

CENTRAL
GARDENS
of NORTH IOWA

Strategic Plan: 2020-2022



Central Gardens of North Iowa, Inc. Strategic Plan: 2020-2022

Adopted by the Central Gardens Board of Directors on November 18, 2019

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

Six Commitments: We are committed to:(1) promoting horticultural and environmental stewardship; (2) building the infrastructure of our free, public garden space; (3) enhancing learning opportunities for members and guests; (4) being inviting to all; (5) being responsible stewards of our resources; and (6) achieving excellence in all that we do.

Strategic Goals: We will achieve our six commitments through:

- (1) Beautifying the Grounds
- (2) Providing Creative Events and Programming
- (3) Practicing Rigorous Stewardship of All Our Resources and Ensuring Financial Stability
- (4) Increasing Engagement with Our Various Publics Through Strategic Marketing, Communication, and Outreach

Actions: The four strategic goals will be accomplished by achieving the actions specified under each goal.



Strategic Goal 1: Beautify the Grounds

Actions:

1. Refurbish/Enhance 2-3 gardens each year for each of the next four years
2. Continue to implement the twelve components of the Upgrade 2020 project by no later than 2021 by:
 - a. Re-creating the Moon Gate area to restore its photogenic excellence through screening and sight upgrades in 2020
 - b. Enhancing the grounds around the Pavilion by 2021
 - c. Installing an enhanced water feature at the head of the stream that transverses the grounds in 2021
 - d. Improving the performance space at the Naturalist Terrace
 - e. Improving the quality of the turf on the Ceremonial Lawn, adding new drainage features, and adding new tent tie-downs in 2020.
 - f. Adding welcome signage to NW corner of Central Gardens in 2020
 - g. Adding landscaping inside and outside the main gate entrance in 2020
 - h. Refurbishing the Fountain in front of the donor wall at the main entrance in 2020
 - i. Identifying appropriate plant identification apps and post their availability on signage throughout the Gardens in 2020
 - j. Fixing drainage and flooding problems in front of the Mother Earth Work Shop volunteer patio in 2020
3. Improve the lighting in the Gardens
 - a. Light the limestone (west) wall of the Nature Education Pavilion in 2020
 - b. Add seasonal lighting displays in each year
 - c. Light and landscape the signage wall in the Southwest corner of the Gardens in 2020.
4. Add a significant piece of art work or aesthetic interest into the Gardens every 10 years
5. Work with the city to share a horticulturalist expert to oversee the grounds during the season in 2020.
6. Erect physical signage for each garden by the end of the 2020 season.



Strategic Goal 2: Provide Creative Events and Programming

Actions:

1. Offer performing arts production every year in collaboration with other non-profits or other entities, exploring various types of the arts including: (a) a Performing Arts Production (outdoor programs or concerts) with 3 other community organizations in 2020 and (b) two Art of Story sessions annually in collaboration with Clear Lake Art Center.
2. Provide four educational components during at least 4 garden-sponsored or hosted events each year, e.g. the Plant Sale, Fresh on Friday, Preservation Celebration, and an Iowa State Extension or Agriculture Class in conjunction with the local high school.
3. Collaborate with Healthy Harvest in 2020 to pilot a "CrEATe from the Garden," event featuring gardening and cooking classes
4. Target specific events that would appeal to families, beginning in 2020 and add one event per year for the next three years; by (a) Offering a family interactive self-guided activity at the south entrance or online in 2020. (A seasonal activity will be included on the CGNI website that would include list of plants blooming by season with photos); (b) Expanding programming for youth through "Growing Green Gardeners" Programming with a target group of ten enrollees and six active participants in 2020 and growth in enrollment for the two subsequent years; (c) Expanding the "Growing Green Gardeners" program to include high schoolers as mentors and add other community members. Success will be measured by family/student satisfaction surveys; (d) offering an event to "Celebrate the Child in 2021, in collaboration with at least four community partners
5. Offer one event per year that celebrates the contributions of ethnic cultures represented in north Iowa, by hosting the third annual "Fiesta in the Gardens" in conjunction with the Picnics and Performances series in August of 2020 and exploring the addition of other cultures in 2021 and 2022.
6. Promote an inter-generational event beginning in 2020, coordinating with area assisted living, nursing homes, etc. and in conjunction with Fresh on Friday that pays special attention to accommodating physical, emotional, social, and economic needs of attendees.
7. Explore weekday Farmers Market to be held at Central Gardens by 2021.
8. Continue to offer at least one "Movement in the Gardens" class on a Saturday in 2020.
9. Continue to offer the "traditional events" that have become a hallmark of Central Gardens' programming: The Plant Sale and Gardening Fair, Fresh on Fridays' bouquet sales and patio socials, the Kids BEE Happy Garden programming in conjunction with Fresh on Fridays, the Summer Garden Party, and Picnics and Performances free Sunday evening concerts annually.



