

December 8, 2021

Dear Friend,

There is so much to be grateful for here at Gardens for Charlestown.

The extraordinary generosity of people like you made last year's Annual Appeal our most successful yet, compensating for our inability to organize the usual fundraisers last year. More importantly, in 2021 we regained our ability to gather *in person*, bringing hundreds of visitors to beloved community events like the Garden Tour of Historic Charlestown in June and Halloween in the Garden in October. At the height of the pandemic, we valued the ability to till the soil in solitude, and to provide a safe place for folks to stretch their legs and soak up the beauty. But **community gathering** is one of the three pillars of GFC's mission, and what a joy it was to be able to gather again!

Thanks to your generosity, we were also able to deliver on another pillar of our mission this year: **education**. The construction of the Exploration Plot for children at the corner of Main and Bunker Hill, the installation of the apiary for our honey bees, and the addition of the weather station atop the Big Shed has increased the educational value of the Gardens and made it more broadly accessible. The turnout of neighborhood children and parents at our first ever Weatherfest! in July was a powerful affirmation of our commitment to learning from nature.

Of course, the **preservation of green space** in our urban neighborhood is the most important part of our mission. We are a community garden that affords its members the ability to cultivate their own plots in exchange for a modest annual fee and a commitment to volunteer service; but we also function like a public park, open to all from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year. As the pace of development in and around Charlestown quickens, Gardens for Charlestown serves an increasingly important role as a natural oasis in the city and a crucial buffer zone between the density of Sullivan Square and the residential blocks to the East.

Much of the work it takes to do all of this is clearly visible: Gardeners working in their own plots or carefully tending our stunning border gardens. But much of the work goes on behind the scenes. This season, our members dedicated nearly a thousand volunteer hours to everything from replacing locks and repairing hoses, to navigating the City's application process for the ability to host bees and soliciting prospective sponsors for the Garden Tour. Much of this work goes on in early morning hours, late at night, and at people's kitchen tables. But it is just as important as what you can see from the sidewalk.

The Annual Appeal is a way for you to participate in this vital work. The Spring will see the installation of a Discovery Trail throughout the garden to provide kids and families a fun way to learn more about plants and gardening. In the Fall we hope you will see us finally resuming work on the repair and replacement of the wooden infrastructure that borders our plots. We expect to replace the worn furniture on our patio and, of course, to keep on top of the maintenance of our buildings, pathways, and common spaces. Local philanthropy has played—and will continue to play—an important part in paying for all this. So too the revenue raised from events. But the generosity of individuals is the indispensable foundation of our fiscal health, and I know I speak for our Board when I offer a heartfelt "Thank you" for whatever you can do to support our work.

All the best to you and those who are close to you!

Christopher Schiavone
President, Board of Directors

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