



A Park That Inspires



Friends of Kenilworth

AQUATIC GARDENS

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens



This has been an exciting year for the Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. We are so proud of our accomplishments and look forward to a bright future at the park.

For more than a decade we have worked in partnership with the National Park Service, local groups and individuals to protect and celebrate the park now and for future generations. This year we've undergone some exciting organizational developments. We brought on new staff, codified our volunteer program, hosted exciting community-oriented events with record attendance and laid the foundation for an ambitious 2019.

We continue to blossom in our service to the park and its visitors. We've grown from 10 volunteers in 2001 to more than 800 volunteers in 2018, all of them working to help keep the ponds, marsh and surrounding trails and forest healthy and beautiful. We continue to bring children from the surrounding neighborhoods into the park for three weeks of camp where the moments of discovery abound and a connection to nature deepens.

Our city is blessed with monumental national memorials and museums. The Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens aspires to become a more well-known and prominent place of special beauty and exploration for the District. Friends of Kenilworth Gardens is committed to bringing resources and partners to help achieve that goal and make Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens into a thriving aquatic garden that inspires everyone.

I hope you will continue to join us at the park to experience the wild beauty it has to offer and continue your support of the Friends' work to support the park.

Sincerely,

Zandra Chestnut

Board Chair
Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

Tina O'Connell

Executive Director
Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

National Capital Parks-East

One visit to Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens results in an expanded appreciation for both nature and history. Each subsequent visit provides a new opportunity to experience the only site within the National Park Service devoted to the propagation and display of aquatic plants.

Located in Anacostia Park, on the banks of the Anacostia River, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens protects a diversity of aquatic plants and wildlife; serves as a serene environment for recreation, reflection and environmental discovery for our local communities; and provides educational opportunities to visitors from all walks of life.

Nestled in the nation's capital, the gardens offer a tranquil escape from our busy lives in Washington D.C. With its unique location and appealing landscape, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens is a one-of-a-kind experience. Through the support of the Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, the National Park Service is able to further enhance its stewardship, community engagement, and educational programs for the neighboring community and all visitors.

Our shared commitment has allowed us to enrich the lives of each visitor by making an impact to their perspectives on the importance of urban national parks. Together, we continue to uplift the gardens for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

Sincerely,

Tara Morrison

Superintendent
National Capital Parks East



Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens is the official nonprofit partner of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, a national park in Washington, D.C. that features an impressive collection of lotus flowers and water lilies, as well as a variety of other aquatic plants and animals. We connect people to the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens through **stewardship, public engagement** and **educational programs** in cooperation with the **National Park Service**. We are dedicated to ensuring the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens are **well-maintained, well-enjoyed** and **welcoming** for neighbors and visitors.



Stewardship

In 2018 we hosted 6 public Saturday volunteer events, 3 corporate weekday events, 6 non-corporate weekday events and a fall SCA crew. Over 800 Stewardship volunteers contributed 2,855 volunteer hours during 2018. An additional 195 hours were contributed by our board and staff for a total of 3,050 volunteer hours in 2018.

We codified our volunteer program, establishing cohorts of regular volunteers who work directly with park rangers on maintenance or interpretive projects, event volunteers who help at our stewardship events and volunteer team leaders who lead groups of general volunteers at stewardship events. We also refined our volunteer recognition and volunteer training programs, and set ambitious and exciting stewardship goals for 2019.

Major 2018 stewardship outcomes:

800+ stewardship volunteers

4,000+ lbs invasives cleared

3,050 total volunteer hours

4,000+ ft trail maintained


New team leader program

2000+ ft pond bank restored

Collaboration with corporate groups

2,500+ lbs trash removed



A man wearing a brown hat, sunglasses, a purple long-sleeved shirt, and tan waders is standing in a pond. He is holding a long wooden pole and looking towards the camera. The pond is filled with lily pads and surrounded by dense green foliage. The sky is blue with some clouds.

We are
stewards
of both the
**Kenilworth
Aquatic Gardens**
and the
next generation.

Photo Credit: Tim Ervin, 2018



Public Engagement

Throughout 2018 we hosted a wide variety of culturally-enriching events including three *Lily Ponds Live!* concerts, the National Park Service's annual Lotus and Water Lily Festival, three NatureFest family days and a photography competition. By collaborating closely with the National Park Service, a variety of D.C.-based nonprofits and local Ward 7 residents, we brought out the best in our events and activated the Aquatic Gardens as a space for people to come together and enjoy the outdoors. Our public engagement programming provided opportunities for folks to enjoy the beauty of the Aquatic Gardens, learn about environmental stewardship and get involved in their community.

