

Grin and Grow Learning Garden History

- 2001 Under direction of Pete and Jackie Peters, NNMGA co-presidents, early planning for a city demonstration garden. In October the site was selected at RFP, as recommended by VCE Coordinator Scott Ewer and NN Parks and Recreation leadership.
- 2002 In May, working with Carolyn Fournier of Parks and Recreation, the type of garden to be built was determined. In August, Ansel Butterfield and Yvonne Tung designed the garden in the form of a happy face. Yvonne's son, a landscape architect, completed the design.
- On September 11, 2002, a group of NNMGA's, after saying a few words about the 9/11 event a year ago, put their shovels in the ground to begin the "happy face" garden, which they dedicated on that day to the future generations of children.
- 2005 Under the direction of President Sharron Kitchen-Miller, first children's programming held at the garden. Sailors from USS George Washington create the garden paths in 2005.
- 2006 Bridge built under the direction of Eagle Scout Brian Perry
- 2007 Garden dedicated to Yvonne Tung. Susan Turner took over leadership upon Yvonne's passing, followed by Kathy Duncan and Brownley Foster. Kathy was sole chair for about four years until 2014. Charlotte Boudreau led children's programming in the garden for many years.
- A Memorial Plaque with names of Maintenance Team members was placed under the Fringe Tree in March of 2007.
- 2012 NNMGA decided to focus on self-directed, interdisciplinary educational programming at the G&G Garden, under the direction of Janet Hirshman Rash.
- 2013-15 Three year plan created and implemented to revitalize the garden under the leadership of Janet Rash.
- Janet Rash and Rhonda Keirn led the committee from 2014-15. Janet, Louise Woodard and Ann Moir chaired the committee since the start of 2016.
- 2015 October, 2015 saw the installation of a large butterfly bench created by Cricket Forge in North Carolina.
- 2016 April, 2016 saw the installation of signage designed by Janet Rash and painted by members of the NNMGA.

On July 12, we held a Rededication of garden. We honored all those who contributed to the garden throughout the years, and rededicated our work to the children of the community.

July 17, Community Day celebration with MG led children's activities.

- 2017 Color brochures were created and made available to the public in a brochure box on site. A different brochure was created for each of the three growing seasons.
- 2018 New signage provided by the city, replacing the hand painted original signs, installed in the garden in February based on the designs created by Janet Rash.
- Installation of the Native Tree Demonstration Garden in October, made possible through a Department of Forestry Virginia Trees for Clean Water Grant written by Janet Rash.
- 2019 A new demonstration garden - the Butterfly Garden - designed by Sue Campbell was added between the old garden and the Native Tree Grove.
- Monumental sculpture donated by the Huntington Garden Club installed in the garden.
- 2020 Donor and Native Tree Grove signs, designed by Janet Rash and provided by the City, were added to the garden.
- Butterfly Garden was expanded to include 100 milkweed plants.
- A native plant Shade Garden was added to the Learning Garden. It is located under the weeping yaupon holly behind the Dragonfly Bench.
- We held a memorial service for our deceased EMG Lee Landers and planted a weeping redbud in her memory in the Native Tree Grove.
- 2021 Eagle Scout project of Steven McWithey from Boy Scout Troop 306 in York County, VA. The project was completed on Saturday, Jan. 23. They created a wide walkway connecting the original Grin & Grow Learning Garden to the new Native Tree Grove. Support for the project was given by the Newport News Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department.
- 2022 QR codes added to the garden connecting visitors to our garden diagrams and tree identifications and information on our website.
- 20th Anniversary event held in September. Three live oaks trees in the Native Tree Grove and one redbud at the garden entrance planted to commemorate anniversary.

Two TREX benches added to the Native Tree Grove Education area.