



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



HG VIRGINIA THURSTON
HEALING GARDEN
A Cancer Support Community

Annual Report 2024/2025



DEAR FRIENDS,

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we find ourselves filled with gratitude for all that has brought the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden to this milestone moment. From a small garden in Harvard, Massachusetts, to a vibrant nonprofit serving hundreds across the state, our journey has been one of compassion, resilience, and community.

We honor the vision of our founder, Bill Thurston, who passed away this spring at the age of 102. Bill's dream was born from love – a love for his wife Ginny and a desire to ease the journey of others facing cancer. With Betsy Tyson-Smith by his side, Bill laid the foundation for a unique healing center that embraces the whole person – mind, body, and spirit.

Today, we carry that vision forward. We have grown in both scope and reach, now serving individuals of all cancer diagnoses across 195 towns and cities in Massachusetts. Thanks to your support, we provide more than 6,600 service visits each year – offering connection and hope to all who walk through our doors or join us virtually.

This year's report reflects not only our history, but our continued growth. You'll read about our strategic financial plan, our rebranding efforts, and the launch of a new website – all focused on strengthening our ability to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

None of this would be possible without you – our community of donors, volunteers, staff, board members, and clients. You are the heart of the Healing Garden, and we thank you for walking alongside us on this path.

With deep appreciation,

Holly Kouvo

Chair, Board of Trustees

Virginia Thurston Healing Garden



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF HEALING, HOPE, AND COMMUNITY

From the seed of a garden to a statewide sanctuary of support, the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden has grown with purpose and compassion. Our mission has always been clear: to optimize quality of life for adults living with cancer in Massachusetts. As we celebrate 25 years, we look back with gratitude and forward with hope.

2000: A GARDEN BECOMES A VISION

Following the passing of his wife, Ginny, in 1999, Bill Thurston donated a portion of their beloved garden and a cottage on their Harvard property to create a new kind of healing space. With the guidance of Betsy Tyson-Smith, a psychotherapist and Ginny's former support group facilitator, the Healing Garden was born – rooted in love, nature, and the belief that healing is more than medical care.



2012 - EXPANDING OUR MISSION

In response to evolving needs and our deepening understanding of the cancer experience, the Healing Garden expanded its mission to serve all individuals with cancer, regardless of diagnosis. This pivotal change welcomed a broader community into our care – including men, younger adults, and those with rarer or advanced-stage cancers.



2000

2008

2012

2008 - A HOME FOR HEALING

After years of quiet growth, the Healing Garden launched and completed a \$1 million capital campaign, transforming the cottage and grounds into a fully renovated center. What began as a vision now had a physical home – beautiful, accessible, and ready to meet the emotional and physical needs of people living with cancer.



2024 - A STATEWIDE SUPPORT SYSTEM

Today, we proudly serve clients in over 195 towns and cities across Massachusetts.

Bill envisioned a center with programs that would complete the circle of treatment for cancer. Clients would not be isolated. They would have access to strategies that would mitigate the harsh side effects of treatment. And they would participate in their emotional healing and empower themselves to live well.

In an interview several years ago, the interviewer asked Bill, "What are you passionate about?"

His answer:

"Passion is not one of my habits, . . . although I am compassionate."

He then quoted from The Little Prince: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye."



2020

2024

2020 - RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF COVID-19

When the global pandemic forced physical doors to close, the Healing Garden opened new ones online. Virtual programs were launched almost overnight, allowing clients to receive support, therapy, and connection from their homes. What started as a crisis response became a lasting opportunity – dramatically increasing our reach and accessibility.



STRATEGIC FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

In the spring of 2024, we created a three-year strategic financial plan to chart a course for the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden. Here are our key accomplishments for FY25.

