



Monarch School of New England in New Hampshire (MSNE) is a first-place grant winner of the National Gardening Bureau Therapeutic Garden Grant. MSNE is a unique, comprehensive, private, nonprofit, year-round, specialized, day school for students, ages 5 to 21, with severe physical, intellectual, emotional, medical and developmental disabilities. (Photo: ~Courtesy of National Gardening Bureau)

In its commitment to promote gardening to gardeners and non-gardeners alike, the National Gardening Bureau (NGB) has grant awards available in 2018. A nonprofit organization, the NGB exists to educate, inspire and motivate people to increase the use of plants in homes, gardens and workplaces by being the marketing arm of the gardening industry.

NGB members are experts in the field of horticulture and information comes directly from these sources.

"Caring for plants and experiencing nature brings healing and purpose to people whose lives have been affected by illness, addiction, violence or military service," said Heather Kibble, NGB president.

"National Garden Bureau, in partnership with local therapeutic organizations, strives to make gardening accessible to everyone, no matter their situation, history or abilities. Our garden grant program impacts individual lives using garden-based education and therapy."



Magee Rehabilitation Hospital Therapy Center and Healing Gardens in Philadelphia was one of 47 grant applicants recognized in 2017 by the National Gardening Bureau. The hospital is a nationally ranked medical rehabilitation hospital specializing in Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury. (Photo: ~Courtesy of National Gardening Bureau)

Five years ago, the NGB made a commitment to give back to those who are actively pursuing and promoting gardening. NGB Executive Director Diane Blazek shared in phone interview last month that discussion varied about how the NGB might execute a give-back.

"We finally decided to focus on therapeutic gardens so I came back to my office and started doing some research," Blazek said. "Our first year, we chose to conduct a fundraiser for a vocational therapeutic garden, Growing Solutions Farm in Chicago, that had just been launched a year or two prior.

"Every year since, we have simply created \$5,000 worth of grants, solicited applications for those grants, narrow the many choices down to three then get the public involved in deciding the first, second and third place winners for the grants. In 2017, the NGB received 47 grant applications. We were very pleased at the number and quality of therapeutic gardens that are out there."

To date no applications have come in from New Jersey.

The American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA), developed the first therapeutic garden characteristics in 1995. A therapeutic garden is designed for use as a component of a treatment, rehabilitation or vocational program.

A garden can be described as being therapeutic in nature when it has been designed to meet the needs of a specific user or population. It is designed to accommodate participant's goals and to facilitate people-plant interactions.



Growing Solutions Farm is a 1.2-acre vocational garden in the Illinois Medical District, helping young adults with autism, was the first recipient in 2005 of the National Gardening Bureau Therapeutic Garden. Farm interns learn skills in the agriculture space and how to follow structured employment tasks while also gaining soft skills. Teachers, volunteers and agency staff engage in daily farm work with our farm interns while modeling and teaching the curriculum that will lead to future success in the workplace. (Photo: ~Courtesy of National Gardening Bureau)

A horticultural therapist uses a therapeutic garden as a tool to engage a participant in horticultural activities.

Therapeutic gardens incorporating the AHTA Therapeutic Garden Design Characteristics are gardens designed to provide a horticultural therapy environment.

Also a nonprofit organization, the AHTA defines and encourages the pursuit of standards of practice, disseminates critical knowledge across diverse constituent audiences, and recognizes and promotes excellence in clinical, professional, educational and research achievement.

Membership in the AHTA is comprised of individuals and organizations from throughout the U.S., Canada, Japan and beyond.

Criteria for the NGB therapeutic grant can be found at <https://ngb.org/grant-application/>. For more information, email info@ngb.org or call 630-963-0770.

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