

# CENTRAL GARDENS of NORTH IOWA

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



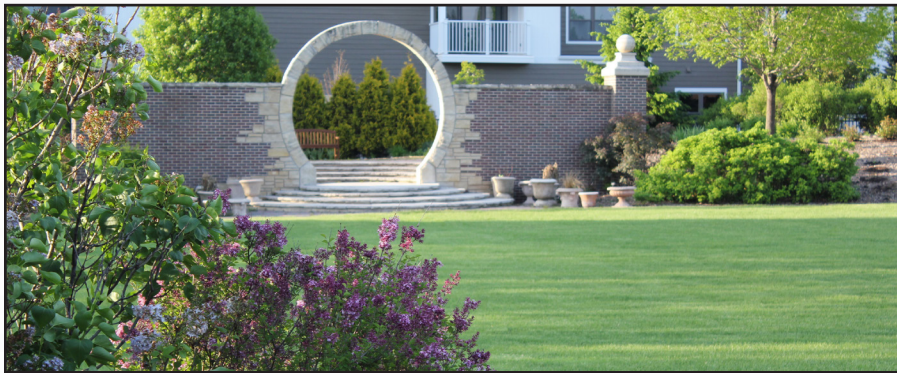
Cover photo by:  
Clear Lake Mirror-Reporter,  
photographer Chris Barragy

*It is the mission of Central of North Iowa to provide a public, intergenerational garden environment that is welcoming, beautiful, calm, educational, recreational and fun.*





2018 Central Gardens Board of Directors



The Moongate and Ceremonial Lawn



Sunflowers are going to be featured throughout the Gardens in 2019



The Sentinel watches over the grounds.

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

As the only free, public garden space in a 90-mile radius of Clear Lake, Central Gardens of North Iowa Inc. offers our over 15,000 annual visitors a unique and serene experience in the midst of a busy tourist town. Our 2.75 acres house twenty-two themed gardens, beautiful architectural and sculptural features, and a meandering stream with waterfalls. Five patios at which to picnic with friends or enjoy a bit of solitude, and a bubbling fountain also grace the grounds. Over forty different activities and events offered a wide variety of experiences for all ages from the time our gates opened in May until they closed in November. And it's always special to watch brides and grooms exchange vows in front of loved ones under the classic Moon Gate.

The Central Gardens Board of Directors is pleased to submit to you its 2018 annual report, which this year is dedicated to the many faithful volunteers who provide 95% of all of the work needed to keep the Gardens so vibrant. Literally, our gates (*and our hearts*) would not be open without them and without our members, donors, and patrons!

Sincerely,

### Board of Directors Officers:

Troyce Fisher, president  
 Connie Plagge, vice-president  
 Jim Kuhlman, treasurer  
 Donna Dull, secretary

### Other Board Members:

Becke Dorenbusch	Aaron Koppes
Ann Grochala	Roy Markwardt
Gail Harringa	Barb Nicholas
Linette Heydt	Gary Nyhus
Andrew Johnston	Bob Rennebohm
Mary Stealy	Mary Woerner

## MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR GREENWOOD

Since coming on board in late summer 2018, I continue to be astonished at the dedication of our amazing volunteers to this beautiful garden. More than flowers grow here; acquaintances grow into friendships, and moments turn into memories. I have had the pleasure of supporting the board and volunteers in many events, and I am excited to see what we can all "grow" next for all our guests. Here's to 2019 and all the joy it can bring to our visitors and volunteers!





# SALUTING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Central Gardens benefits from the generosity of over one hundred volunteers who regularly give of their time and talents to ensure that all our guests experience the beauty and energy of the Gardens. While we can never repay them, the board annually expresses its appreciation through three Volunteer Recognition parties.

Some volunteers do what's typically associated with gardening—planting, seeding, weeding, mulching, adopting a garden, hauling garden waste away, arranging bouquets, cleaning the pond and fountain, doing minor (and sometimes major!) repairs, etc. There are others who plan and coordinate children's activities, the annual plant sale and gardening fair, the Summer Garden Party, our Picnics and Performances series, and outreach with other groups with whom we collaborate.