Strategic Goal 3: Practice Wise Stewardship of All Our Resources and Ensure Financial Stability

Actions:

1. Continue to grow the endowment every year by:
 - a. Directing one-half of any unrestricted cash donations to the endowment
Continue practice of directing any excess funds at year's end to the endowment funds.
 - b. Transferring one-half the amount of any grant that has been received for which events/items had been budgeted from the checking account to the endowment at the end of every fiscal year.
 - c. After the completion of the 2020 capital campaign, reassessing and setting new specific goals for the growth of the endowment.
 - d. Implementing and expanding new membership program begun in 2019
2. Increase projected net revenue of major events (Plant Sale, Fresh on Fridays, Summer Garden Party, Outdoor Theater and Picnics and Performances) by 10% each year for the next three years.
3. Increase the total number of individual memberships to 200 members by 2022.
4. Increase the total number of corporate memberships to 60 by 2022.
5. Increase the number of rentals to 20 by 2021 and 25 by 2022.
6. Increase donations, honoraria, and memorials made by individuals by 5% each year for the next three years by marketing and publicizing the various donation options by newsletter, website, and social media
7. Conduct a different brick campaign each year that targets a specific audience and appropriately developed theme. Sell 100 bricks over the course of the next three campaigns
8. At the end of the fiscal year, conduct an assessment to evaluate if financial goals were met, and to compare financial performance from year to year.
9. Add more depth and specificity to the monthly financial reports as determined by the Finance Committee annually.
10. To improve financial planning, beginning in 2020, develop a 3-year financial projections plan.
11. Construct the next year's budget in November for the existing year, and solicit requests for funding in October of each year.
12. Promote CGNI as a recipient of estate planning efforts with appropriate audiences by 2020 by marketing and publicizing estate planning and planned giving options by newsletter, website, and social media.
13. Maintain grant fundraising of at least \$25,000 each year.
14. Add a "Reserve for Replacement" line item in the budget beginning in 2020, funded originally with \$10,000 from the Upgrade 2020 funds and added to annually according to a formula consistent with IRS rules.

Strategic Goal 4: Grow the Demographic Profile of the Gardens Through Strategic Communications and Outreach

Actions:

1. Tell CGNI's story on social media through weekly and bi-weekly postings to Facebook, Instagram, North Iowa Bloggers, Trip Advisor, Clear Lake Moms, and Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce emails, in traditional media outlets such as radio and TV interviews, advertisements in newspapers and press releases targeting upcoming events, and through monthly editions of our newsletter, "What's Growing On at Central Gardens."
2. Intentionally recruit persons of a younger age demographic to the board of directors, adding one new member per year who is 50 years or younger and seek to attract ethnic diversity to events and volunteer cadres and committees.
3. Increase the numbers of new volunteers to the Gardens by 10% each year for the next three years. Support them with update information about how to volunteer, saturation postings of what jobs need to be done weekly, and intrinsic and extrinsic benefits for volunteering.
4. Develop robust collaborative partnerships with other non-profit organizations in north Iowa, adding one new partnership per year for the next three years, beginning with NIACC Lifelong Learners in 2019 and 4-H and ISU extension in 2020. -
5. Evaluate the content and structure of the website annually and make recommendations and implement changes during the "off season."
6. Enhance the website by adding more information about plants and other living things in the Gardens, updating the map of the grounds, improving the "Donate" button, adding links to useful websites, adding a history of the Gardens, and listing a protocol for photographers who use the Gardens, beginning in 2019, and concluding no later than 2021. Add a drone-based promotional video to the website no later than 2021.
7. Add physical plants ID signs in one pilot garden in 2019 and in four more each year until all are identified and develop a mobile app by 2021.
8. Revamp the rental information on the website by February of 2020.
9. Explore becoming an official monarch way station by 2020.
10. Get Central Gardens' wedding venue to appear during Google searches of wedding sites near Clear Lake by 2019.
11. Offer short informational tours of the Garden weekly during the Picnics and Performances season.
12. Develop an audio tour of CGNI by 2021.
13. Become an All-American Selection Demonstration Garden in 2020.