GOAL	SAMPLE HIGH-LEVEL METRICS	OVERALL PRIORITY/TIMING	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS
GOAL 1: Program Development: Continue to grow core complementary integrative therapy and cancer support services for clients and caregivers within the service area, expanding access and programming regardless of age, ethnicity, and gender through enhancing community connections and service sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Month-to-month trends in program statistics by age range, gender, and residence Total utilization - in-person vs. online Number of offsite programs 	High/ Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded bereavement services to include 2 grief support groups, a quarterly potluck dinner, and expressive arts workshops Collaborated with oncology experts from DFCI, MGH, Emerson on community education Facilitated three retreats
GOAL 2: Philanthropy and Revenue Growth: Increase the organization's average fundraising capacity annually by 5% on a 5-year rolling average through enhanced touchpoints with donors, increased grant opportunities, and an active Board of Trustees seeking contributions and allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of donors Average gift per donor Number and amount of grants Development expense as percent of funds raised Non-operating revenue percent 	High/ Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met annual fundraising goals Re-engaged lapsed donors by a rate of 5%
GOAL 3: Board and Staff Leadership Development: Strengthen the effectiveness of the Board with visionary leaders with external relationships and fundraising focus; clarify Board and management functions, processes, and communications to support the mission in the most cost-effective manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in committee and task force meetings Number and length of meetings per year Results of Board self-evaluation Leadership reviews 	Medium to High Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed by-law revision Created and approved a gift policy
GOAL 4: Community Outreach and Brand: Clarify use of "Healing Garden" name and develop focused, resourced marketing function to build community awareness and experience within the service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness: name and services Calls-to-action: targeted marketing messages Participation in community events 	Medium/ Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted men's needs assessment Completed organizational rebrand Updated website and marketing materials Conducted a community needs assessment to collect data to inform future program planning

SPOTLIGHT ON GOAL 4:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND BRAND

Through a generous grant from Middlesex Charitable Foundation, we launched an organizational rebrand project, website redesign and created marketing materials that are now in oncology offices across Massachusetts.

Our first step was to examine the foundation of our brand and clarify why rebranding is necessary. Our leadership envisioned how rebranding will strengthen the organization's mission and impact.

Our key objectives were to:

- Broaden our reach – attract new clients, supporters, and volunteers
- Align with mission – clarify the purpose and scope of our organization
- Modernize image – ensure we are reaching our target audiences

We engaged experts to help us evaluate and review current brand elements, including the existing brand identity (name, logo, tagline, colors, fonts, and messaging). We created a marketing committee of the Board of Trustees who helped to assess what is working well with the current brand and what elements need to be updated, refined, or completely changed. Through surveys and focus groups we learned of opportunities for communicating more effectively to our target audiences.

In the spring of 2025 we completed a re-brand of the Virginia Thurston Healing Garden.

BRAND MESSAGE AND TONE

The Healing Garden's brand message is built on warmth, heart, connection, and inclusivity. Our tone should always feel welcoming, supportive, and compassionate, ensuring that everyone—regardless of their background or stage in their cancer journey – feels seen, heard, and valued. This is accomplished through the open, accessible font, warm inviting and soothing colors, and modern update on original brand.