Another group of volunteers daily unlocks the gates at dawn and locks them up at dusk, cleans the buildings and washes the windows, formats the newsletter, bakes goodies and hosts coffees, serves on committees, and teaches gardening classes. One group shared their vegetable canning and cooking expertise at the annual Preservation Celebration. The list goes on and on.

We are always in need of more volunteers! Please consider joining us in giving back to the North Iowa community (and beyond) with your time (and sweat equity!).

Groups partnering with our volunteers in 2018 included the Clear Lake Arts Center, Dance Arts Centre, Simply Nourished, Lime Creek Nature Center, Landfill of North Iowa, the Lions Reach Out Club, ISU Extension, Ludington Family Farms, P & P Honey, Wings and Things, LaLuz, NIACC, the Clear Lake Library.



Some members of the 6:30 am Bouquet Makers Team



A generous volunteer cleaning the stream



Volunteers welcome Fresh on Fridays guests with coffee & treats.



"Down and Dirty" volunteers do heavy lifting

“Central Gardens is a very magical place. Flowers aren't the only things that grow there. So do friendships and other unexpected miracles.” – Volunteer

“After retiring from farming, I found Central Gardens as a way to give back to North Iowa, and then I realized the Gardens were giving back to me.” – Volunteer

“The peace and serenity I feel when I work in my adopted garden is absolutely wonderful.” – Volunteer





Butterfly Sculpture, the newest acquisition to the sculptures in Central Gardens



Beautiful blooms



New bridge lighting adds welcome safety feature



Lori Broghammer of ITC presenting Central Gardens with a check for \$10,000

“Very nice and peaceful.”  
—Woden, IA

“Flowers today are so bright and beautiful. Congratulations for a job well done! What a gem for Clear Lake.” —Mason City

“Thanks for the lovely walk.”  
—Garner, North Carolina

# ENHANCING THE BEAUTY OF THE GROUNDS

Our volunteer “plants manager” and her committee decided to have bold and vibrant annuals complement the other flowers, plants, shrubs, and trees in 2018, and bold they were! Most annuals are purchased in bulk and then planted by--you guessed it-- a cadre of volunteers. The active Design Committee also oversaw the addition of 59 perennials, 57 shrubs, and 16 trees. Volunteers also cleared out a few trees and bushes that were not thriving, oversaw the addition of irrigation lines to the hillside northeast of the Nature Education Pavilion (where the Sentinel sculpture resides), and added new pavers and a new trellis to the Kids BEE Happy Garden.

A major emphasis in 2018 was placed on enhancing our visitors’ safety, so we added lights to all three bridges and up-lit three trees to guide out those who visit the grounds at dusk, and replaced or secured loose bricks and stone benches on several patios. Powder coating of the railings of the Nature Education Pavilion and all trash receptacles was accomplished, as was the purchase of three new patio tables and chairs.

In addition to The Sentinel sculpture, Central Gardens is now home to a new ironworks Butterfly sculpture, a gift of Ann Kuhlman. It will soon beautify the shade garden in the northwest portion of the grounds.

## WHAT’S AHEAD:

Central Gardens will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2020. For those in on the ground floor of the planning of the Gardens, it’s hard to believe nearly twenty years have already passed. For those who are newer to the Gardens, it’s a bit easier to see where parts of the Garden need upgrading and refreshing. A 12-part improvement project, entitled Upgrade 2020, will begin in April of 2019. Over \$80,000 of the \$220,000 cost (one-half for improvements to the grounds, and one-half to be directed to our endowment) was raised in 2018. You can see specifics about the twelve projects (and how you can donate to the cause) on our website.

## QUOTES FROM THE VISITOR’S LOG:

## UPGRADE 2020 DONATIONS RECEIVED IN 2018:

**\$20,000 AND ABOVE:** Shawn Sabin and Paul Barnds  
**\$10,000-\$19,999:** CL Tel, Corrine Hadley, ITC, Gary and Sandy Nyhus  
**\$5000-\$9,999:** Clear Lake Bank and Trust Company and Ray Hewitt, Donna Dull, Troyce Fisher and Deb Groath  
**\$1000-\$4,999:** Al and Marguerette Atwell  
**ALL OTHERS:** Becke and Mark Dorenbusch, MaryAnn Hendricks



# BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER for Celebration, Education, and Fun

Central Gardens is a very busy place from the time we open its gate on May 1st until we close on November 1st. We hosted 14 weddings, showers and reunions for over 500 people in 2018. The visitor log featured guests from 41 states and one territory and from 9 countries.