Major 2018 public engagement outcomes:

800+ concert attendees

7,000+ Lotus Festival attendees

20% increase in photo contest entries

30% increase in social media engagement

Partnership with National Park Service

Partnership with East River Jazz

10+ concert event partners



We are proud to be the
official philanthropic partner
with the **National Park
Service**, dedicated to
protecting and celebrating
this special place
throughout
the year.



Education

NatureFest, our flagship educational camp, brings more Ward 7 families closer to the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens every year. 2018 NatureFest saw 75 children, 30 camp counselors and 7 teen junior camp counselors enjoy a variety of exciting environmentally-focussed educational programming. NatureFest gives local kids and adults a unique opportunity to come together and enjoy one of the most beautiful gems D.C. has to offer.



Major 2018 NatureFest outcomes:

75 campers

30 adult camp counselors

7 junior camp counselors

20+ local community partners

92% attendance rate

400 program hours

**88% increased or maintained
a positive feeling of liking
nature**

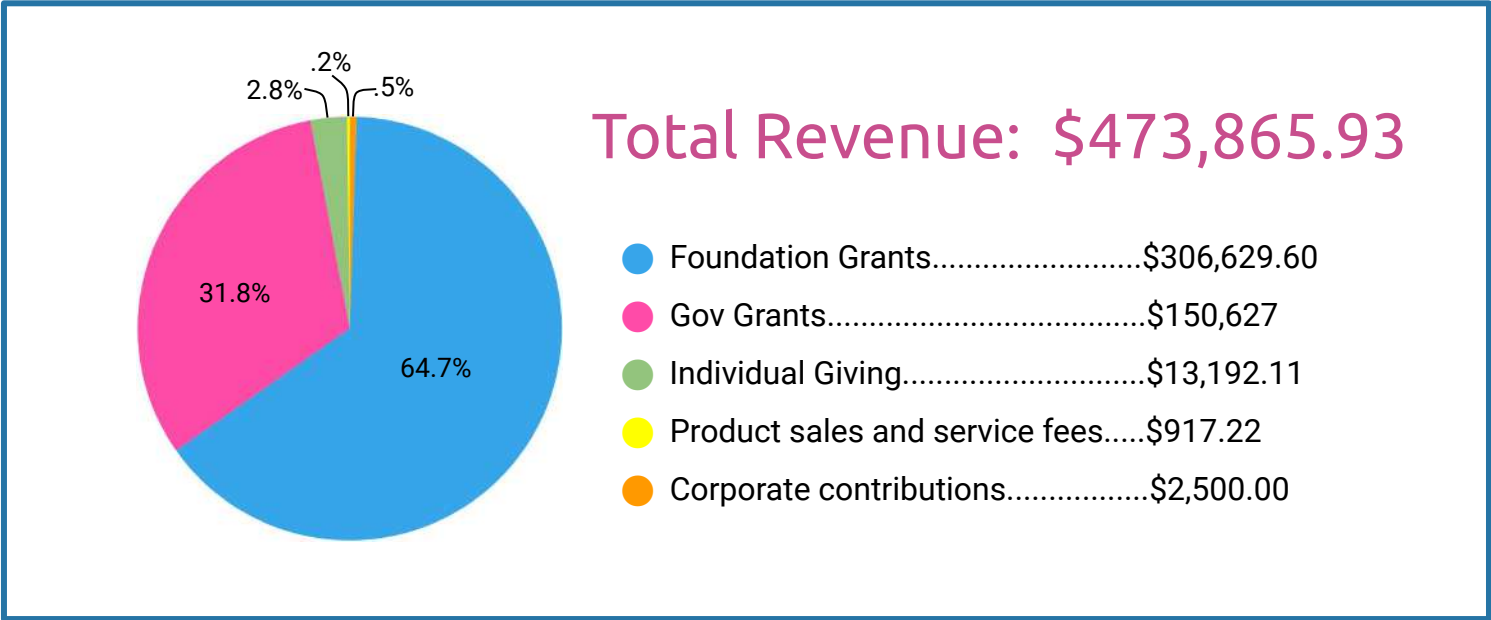
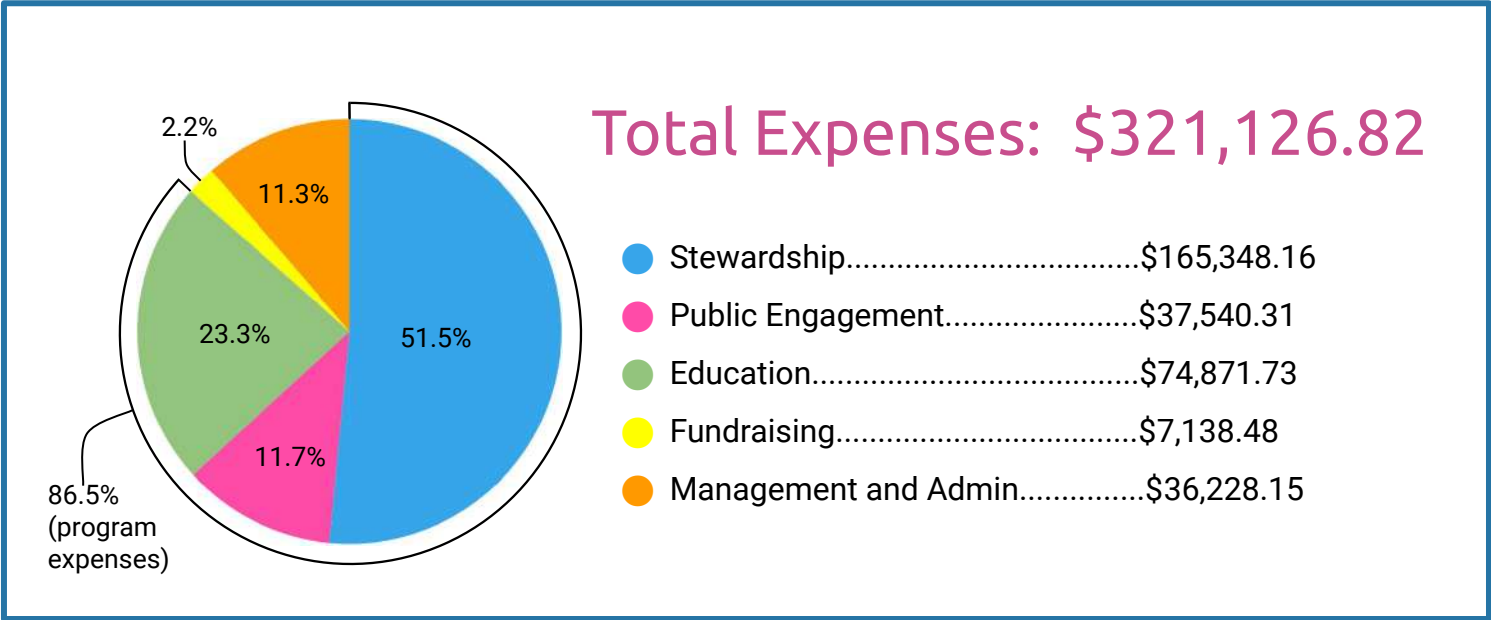
**88% increased or maintained
interest in returning to the
Gardens**