LOGO + ICON



BRAND COLOR PALETTE

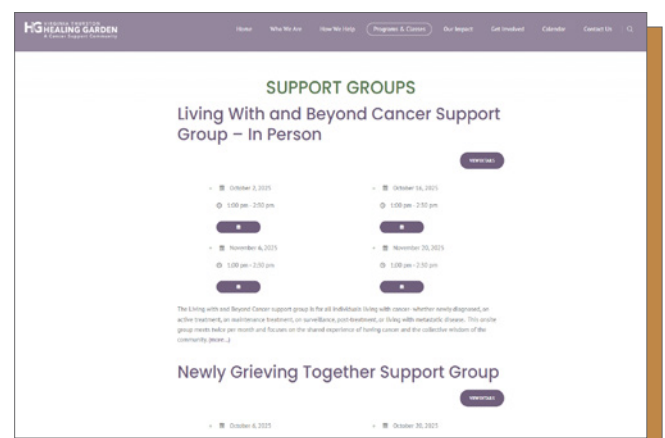
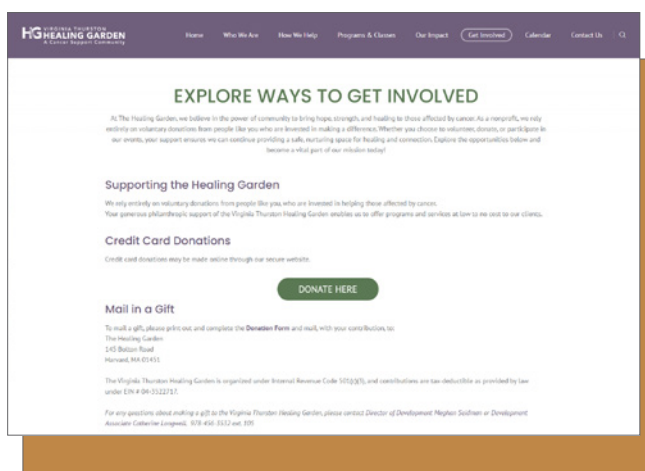
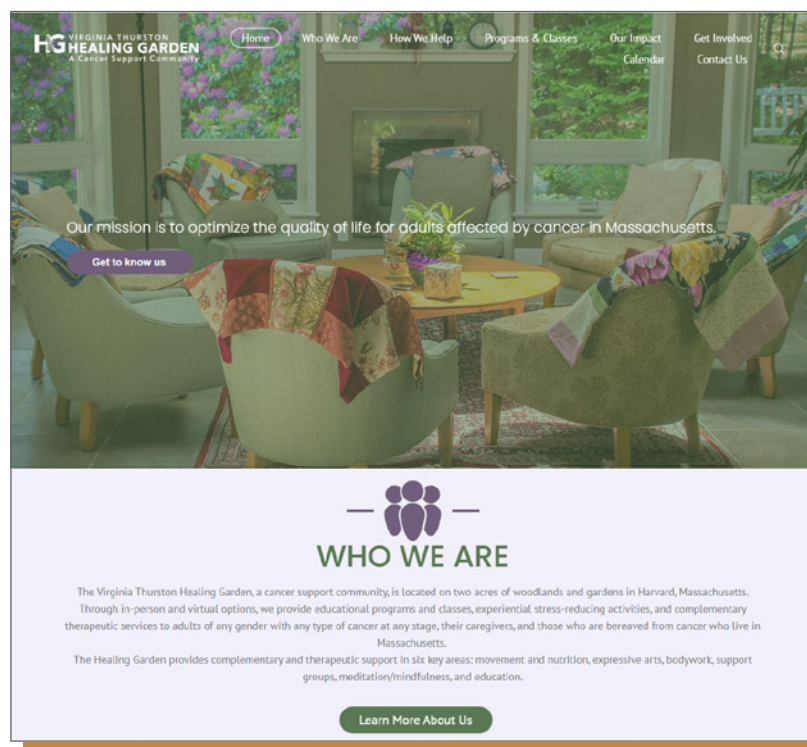


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WEBSITE REFRESH HIGHLIGHTS

With a solid brand in place we turned our attention to the website. The main goals of the website refresh were to:

- Create a website that embodies our brand's essence – with the primary objective being that anyone who uses our website would immediately understand who we are, who we serve, how to engage with our services, and why we are important to people living with cancer
- Increase the ease of use for the users of the website e.g. on-line scheduling
- Make the ability to donate easy and clear; and
- Demonstrate our impact.



CLIENT IMPACT STATEMENTS

"Upon receiving my cancer diagnosis, I felt scared and overwhelmed. Unable to confide in my family, who lacked experience with cancer, I turned to the Healing Garden for support. Participating in their programs proved to be the vital assistance I required to navigate diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. This organization has been indispensable to me."

"My family is on the other side of the county. The Healing Garden provided the in-person support I needed. The nutrition, exercise, farm share, support groups and body health (yoga, massage, acupuncture) were absolutely amazing! Thank you so much for being my support both physically and emotionally throughout my treatment and beyond."