## THE BUSY EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE ALSO OVERSAW THESE EVENTS:

- Bargain hunters flocked to the annual Plant Sale and Gardening Fair on May 19, taking advantage of donated plants all organized and priced by a volunteer committee.
- Another stellar group of volunteers showed up at the Gardens at 6:30 am for twelve straight Fridays to cut and arrange fresh flowers to be sold during Fresh on Friday's activities. Others welcomed guests at the Nature Education Pavilion patio to enjoy coffee and treats. And the volunteers who support the Kids BEE Happy Garden planned and hosted twelve different educational programs for a total of over 600 kids during the summer.
- A country theme greeted 200 attendees at the Summer Garden Party on June 24 who supported Central Gardens with both ticket sales and auction purchases. Over 1200 people attended one of eight late-summer Sunday evening Picnics and Performances programs that featured talented musicians from North Iowa and even a juggler! The Fiesta in the Gardens celebration, held in conjunction with the Clear Lake Arts Center, attracted over 300 people alone who enjoyed Latino music, food, decorations, and craft activities. Planned by an all-volunteer committee, the event featured the musical group Tropicante from Cedar Falls, IA, who regaled the crowd with a wide variety of Latin-American songs.
- Scarecrows donated by various groups and individuals graced the grounds in mid-October, and a Farm to Table potluck dinner was held in conjunction with the Harvest Fest in Clear Lake, also in October. While the weather was a bit chilly, the mood was very warm. We worked with Crisis Intervention Services to host a "Labor of Love" celebrating the power of the human spirit on Labor Day, the Clear Lake Public Library to host children's story hours, supported Earth Day activities in Clear Lake, and kept the Little Free Library stocked.

## EVENTS SPONSORS AND DONORS:

### PLANT SALE AND GARDENING FAIR:

Be Wellness, Brakke Implement, Dr. Judith Demro, Hearing Associates, Hosmer Toyota, Midland Concrete, North Iowa Collision, North Iowa Cooperative, , Sail Inn, Ken and Carol Smith, Thrifty White, and Unique Boutique. Those donating products included Cabin Coffee, ControlPrint Creative, DuraDocks (Tony Kochkler), Kramer Hardware, and Lake Coffee.

### FRESH ON FRIDAYS PATIO GATHERINGS:

Cabin Coffee Company

### SUMMER GARDEN PARTY:

CL Tel, Farmers State Bank, Bonnie Hall Realty, Hearing Associates, , Jim and Ann Kuhlman, and North Iowa Community Credit Union. Products were supplied by: Clear Lake Fire Station, Goodnature Store, Kramer Hardware, Lake Lifestyle, Lake Liquors, Lake Time Brewery, North Iowa Pork Producers, Randy's Neighborhood Market, and Titan Pro.

### SUMMER GARDEN PARTY CONT'D:

Auction donors were: Rosemary Alsbury, Laurie Cook Photography, Country Landscape, Crossfit Chiron, Green Pro, Donna Dull, Linette and Gary Heydt, Images Photography, Jim Kuhlman, Kayla Myers, Bill Mateer, John Larsen, MN Twins, MN Wild, MN Vikings, Jody and Connie Plagge, Dean Stromer, Sukup Manufacturing, Surf Ballroom, and Kathie Vix

### PICNICS AND PERFORMANCES:

Avan Grid Renewables, Clear Lake Bank and Trust, Mark and Becke Dorenbusch, D.M. Dull Foundation, Edward Jones-Sara Carlsson, First Gabrielson Agency, Jim and Ann Kuhlman, Lake Dental, McQuaid Agency, Pla-Ground Family Farms, POET, Gary and Sandy Nyhus, Schupick CPA, and the Bertha E. Stebens Foundation.

### GARDEN FIESTA:

Mr. Taco (Luis Garcia) and Wells Fargo.

