

Garden Club of Virginia Common Wealth Award 2022 Nominees

Garden Club of the Eastern Shore: Beautification and Conservation of Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence Campus

For more than a decade, Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence has sheltered clients and operated from inadequate facilities. Recently, thanks to a generous donation, ESCADV purchased a former assisted living facility in Onancock, Va. to be repurposed as the Shore's domestic violence shelter, their administrative offices, classrooms, etc. This five-acre, three-building campus had been abandoned for three years and neglected for many more. Three Eastern Shore garden clubs - Chincoteague Garden Club, Debedeavon Garden Club and Ye Accawmacke Garden Club - as well as the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners, have joined with The Garden Club of The Eastern Shore to support this project by organizing and providing landscaping and a children's play area. The clubs are providing funding through their community outreach committees. We are requesting assistance from local businesses who deal with plant and/or landscaping materials to help us with in-kind donations or discounted pricing. Our plan will transform this blighted property, improve its neighborhood, and will include trees, low maintenance plantings and a kitchen garden - easily maintained by the residents, staff and volunteers under GCES guidance. The Commonwealth Award would allow for accessible raised kitchen garden beds, an irrigation well, supplies and tools to ensure this project's success. Our goal is to enhance ESCADV's massive effort by providing a welcoming and attractive "soft landing" for families in crisis.

Gabriella Garden Club: HOME Pocket Park

During the 20th century, Danville was a leading industrial city in Virginia, and the home of one of the largest textile mills in the South. By the new millennium, those industries had all but disappeared in Danville, leaving high unemployment and dilapidated buildings. For more than a decade, Danville has striven to rebuild itself as well adopting the moniker, "The Comeback City."

HOME Pocket Park is in a rapidly growing area of Danville's downtown district. The space currently houses the "HOME" sign which was part of a larger sign for Dan River Fabrics. In addition to its historical significance, the sign has become a symbol of Danville, frequently photographed, and used for marketing materials. The land, however, is under-utilized.

Gabriella Garden Club envisions this to be an interactive and multifunctional space of natural beauty within its urban location. A plan has been developed utilizing a combination of hard and soft scape material, with perennial providing color throughout the year. It also includes places to gather for outdoor dining, individual reflection and community events.

Funds from the Common Wealth Award would be used to transform the space into a welcoming and beautiful respite, hopefully making all its visitor feel at HOME.

Garden Club of Norfolk: GC Norfolk's Tribute to Frederick Law Olmsted Greenways along Norfolk's Elizabeth River Trail

The Garden Club of Norfolk is paying tribute to Olmsted's 200th birthday by transforming and enhancing blighted areas along the Elizabeth River Trail. The Trail offers 10.5 miles of free public access and enjoyment of natural green and waterfront paths for walking, running, and biking. Adherence to ADA standards makes it easy for people of all abilities and ages (and their

pets!) to enjoy the trail. There were an estimated 469,000 visitors last year. GCN is proud to lend a hand to enhance this important public space that provides much-needed urban respite in a city with few remaining public waterfront green spaces.

In 2021 GCN created an 8,000-square-foot native tree grove and pollinator area along a major trailhead - just one of the specially chosen trees is known to host 46 caterpillar species! In 2022, our work moved directly to revitalization of the Trail with a 6750 square foot barren swale to be transformed into a rain garden, bird sanctuary and wildlife habitat with over 2500 native trees, plants, shrubs and perennials planted to both beautify and protect. And all the while these new attractive view sheds will serve as living classrooms to teach Trail visitors how they too can *plant to protect* and so help mitigate our city's challenges of climate change.

Three Chopt Garden Club: Horticulture Therapy for Pediatric Patients at Virginia Treatment Center for Children (VTCC), Richmond

Unmet mental health needs have a devastating impact on families. Demand for care outpaces resources. As the effect of the pandemic takes its toll, the need is drastically rising. Located in Richmond, Virginia Treatment Center for Children (VTCC) is home to VCU's divisions of child psychology and psychiatry. VTCC provides clinical care and resources that help families navigate the complex needs of mental and behavioral health. Three Chopt Garden Club helped create and continues to maintain two gardens at VTCC. Membership seeks to partner with experts to create a horticulture therapy program. This would become one of the few acute child psychiatric gardening programs in the Commonwealth. Horticultural therapy would give patients access to something they crave: the outside world. Programming will serve as an anchor for children and aid in efforts to stabilize their mental health. In addition to improving patient outcomes, the program would also directly benefit frontline providers and patient families. Funds provided through the Common Wealth Award will underwrite the purchase of equipment to launch and sustain this program, pay for first year plant costs and support GCV's mission to challenge future generations to celebrate the beauty of the land and understand the gifts of nature.