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS



FY24 UTILIZATION

SERVED **527**
CLIENTS
FROM **129**
TOWNS AND CITIES
ACROSS MA



OFFERED **981**
ONSITE BODYWORK
APPOINTMENTS



6,370 VISITS
FROM INDIVIDUALS
LIVING WITH CANCER,
CAREGIVERS, AND
BEREAVED MEMBERS

45.5%
OF OUR CLIENT
COMMUNITY HAS
BREAST CANCER

14.8% OF OUR
COMMUNITY ARE
CAREGIVERS AND
BEREAVED MEMBERS



86%
OF OUR CLIENTS
IDENTIFY AS FEMALE

FINANCIALS

We don't charge for services so we need your support and thanks to all of you who have supported us this year.

Annual Fund

Your annual fund support helps us serve more clients every year. These contributions empower our team to deliver high quality programming. We raise our entire operating budget every year, through the generosity of our community.

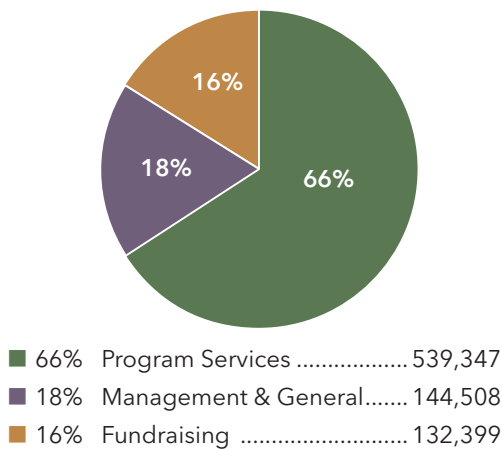
Special Events

Our Perennial Walk and the Garden Gala bring our supporters together to celebrate our mission, support from these events have a direct impact on our clients and caregivers.

Grants and Corporate Support

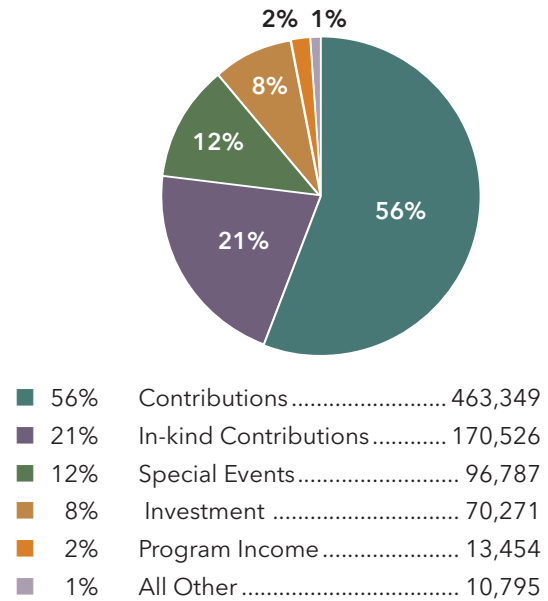
We are grateful to foundations and companies who "give back" to their communities. We especially thank our Friends of the Garden sponsors, and grantors who support our programs and services.