"  
"Love this!."  
- Bogota, Columbia  
"

"  
"Beautiful colors and sounds. Extraordinary!"  
- Lone Tree, IA  
"

"  
"The kids loved exploring!"  
- Garner, IA  
"

"  
"Thank you for your vision and excellent work."  
- Ankeny, IA  
"

"  
"Celebrating our 7th anniversary. Got married here!"  
- Castle Rock, CO  
"



Over 40 bouquets are sold every Friday in the summer



Our youngest gardeners enjoying the wonders of nature



Denim and Diamonds captured the spirit of the annual Summer Garden Party



A couple saying vows under the iconic Moon Gate



# EXPANDING OUR MEMBERSHIP

## and Growing the “Reach” of Central Gardens

In 2018 Central Gardens welcomed over 15,000 visitors from 41 states, one territory, and 9 countries. (There are probably more, but that’s what we have officially registered in our visitor’s log). Most of our guests, naturally, are from Northern Iowa and Southern Minnesota. Our monthly newsletter, “What’s Growing On (in Central Gardens of North Iowa)” has a circulation of over 1,100.

While those statistics are impressive, we continue to be surprised by comments we hear from North Iowa “locals” who say they’ve never been to the Gardens. So, the board has adopted a very intentional goal of growing the reach of the Gardens by implementing new individual and family and corporate membership programs and offering additional educational and celebratory experiences that attract an even broader audience.

### MEMBERSHIPS OF \$250 AND ABOVE:

Billion Ford, CL Tel, Deb Groath and Troyce Fisher, Ann Grochala, Joyce Hanes, Randy and Kathy Ingram, Roger and Mary Kopacek, Larson’s Mercantile, Jan and Tom Lovell, Chris and Debbie Mitchell, Jim and Cindy Niemants, Gary and Sandy Nyhus, Stephen Palen, Jody and Connie Plagge, Bob and Mary Anne Rennebohm, Doug and Carla Salmon, Mark and Lynn Scribbins, and Charles Walker.

### WHAT’S AHEAD:

Building on the success of the Fiesta in the Gardens to celebrate Latino culture, tentative plans are to expand the event in 2019. Outreach to physical neighbors of the Gardens will include an invitation to join us for coffee and a free flower. We will again host a May Day! May Day! reception for potential volunteers when our season officially begins on May 1st, open our gates pre-season to accommodate area schools whose prom attendees want to have pictures taken in the Gardens, and expand our social media and informational program efforts.

Due to our revised individual and corporate membership structures, we also anticipate having more members take advantage of one of the benefits of membership, which is complimentary rental opportunities in our Nature Education Pavilion second level meeting room, where the view of the Gardens is fantastic. Besides obvious gatherings such as wedding parties, bridal showers, and family reunions, the Nature Education Pavilion has also been a gathering spot for bridge clubs, social clubs, and small businesses’ retreats.



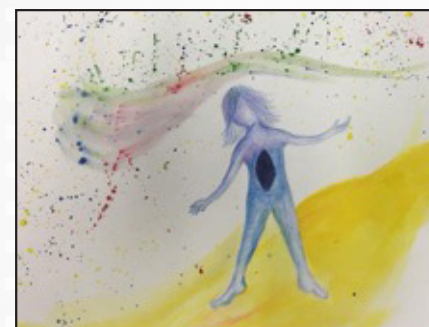
Celebrating Latino Culture



Farm to Table Community Potluck during Harvest Fest week-end



Exploring in the Kids BEE Happy Garden Dig Pit



One of the drawings for sale at the Labor of Love Celebration hosted by Crisis Intervention Service.

“Beautiful native gardens!”  
– Algona, IA

“Fantastic! Very well manicured, bees and butterflies are happy!”  
– Waukee, IA

“Beautiful place and beautiful people.”  
– Puerto Rico



# PRACTICING EXCEPTIONAL STEWARDSHIP

The board of directors has as one of its strategic priorities to “ensure financial stability for Central Gardens of North Iowa, Inc.” It takes very seriously its responsibilities as a steward of the revenue the Gardens receives and as watchdog over any expenses incurred.

The board is proud that all work completed at the Gardens has been done without ever going into debt, and that it has a policy to direct one-half of all donations to the permanent endowment fund. We recognize that maintaining and enhancing a public garden space of this magnitude takes significant resources. We are grateful for all the support received through memberships, grants, events, brick sales, rentals, memorials, donations and honoraria, and from the return on our financial investments.

If you're not currently a member, please become one. Also, consider giving memorials and donations to Central Gardens in celebration of loved ones, and including Central Gardens of North Iowa in your planned giving and estate planning efforts.

