### The Virginia Thurston Healing Garden Cancer Support Center

Providing education and therapeutic services to those living with cancer

Annual Report 2018-2019

## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we end Fiscal Year 2019, we look back at the amazing growth that has occurred since our founding in 2000. Bill Thurston and Betsy Tyson-Smith, our co-founders, were thought-leaders ahead of their time. Starting out in a tiny cottage, with two employees, they endeavored to provide compassionate cancer support while immersed in the beauty of the Harvard woodlands, to women experiencing breast cancer.

They attracted practitioners of both eastern and western philosophies of supportive care bringing the best of both worlds together in one place.



And the patients arrived, and the community grew. They were delivering a way for people to access an integrative medical approach to cancer care way before the medical community embraced it.

Today, our center provides an extraordinary breadth of services for men, women, caregivers, and family members affected by all types of cancer. Clients and caregivers are harnessing the power of the brain/body connection to improve their health and well-being.

What is even more amazing is that this growth is all due to the generosity of individuals like you.

Last year, your support assured that young adults with cancer and their significant "other" had access to retreats that help them identify how the cancer has changed their relationship and how to heal from this.

Nurses and social workers came together to think more deeply about the sensitive delivery of endof-life care, and how to navigate the impact of this work as providers.

Your support allowed us to increase staff hours, to meet the demands of a 75% increase in client services over the past 5 years!

So today, please read our report and know that together we are caring for our communities at large, sharing what we can and making the world we live in a place where your generosity is improving life for others. I hope you will be inspired to continue or increase your support.

On behalf of all the clients you have touched, thank you.

In gratitude,

Koch

Margaret Koch Executive Director margaret@healinggardensupport.org **Our overall reach:** Towns with ten or more households served

Acton	107	Framingham	20
Concord	72	Lancaster	20
Harvard	53	Maynard	20
Groton	49	Arlington	19
Leominster	48	Pepperell	19
Sudbury	46	Lexington	18
Bolton	43	Sterling	18
Chelmsford	42	Northborough	17
Littleton	42	Clinton	16
Worcester	41	Westborough	15
Hudson	38	Natick	14
Westford	38	Carlisle	13
Marlborough	33	Lunenberg	13
Stow	33	Shrewsbury	13
Boxborough	26	Bedford	11
Fitchburg	26	Andover	10
Lowell	22	Gardner	10
Shirley	22	Holden	10
Ayer	21	Hopkinton	10
Townsend	21		

2 Winchendon

Fitchburg

(41) Worcester

2 New Salem

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## FY 19 Snapshot of Services

3,574	Visits by clients and caregivers
302	Individual clients & caregivers served
154	Free support groups
433	Hours of individual & family counseling
980	Individual bodywork sessions from shiatsu to acupuncture
306	Therapeutic and educational programs & classes

Since we opened nearly 20 years ago, the Healing Garden

has served over 1,450 clients from 170 towns & cities

Townsend Pepperell Groton Lunenberg 200 Lancaster Ayer Nashua, NH

42 Chelmsford

> (13) Carlisle

Providence, RI

20 Maynard

42 Littleton

**e** Boxborough

> 33 Stow

22 Lowell Andover

5 eading

0

Quincy

3

Melrose

**e** East Boston

Last year, our client roster included men and women from ages 16-84 hailing from 81 different towns and cities across Massachusetts.



## Accomplishments

### **Compassionate Care**

3,574 visits in which Healing Garden clients received supportive and compassionate care designed to address their specific needs during cancer treatment and beyond.

### **Increased Access**

Our practitioner's commitment to affordable care is extraordinary:

- Practitioners provided **deeply discounted one-on-one, hour-long treatments** for cancer and treatment side-effects, on a sliding scale fee system, (67% of fair market value), ensuring open access to even the most financially insecure clients.
- Program and class facilitators and support group leaders also provided their services at **a deep discount** (74% of fair market value), insuring clients and caregivers can come together to work and learn how to cope

Our financial assistance programs offered access to services at the Healing Garden and beyond.

- The **Fund-A-Need program** offers supplemental help to financially insecure clients who had difficulty even meeting the sliding scale fee system.
- The **Madonna Fund** meets clients' special requests for unique needs beyond the Garden such as food cards; gas cards; respite care; and deep housecleaning for immune-suppressed individuals.
- A new transportation assistance program in partnership with **Expect Miracles Foundation** now affords reimbursement for rides to and from integrative support services at the Healing Garden, and at affiliated private practices off-site. Now medically compromised clients can stay engaged with our community and take advantage of vitally important therapeutic support services.

### **Expanding Education**

The Healing Garden remained committed to educating on issues of survivorship and the value of holistic care during cancer:

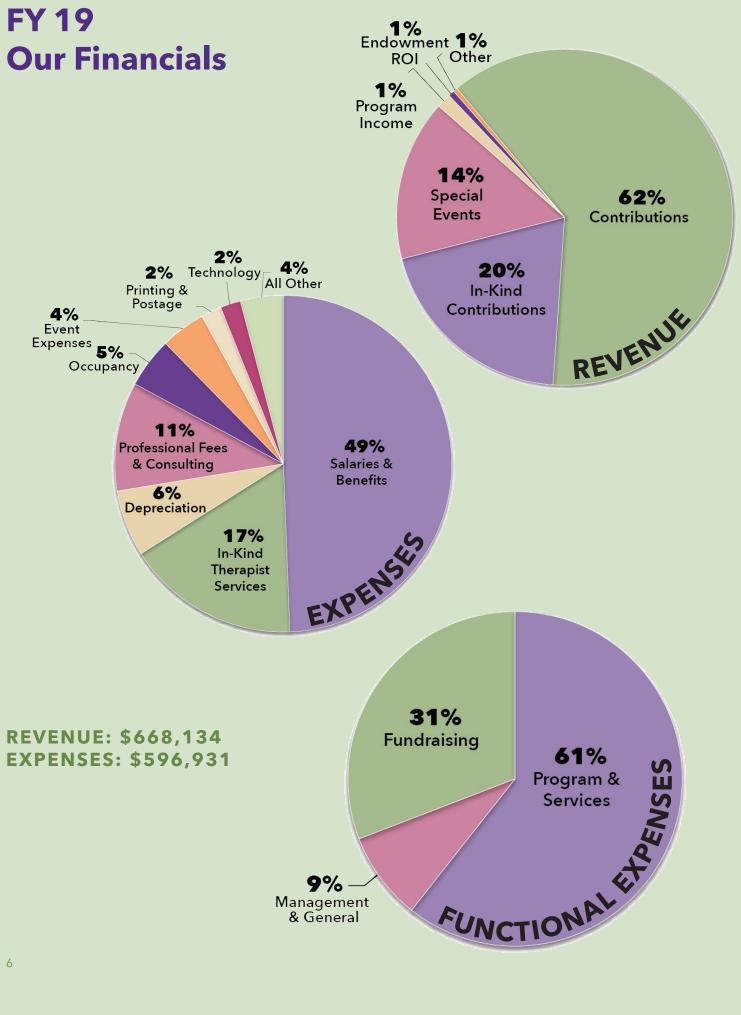
- We continued a **6-year partnership** with Lesley University to educate future oncology focused professionals, by serving as an internship site for master's degree students.
- A new CEU program in partnership with Good Shepherd Institute welcomed 40 oncology nurses and social workers. These professionals gained knowledge to assist them in promoting safe, informed, compassionate care for patients and families facing serious illness and end of life.
- We welcomed speakers from across the medical community to present topics
  ranging from "Lasting Happiness," to "Trauma & Cancer". Speakers included Sanjiv Chopra, MD; Linda Schiller, LICSW; Ann Snow, RN, OCN; Jerry Soucy, RN; Aurelie Cormier; and David Frank, MD.

Our staff was recognized for leadership in the field:

- Executive Director Meg Koch joined the **MA Department of Public Health's Survivorship Task Force** to advocate for survivorship education and services throughout the Commonwealth.
- Brianne Carter, Co-Director of Integrative Care, was invited to moderate a breast cancer round-table at Charles River Laboratories for the second year in a row.

Mindful movement classes in connection with nature provide calming, restorative energy.







## **A Client Story**

# Kathy and Stan Tuttle find comfort after great loss

"We are so grateful for everyone at the Healing Garden ... At the Healing Garden you are not alone. There are others that are walking this path too. It's become a very important part of our lives."

Healing Garden clients Kathy & Stan Tuttle

Over the course of their 33-year marriage Stan and Kathy Tuttle have heard the word "cancer" too many times: Stan has faced three cancer diagnoses (the most current in 2019), and a discovery of Lynch Syndrome in 2010 on Kathy's side of the family ravaged through her genetic line affecting three nieces, her nephew, and her brother.

Then, in 2015, Kathy was diagnosed with stomach cancer. And two years later the hardest blow of all: the couple's beloved daughter Shelly - a young wife, mother, and community advocate, discovered she had Stage IV Thymic Carcinoma.

Kathy brought Shelly to visit the Healing Garden shortly after her diagnosis. Shelly was so moved by the compassion she encountered she said, "Let's just move in here for a few months!" "It gave her hope and it gave her something to look forward to, " said Kathy. Sadly, Shelly passed just 7 weeks post-diagnosis.

After they lost Shelly in 2017, Stan and Kathy were able to find solace and comfort through the **Healing Garden's bereavement** support group. According to Stan, "After the first meeting Kathy told me that listening to other people, and what they're going through made her feel so much less alone." Two years later, they are still attending the group, and participating in many of the Healing Garden's other programs including massage, acupuncture, counseling, and mindfulness classes.

Although Shelly wasn't able to take advantage of programs, her children - Stan and Kathy's grandchildren - have benefited from the Healing Garden. Through the Madonna Fund, the couple was able to pay for swim lessons for their grandson, and their granddaughter was introduced to Camp Kesem, a bereavement camp that offers free support to children.



Kathy & Stan's daughter, Shelly Leonard.

## **Our Donors**

On behalf of the clients we serve, we thank you all for helping to provide a unique community of compassionate understanding and support.

### **Floral Leadership Giving Society**









The Healing Garden's Floral Leadership Giving Society was established this year, to recognize those individuals and corporations who demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the Healing Garden through accumulated gifts of \$1,000 and above.

#### **Nasturtium Giving Society** (\$10,000 and above)

Anonymous (1) Maurice, Jason & Drew Leavitt Gazbar Sports Grill Mrs. Sarah Hindle Mr. & Mrs. Ken Isaacs Mr. & Mrs. William Sawyer

#### **Jasmine Giving Society** (\$7,500-\$9,999)

Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Panek

#### **Passionflower Giving** Society (\$5,000- \$7,499)

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Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Healing Garden was able to offer a culturally diverse group of patients from the Family Health Center of Worcester a full-day retreat to experience various therapies including massage, Reiki and expressive arts. Many of the patients, who spoke a variety of languages from Albanian to Spanish and Portuguese, had never experienced holistic therapy before.

### Memorial Gifts In Loving Memory Of:

Chrissy Clawson Audibert Kasia Bajson Ferrara Noreen Beck Brenda Belanger Claire Brown Joan Cassidy Tricia Castigna Liz Chambers Mary Ellen Connell Hector L. Creamer III Terry Croteau Kristine Cuzzi Denyse Densmore Louise Margaret Deslauriers Cathie DiGrazia

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In addition, we are deeply grateful for the smaller gifts we receive. We thank our many donors who provide in-kind gifts. Thank you too to the many clients and donors who solicit gifts on our behalf. Thank you to our therapists who donated 50% of their time, our volunteer Healing Gardeners, and those volunteers who help with administrative projects and special events. Every gift helps us meet the needs of the clients. Please contact the Healing Garden if you find any errors in our donor list.

## **Planned Giving**

For Win Hindle, financial planning included a planned gift to the Healing Garden

For Win Hindle, it was an easy decision to include the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden in his will. Throughout his life, Win shared his talent, time, and treasure with organizations that would benefit the community in which he worked, lived, and learned. He cared deeply about helping others and he believed that legacy gifts would ensure that continued support even after he was gone.

To celebrate this legacy of giving, we established the **Hindle Legacy Giving Society** to recognize those who support the Healing Garden through a bequest or a planned gift, and to encourage others to do the same.

Bequests and planned gifts represent a unique source of

funding for the Healing Garden, enhancing reserve funds and preserving the organization's long-term integrity and financial stability.

Participation in the **Hindle Legacy Giving Society,** is an opportunity for donors to realize their desire to support the Healing Garden after death, while also providing for their heirs and realizing possible estate and/or income tax savings. You can make your commitment a lasting one.

Consult your attorney for the tax benefits of making a charitable gift in your estate plan, and contact Maddie Phadke, maddie@ healinggardensupport.org, for more information about the Hindle Society.



Win Hindle, Hindle Legacy Giving Society donor

The Hindle Legacy Giving Society honors those who have included the Healing Garden in their estate plan:

Mr. Win Hindle Ms. Carol Ehrlich Mr. & Mrs. Dana Koch

## Why We Give

# Robin and Ken Isaacs pay it forward for their Healing Garden family

For 25 years Robin Isaacs has been fighting metastatic breast cancer. In and out of the sterile environs of the hospital, she had been searching for a place where she could feel supported as a person, and not just a patient.

Robin was immediately drawn to the Healing Garden's calm, rural oasis that reminded her of the family farms they used to have in Walpole and S. Dartmouth. Robin's roots come from Kentucky. "As soon as I get in the car to drive to the Healing Garden, I feel held. There is a true connection here for me. It feels like family."

In addition to taking advantage of individual treatments such as oncology massage and acupuncture, Robin has become a regular member of the **Metastatic Support Group**. "It is such a relief to talk to other people without any judgment; everyone is so supportive in the group." Robin has formed deep friendships through the group as well, extending the social support outside of the garden walls.

Robin's husband Ken has participated in the programs as a caretaker, and their daughter Jenny



Healing Garden donors Ken & Robin Isaacs

became a client after she was diagnosed with both melanoma and thyroid cancer. "Coming here has helped all of us," said Robin.

This past year the Isaacs decided to pay it forward with a major gift to the Healing Garden. According to Ken, "The Healing Garden has been such an incredible help for Robin and Jenny. When you put it into perspective with other institutions we might give to, we have such a direct, personal connection here and we know our gift is making an impact for individuals most in need.

"The Healing Garden is supporting people at the most critical point in their lives, and they're including people who can't afford it. There are no gates, no barriers to access here. This is the kind of philanthropy that is important to us."

### Community Support



Students from the Groton School helped beautify our gardens last year. In all, 129 individuals donated 508 volunteer hours to the Healing Garden. From landscaping, to event support, to office administration, our volunteers brought warmth and light along with a firm commitment to supporting our mission.



Clients attend nutrition and cooking classes offered through a collaboration between Healing Garden and The Community Harvest Project.



Providing education and therapeutic services to those living with cancer

Virginia Thurston Healing Garden 145 Bolton Road | Harvard, MA 01451 info@healinggardensupport.org



Because of you, supportive care starts here.

## **Our Donors Make it Happen!**

In the oncology world, there is a term called "financial toxicity", the result of having in a chronic illness that incurs great expense to an individual or household. In an unfortunate statistic, in 2019, 25% of our clients live at or below the national poverty level. For all our clients, we know that the lower the cost of programs we can offer, the more attendance we get. And, we know our clients want to have access to the important work to help themselves heal. Help us spread the word about the wonderful resource that the Healing Garden is! Please consider whether you can increase your support to help others live life fully.

#### Founders:

William Thurston Elizabeth Tyson-Smith

#### **Board of Directors:**

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