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES



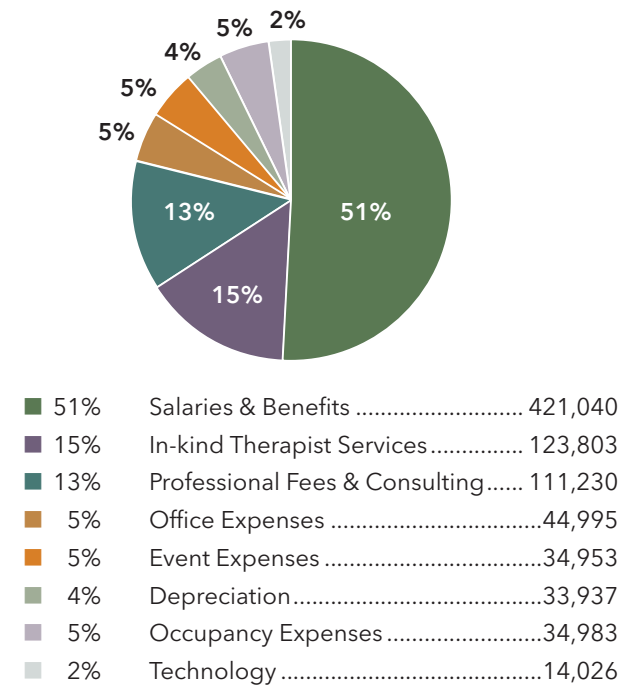
TOTAL\$816,254

REVENUE



TOTAL \$825,181

EXPENSES



TOTAL \$818,467

FLORAL LEADERSHIP

NASTURTIUM GIVING SOCIETY (\$10,000 AND ABOVE)

Aegon Transamerica Foundation
Anonymous
Ken & Nanci Bishop
Jeanne & John Bowers
Concord Carlisle Foundation
Daymarc Foundation
Mrs. Winston Hindle
David & Laurel Martin
Middlesex Savings Charitable
Foundation
Mildred's Dream Foundation
Cindy & Richard Pelletier
The Sanborn Foundation
West Boylston High School,
"In It to Win It" Event

JASMINE GIVING SOCIETY (\$7,500-\$9,999)

The Parmenter Foundation
James & Eva Conniff

PASSIONFLOWER GIVING SOCIETY (\$5,000-\$7,499)

Fred Hamilton
Gail E. Hindle
Mika Minots
The George Wallace Foundation
TJX Foundation

LAVENDER GIVING SOCIETY (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Agnes M. Lindsay Trust
Alice Rowan Swanson Foundation
Asvins Foundation
Debbie Avery
Avidia Bank Charitable Foundation
Frances Booth
Marcia & Jim Croyle
Diane & Mark Cyker
Chris & Leslie DeMers
Douglas & Isabelle Crocker
Foundation
Shannon Kelley

Holly & Steve Kouvo
Heather Lammey
Ray Larson
Carrie Leggett & David Pangburn, M.D.
Michael & Helen Cyker Charitable
Foundation
Sharon & Dennis Murphy
Uma Narayanasami, M.D.
Jessie & Jonathan Panek
Parker Hannifin Foundation
George & Consuelo Ryan
Schwartz Charitable Foundation
St. Vincent Healthcare Fund of
the Diocese of Worcester
Stow Community Chest
Brian Swanson
Meg Mattern & John Wallace
Jon Way, M.D.

HAWTHORNE GIVING SOCIETY (\$1,000-\$2,499)

Ayer Fire Department
Gail & Paul Bouton
Phyllis & Dick Clawson
Clinton Cultural Council
Edward Colbert
Ellen Crompton
George Elenbaas
Madeleine & Rick Findlay
Michael Francolini
Chris & Jerry Furman
Melissa & Will Gardner
Katie Gray
Connie Greaves Bates
Karen & Rod Griffith
Beth Hamilton
Harvard Lions Club
Helen Hill
Ronald Johnson
Christopher Jones
Daniel Kagan
Edwin Knights, M.D.
Deb Kotlarz
Robin Lazarow
Diane Leonard
Laurie Link
Catherine & Mark Longwell

Lorraine Mastropieri
Nypro Foundation Inc.
Oliver & Jennie Donaldson
Charitable Trust
Mariclare O'Neal
Susan Parker
Mariko Pyle
Rita Rand
Anand & Sumana Rao
George and Nancy Robb
Richard Roman
Bonnie & Thomas Rosse
Rosse Family Charitable Foundation
Meghan & Robin Seidman
Karen Shea
Heidi & Don Siegrist
Cathryn Stein
Sterling Firefighters Association
Clare Thomas
Kelsey Thompson
Elizabeth Tyson-Smith & David Smith
Donna Vieth
Sara & Tim Wondolowski
Noreen A. Zachem
Christine Zinke & David Roberts