Here is a summary of how we closed the year:

**Total Fixed Assets 947,944.73 | Total Other Assets 90,809.66**

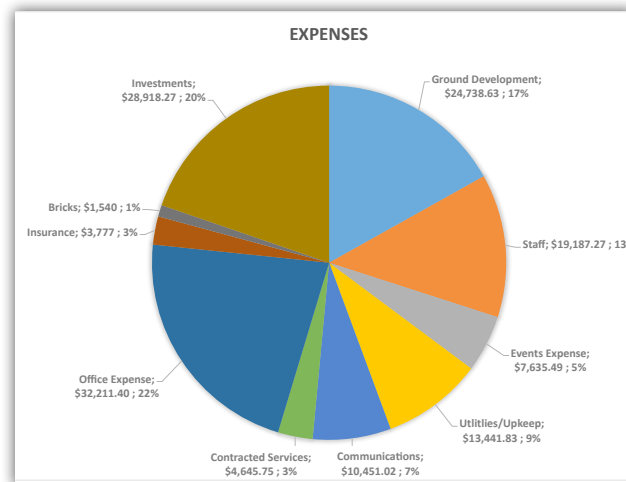
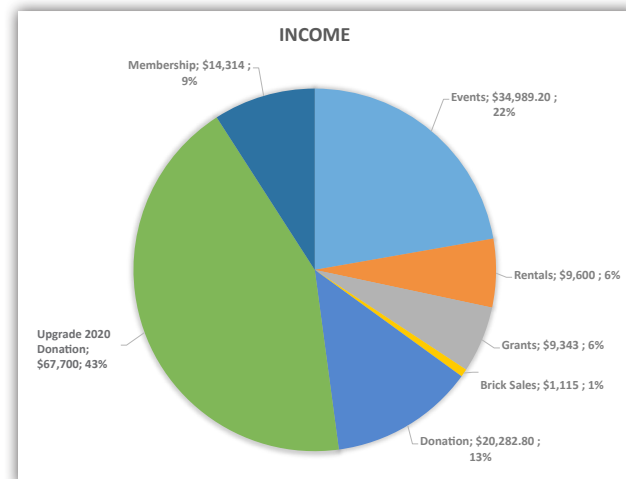
**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 1,475,849.85**

## GRANT AWARDS:

AvanGrid Renewables, Benevity Fund (Kohl's), City of Clear Lake, Clear Lake Noon Lions Club, Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa-Cerro Gordo Affiliate, Farrer Foundation, John K. and Louise Hanson Foundation, Iowa Arts Council, Krause Gentle (Kum 'N Go), Reinhart Foundation, Bertha Stebens Foundation, Wells Fargo, and the Worth County Development Authority

## DONATIONS OF \$500 OR MORE:

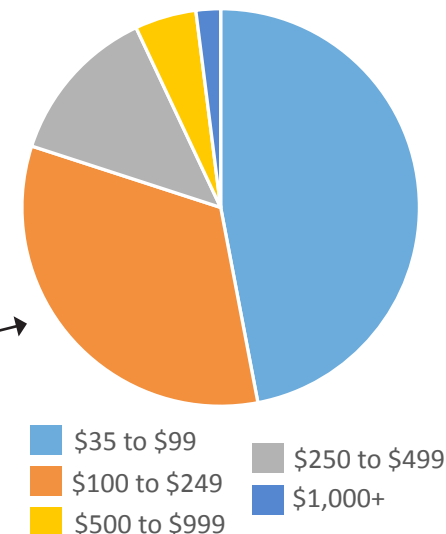
Ameriprise, Easter Family Fund Community Foundation, ITC Midwest, Gary and Sandy Nyhus, Bill and MaryAnn Nicholas



## MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

The other group of individuals who contributes to the success of Central Gardens are our 110 members. Their faithful support of Central Gardens is much appreciated.

Here's a chart to breakdown the levels:







800 Second Avenue North • PO Box 735  
Clear Lake, IA 50428



# CENTRAL GARDENS of NORTH IOWA

## FIND US AT:

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 @centgardens

 @centgardens

Central Gardens North Iowa, Inc., is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization.

To review our Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 go to  
[www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com](http://www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com)

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