**80% camper/counselor return
rate**

The **Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens**
provides an extraordinary space for
outdoor exploration
and learning.



2018 Financials



AmeriCorps VISTAs



September 2018 saw the hiring of David Drawbaugh and Maya Douglas, two AmeriCorps VISTAs eager to make a splash at the Aquatic Gardens. We're thrilled to have them on board! David and Maya were hired through the AmeriCorps VISTA program, a national service program that pairs young professionals with organizations that work to alleviate poverty. They were on staff from September 2018 to September 2019 as per AmeriCorps VISTA's year-long service assignments.



As Volunteer Coordinator David worked to increase volunteer capacity, including more corporate opportunities and streamlining volunteer training and management. A recent graduate of Dickinson College, he used his Bachelor's Degree in environmental studies to spread the word about environmental conservation in urban areas. David enjoys biking, swing dancing, weightlifting and calling into the Kojo Nnamdi Show



As Community Outreach Coordinator Maya worked to connect the surrounding community and greater D.C. to the inspiring opportunities unique to the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. Maya is a recent graduate of Hood College with a degree in communication studies and minors in African American studies and Nonprofit management. She enjoys going to concerts and spending time exploring parks with family and friends.

Thank You!

Wow, 2018 sure was a great year. But we're not resting on our laurels (or maybe lilies in our case). We're looking forward to an exciting and ambitious 2019!

We'd like to extend a huge thank you to all the staff volunteers, corporate groups, nonprofit partners, stewardship crews, artists, educators, families and friends who made 2018 one of our best years on record.

We look forward to sharing all the enriching programming we have planned for 2019 with you.



Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

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