DONORS

\$500-\$999

Ayer Cultural Council
Anita Baltzersen
Iris & Ted Barten
Bolton Cultural Council
Diane Brady
Sam Brown
Alice Campbell
Carolyn Carbonell
John & Ellen Carpenter
Brianne & Nick Carter
Bill Coffey
Alicia Colley
The Congregational Church of
Westborough
Gayle Connolly
Colleen Conry
F. Robert Cullinane
Sarah Curtis
Cathy D'Angelo
James Densmore
Michael Densmore
John P. Duquette
Joseph Ferrara
Patrick & Erinn Flanagan
Lisa Frackiewicz
David A. Frank, M.D.
Shirley French
Guido & Helene Gagliano
Gardner Cultural Council
Cara Gavin
Amy & Paul Greeley
Groton Cultural Council
Dana Hollinshead
James & Penelope Hommeyer
Marisa & Pradeep Khurana
Terri & Philip Knoettner
Dan Lifton
Amy Longwell & Kirk Atamian
Greg & Kelly Marchand
Steven Miller
Julie Murphy
Michael Murphy
Dave Nadler
Nadia Nedelcheva
Daniel P. O'Connor
Nancy Prior

Jennifer Ratay & Scott Porter
Elaine Ritchie
Kathleen Rusilas
Kristina & Bruce Rychlik
Adam Rypinski
JoAnn Simon & Tsehsin Lin
Fred Slavin
Ann M. Snow
Barry Stell
Katherine Stordy
Sterling Cultural Council
Michelle Tynan
Jane Way
Edward & Judy Zubrow

\$250-\$499

Jonathan Aibel
Rick Anderson
Matthew Audibert
Charlotte & Doug Banghart
Rich & Beth Barrett
Carol Barron
Katherine & Robert Becker
Paul Belanger
Barbara Bender
Alan & Peggy Berko
Berlin Cultural Council
Sheila Berman
BU School of Social Work,
Bedford Cohort
Boxborough Cultural Council
Peggy & Richard Briggs
Carlisle Cultural Council
Elise & Harold Carter
Blake & Annette Cerullo
Frances & Robert Clawson
Concord Cultural Council
Megan Connor
Christine Connors
Mark & Janae Corley
Charles & Katharine Denault
Tatiana Dessain
Anna Dimascio
Rita DiStefano-French
Anne Fellows
First Parish Church UU
Sheila Flory

Carrie Fuchs
Andrew & Marjorie Glincher
Heather Goldstein
Russell & Donna Goodman
Helaine Goodner
Pamela Gordon
Peter & Susan Grilli
Michelle Grindle
Jonathan Campbell & Thea Hahn
Harvard Cultural Council
Marianne Heard
Brett & Allison Heyman
Vicky Hill
David Hogue
Hudson Cultural Council
David Hurlbut
Ken Isaacs
Dana Jones
Jeanne Jones
Tasso Kaper
Linda Kelley
Terry King
Kathy Ann Gianino & Alice Knowles
Susan Kornfield
Peter Kurz
Fritz Kussin
Karl & Sarah Kussin
Leominster Cultural Council
Joette Levine
Nancy Levy
Bill Lincea-Kane
Jeff & Linda Lischer
William Loehfelm
Molly Lyttle
Lisa & Craig MacDonnell
Marlborough Cultural Council
Becky McCullough
Thomas & Mary McGilvray
Karen & Paul McGinn
Alizon Meikle
Sarah Miller
Nashoba Athletics Booster Club,
Cheer Team
John Nystrom
Mahta Ostovari
Andrea Paci
Whitfield & Linda Painter

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DONORS CONTINUED

Michael Parks
Clifford Perlman
David Perry
Elizabeth Peters
Alison & Steven Peterson
Stacey Pimentel
Suzanne Pomerleau
Lorraine Ragnio
Jonathan Rappaport
Linda Reddy
Jamie Redgrave
Ruth Richards
Dale Richardson
Erica Rossitto
Anthony Saizon
Tom Sartini
Katy Sharko
Shirley Cultural Council
Diane Sidorowicz & Lourdes
Rodriguez-Nogues
Hugh & Laura Silk
Sounds of Stow
Kenneth Spenser
Peter St. George
Jill Standish
Ina Staris
George & Terry Symula
Peter Szuch
Matthew Taylor
Townsend Cultural Council
Lisa Troy
Elizabeth Walker & Dan Routhier
Janet & Jim Ward
Alissa Weiss
Eric Wells
West Concord Union Church
Darrell & Willie Wickman
John & Jacqueline Wilcox
Women's Business Network
Deborah Woodcock
Charles & Margaret Ziering

MEMORIAL GIFTS IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Beth Andrews	Fred Lucey
Rosemary Atamian	Amanda Miller
Katarzyna Bajson-Ferrara	Karen Miller
Amy Beaudet	Linda Moody
Iris Amy Ben-David	Nancy Moore
Stephen A. Benton	Maureen Murphy
Nina Huber Bernard	Renee Nadler
Tracy Brown	Gayle O'Riley
Peter Carlino	Kelly Gower Ormsby
Fabrizia Ciampa	Rana Gladstone Rappaport
Denyse Densmore	Warren Razzaboni
Susan Elenbaas	Letitia Conniff Reed
Jean Francolini	Lois Reilly
Juliana Gagliano	Arlana Roman
Daniel Gagliano	Susan Russell
Matt Galligan	Allison Walsh Sartini
Lorraine Gower	Ruth Silman
Elly Hamilton	Nancy Silverstein
Danny and Irene Hite	John Snyder
Kathleen Hughes	Ted Standish
Nancy Johansen	Nancy Stell-Kiely
Mary Jo Johnson	Charlotte Szuch
Kathryn Kagan	William R. Thurston
Jeanne Kangas and Jon Karas	Charlotte Timlege
John David Kelley	Elise Vandergriff
Joanie Kish	Christine Way
Allie Kussin	Terrie Winograd
Gigi Kussin	Patricia Urick Zegas
Kerry Lee	Rena Zelukiewicz
Norma Leonard	
Lindy Lewandowski	



FRIENDS OF THE GARDEN

HARVESTER \$5,000 +

Nashoba Valley Winery

CULTIVATOR (\$2,500-\$4,999)

Third Space Kitchen and Events
Enterprise Bank & Trust Co.
Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
HUB Foundation Co., Inc.

GARDENER (\$1,000-\$2,499)

IC Federal Credit Union
Zimmer Biomet

PLANTER (\$500-\$999)

Charter Oak Country Club
Harvard Alpaca Ranch
Persado
Pierce Plumbing and HVAC, LLC
Temescal Wellness

ADOPT-A-POT

Bellwether Bookkeeping, Inc.
Boston Mutual Life Insurance
Company
Broadcom
Harvard Chiropractic, P.C. Helene
Gagliano, In Memory of
Juliana Gagliano
Healing Garden Staff, In Memory
of John Kelley
Nashoba Athletics Booster Club



FOUNDERS

William R. Thurston (1921-2024)
Elizabeth Tyson-Smith

TRUSTEES

Deborah Avery, MBA - Vice Board Chair
Molly Best - Treasurer
Eric Brown
Marcia B. Croyle - Clerk
Shannon Kelley
Holly Kouvo - Board Chair
Caroline Leggett
David Martin, MBA - Past Board Chair
Sharon Murphy
Heidi Siegrist
Peter St. George
Katherine Stordy
John Wallace
Jon Way, M.D.

EMERITI

Sarah K. Hindle - Past Board Chair, Emeritus
Pamela P. Sawyer - Past Board Chair, Emeritus
William Thurston - Founder, Emeritus (1921-2024)
Betsy Tyson-Smith - Founder, Emeritus

STAFF

Meredith Hobson, LICSW, APHSW-C, Director of Clinical Care
Meghan Seidman, MBA, Director of Development
Chris Furman, Integrative Care Coordinator
Catherine Longwell, Development Associate
Erin Raber, MA, MT-BC, Clinical Care Specialist
Christine Zinke, MA, LICSW, Clinical Care Specialist



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