for the Winter Solstice and it also staged a small art and photography show featuring members' artwork and photographs of the meadow for the naming of the Native Plant Meadow as "Cathy's Meadow."

From our experience in this new partnership, there is no doubt that the Greenburgh Nature Center is successfully executing its mission "to inspire passion, curiosity, respect, and action for our natural world." It would be an honor for GCI to present the GNC with the GCA Club Conservation Commendation.

Sincerely,

Anne Myers, Vice President and Awards Chair
Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson