



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

The
YEAR IN
REVIEW

2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

It was nearly a century ago when Suzanne Massie, the fourth GCV President, wrote, “My greatest wish would be that the Garden Club of Virginia could be the means of planting and preserving the state to the extent that visitors entering the state over the main highways would exclaim over the beauty and know that they were in Virginia’s boundaries.” Wouldn’t she be proud that the legacy of environmental stewardship and the restoration

and preservation of our historic treasures remain the core of our mission today. Your dedication, volunteer efforts, and financial support continue to make these worthy achievements possible.

Over the past two years, and guided by our strategic plan, *The Path Forward*, we focused new attention on education and communication. Answering the call for member-wide educational opportunities, our monthly virtual series, *Cultivating Conversations*, debuted last fall and a redesigned website launched in May. In addition to a fresh look, the new platform facilitates idea sharing, customized personal profiles and serves as a valuable resource for member connections and communication.

We collaborated with the Virginia Museum of History & Culture at History Blooms, a three-day event where our members and guests enjoyed special lectures, workshops, and engaging activities focused on Virginia history, gardening, and landscape preservation. The 65th Annual Conservation Forum, on ecolandscaping, presented three dynamic speakers who shared expert insights on restoring nature’s balance in our own gardens.

By virtue of your hard work, commitment, and gracious hospitality, Historic Garden Week 2024 was the most financially successful in its 91-year history. As we embrace our partnership with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects, we are poised to continue to preserve historic landscapes across the commonwealth with a new vision to bring history to life through vibrant, accessible, and sustainable landscapes.

I am proud of our legacy and what we have accomplished together. It has been my great honor and privilege to serve with you, and I am truly grateful to all of you for your passion, dedicated service, and loyal support.

Warmly,

Debbie Lewis, GCV President, 2022-2024

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA



DONATIONS ARE LIKE HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

The word “ecosystem” has drifted into my vocabulary recently for two reasons. First, the theme of GCV’s 66th Annual Conservation Forum is restoring our ecological foundation. The Conservation and Beautification Committee lined up four speakers who all have “ecosystems” in their biographies, and I can’t wait to hear them. Second, I built a pond in my backyard and, in doing my homework, I

learned that healthy ponds are the quintessential example of ecosystems.

In reading more about ecosystems, I’ve come to realize that, collectively, donations are like healthy ecosystems: they create a chain of interactions that work together as a system to sustain life or, in the case of the GCV, to sustain our organization.

The donations in our ecosystem come in many sizes and forms, such as the extraordinary gifts from the Elisabeth Reed Carter Charitable Lead Trust and the Mezzanotte Foundation for updates to the Kent-Valentine House, and from the Robert and Bessie Carter Foundation, whose generosity has helped to provide competitive grant funding to our member clubs through the Bessie Bock Carter Award.

Many loyal donors have been giving to the Annual Fund for more than 20 years, and we received gifts from nearly 100 first-time donors in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

The Green Arrow Society doubled from 20 members to 40 over the past two years. These members’ future gifts, included in their estate plans, will also help to sustain our mission.

Each gift spurs interactions, whether for educational programs, conservation and environmental studies fellowships, grant awards to member clubs for local projects, or for committee meetings and gatherings at the Kent-Valentine House, gifts are critical to fulfilling our mission. On behalf of the Garden Club of Virginia, thank you for being part of this wonderful, thriving ecosystem.

Andrea Butler, Executive Director

GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA



Thanks to generous gifts from the Elisabeth Reed Carter Charitable Lead Trust and the Mezzanotte Foundation, the GCV refreshed the historic Kent-Valentine House, creating a beautiful conference room, adding office and storage space, and carpeting the staircase and offices.

Kent-Valentine House Committee members rose to the occasion. General contractor Bentley Wellington oversaw the work, much of which required approval from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The project encompassed construction, cabinetry, painting, HVAC, lighting, and structural work, as the second-floor porch was gradually pulling away from the house. The former Historic Garden Week office was divided in two, creating an office for the communications director. Preston Lee (The James River Garden Club) of Greenway Interiors donated

her time and her designer's discount for the purchase of fabrics, wallpaper, carpets and furnishings. The library books in the executive director's office were culled, making way for more file drawers, and a "book nook" was added to the third floor for members use. The stabilized porch now boasts an office for the GCV president and a production and storage area.

In addition, committee members conducted a fine arts inventory and created an accessions policy for the GCV; revised the flower teams manual; organized the perpetual silver trophies for flower shows; and sorted through the GCV archival material in the basement.

The Kent-Valentine House's first floor was lovingly restored in anticipation of the GCV Centennial in 2020. The third floor features up-to-date space and communications for club, committee, and board meetings. Now the second floor provides the staff with an efficient and attractive work area, and a conference room for members use.

KENT-VALENTINE HOUSE



CONSERVATION & BEAUTIFICATION

The GCV embraced the conservation pillar of its mission with several programs and advocacy in FY2023. The 2023 Conservation Forum titled EcoLandscaping, Restoring Nature's Balance, drew GCV members and guests to the LEED certified CODE Building in Charlottesville. Thomas Rainer, a landscape architect and leading voice in ecological landscape design, Eliza Greenman, an heirloom orchardist, and Larry Weaner, noted landscape architect and meadows specialist, educated attendees about eco-friendly landscapes. They explored what people can do – even on a residential scale – to incorporate native plants into existing and new landscapes, create sustainable gardens, conserve water, and reduce pesticide use with a new eco-responsible approach to landscapes.

The Conservation and Beautification Committee's Legislative Subcommittee reviewed and recommended environmental and conservation legislation before the General Assembly to support GCV members' advocacy efforts. Legislators passed several bills supported by GCV to preserve and protect Virginia's environment. Most notably, the combined House and Senate bills establishing a PFAS Expert Advisory Council to assist state agencies in monitoring and tracking potentially significant sources of PFAS in public water systems. The law extends to hold potential PFAS polluters accountable through monitoring water systems' raw sources for contamination identifying those using or manufacturing PFAS. The law took effect July 1, 2024. GCV's 2022 Conservation Forum focused on the environmental impact of PFAS, "the forever chemicals," polluting waterways and presenting grave health risks in Virginia and nationwide.

A new GCV award, the Helen and Tayloe Murphy Conservation Leadership in Government Award, recognizes individual government employees, coalitions and/or agencies who have demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to environmental stewardship of Virginia.

GCV also added a second Conservation and Environmental Studies fellowship to offer one for undergraduate and for one graduate student research.

GCV continues to encourage and support member clubs' pursuit of Bee Cities certifications in conjunction with The Xerces Society. This statewide effort to protect native pollinators strives to protect endangered bees critical to the health of the ecosystem. To date, 16 Bee Cities have been declared in Virginia.

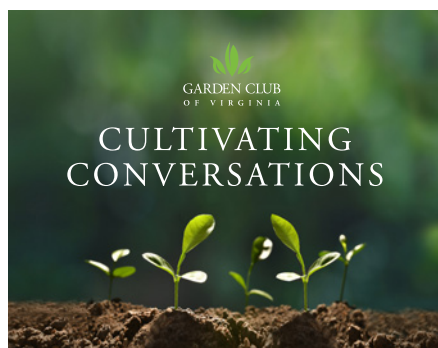
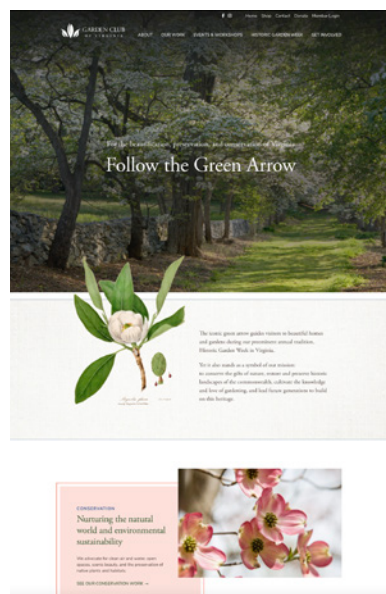
Through the efforts of members and donors, GCV continues to be a significant proponent for conservation and beautification throughout Virginia.



MOVING GCV'S DIGITAL PRESENCE FORWARD

In 2005, under the visionary leadership of former GCV President Nina Mustard, GCV launched its first robust, modern website. This site served as an incredible leap forward in GCV's digital presence, a catalyst for connecting member clubs with one another, and keeping the world informed of all the extraordinary work of the GCV and its member clubs.

Fast forward to today, and – according to a 2023 member survey – 95 percent of our members reported an interest in some type of virtual programming, two-thirds of members responded that they would be more likely to attend events that included a virtual option, and members shared a desire to make use of the website for educational resources, event information, and connecting with one another.



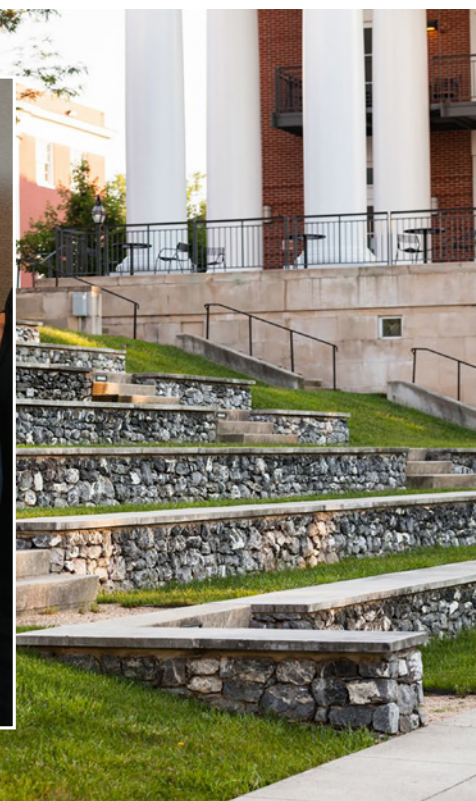
In response to this member input and the shifting needs of our growing, vibrant organization, the Garden Club of Virginia has proudly released a new and updated website at GCVirginia.org, and launched a new virtual learning series, Cultivating Conversations.

Now entering its second programming year, Cultivating Conversations has been a

resounding success. Members from across the commonwealth have tuned in to connect with one another and learn from fellow member experts on topics ranging from flower arranging mechanics and gardening with sustainability in mind, to entering horticulture or photography shows, caring for pollinators, and creating seasonal arrangements from your home garden. Recordings of past sessions are, and will remain, available on GCV's website, and this program's second season promises to add to that growing library of reference material. Topics for the coming season were chosen based on survey feedback from each session's participants, and will include more advanced arranging mechanics, a session with our new landscape architect, and more.

For its part, the new gcvirginia.org has been crafted and re-organized with the individual member in mind. The new platform is user-friendly on mobile devices and allows members to customize personal profiles, register for events easily, find educational information, and connect with one another. We are continuously working to update and improve our virtual offerings and encourage members to share feedback and experiences to ensure the website and our virtual programming remain both valuable and enjoyable.

All of this was made possible by the contributions from Bartlett Tree Experts and our members. Thank you for your support and active participation throughout this process. We hope both this new website and additional virtual learning opportunities serve as a source of pride and enthusiasm for you as a member of the GCV.



Photos courtesy of Nelson Byrd Woltz. LEFT: Thomas Woltz. Photo by Fran King

RESTORATION

The Garden Club of Virginia concluded its extensive search for a new landscape architect in early 2024, tapping renowned landscape architecture firm Nelson Byrd Woltz. The partnership brings new vision to the landscape and garden restoration pillar of GCV's mission.

In addition to continuing our tradition of documenting and restoring historic sites, the GCV will be considering the role of climate change, sustainability, biodiversity and culture in our work. The stories of our gardens and landscapes are not static. They are layered and reach across decades and cultures.

Together, with Thomas Woltz and the NBW team, we will strengthen our commitment to preserving historic landscapes across the commonwealth with an expanded vision that inspires, educates, and provides relevance and connection as we tell the stories of our shared heritage.

GCV's restoration work and fellowships are funded by the proceeds from Historic Garden Week. All of our members make this fundraiser successful by helping to plan and host the nation's only statewide home and garden tour.



Photos courtesy of Nelson Byrd Woltz.



WE THANK OUR GENEROUS DONORS

07



THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA
GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THESE

Generous Donors

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* Perennials - Donors who support the Annual Fund for three or more consecutive years



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The Garden Club of Fairfax*
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The Hunting Creek Garden Club*
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Jackie and Litz Van Dyke
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Eileen A. Wilson
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Sarah Jane and Russell Wyatt*
Susan Wynne
Mary Catherine Zullo

ANNUAL BORDER \$100 TO \$249

Cotton Top Neighbors
Theater Works Community Players
Virginia Pilot Association

Harborfront Garden Club
The Huntington Garden Club*
Junior Virginia Beach Garden Club*
Leesburg Garden Club*
The Lynchburg Garden Club
The Martinsville Garden Club
The Nansemond River Garden Club*
The Garden Club of the Northern Neck*
The Petersburg Garden Club*
The Princess Anne Garden Club*
Rivanna Garden Club*
The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton*
The Village Garden Club
The Virginia Beach Garden Club*
The Williamsburg Garden Club*

The Garden Club of Alexandria
The Augusta Garden Club*
The Blue Ridge Garden Club*
The Charlottesville Garden Club*
Chatham Garden Club
Dolley Madison Garden Club
The Garden Club of the Eastern Shore*
Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club
Gabriella Garden Club
The Garden Study Club*
The Hampton Roads Garden Club*

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KNOT GARDEN UP TO \$99

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The Garden Club of the
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GREEN ARROW SOCIETY

Individuals who include the Garden Club of Virginia in their estate plans are distinguished as members of the Green Arrow Society. Named for one of our enduring symbols, the Green Arrow Society recognizes those who point the way to a strong future.

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GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

Historic Garden Week

2024 HONOR ROLL OF SPONSORS

The Garden Club of Virginia's restorations of historic public gardens and fellowships in landscape architecture are made possible by the proceeds from Historic Garden Week in Virginia. We thank these sponsors for their gifts of \$1,000 or more.

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A stunning tablescape set for royalty, thanks to the talented members of The Garden Club of Norfolk.



Fran Carden, HGW State Chairman, 2022-2024, with Ben and Debbie Lewis.





The Garden Club of Virginia has separate funds to support distinct pillars of our mission. Gifts to all funds except the Annual Fund are restricted to specific purposes. Many donors have made tribute gifts in honor of and in memory of others to these funds. The Garden Club of Virginia sends acknowledgment of these gifts to the honorees or to surviving family members.

THE ANNUAL FUND helps to provide the resources needed to fulfill the GCV's mission.

THE COMMON WEALTH AWARD provides competitive grant funding for community-based projects led by our member clubs.

THE CONSERVATION FUND supports the GCV's educational programming, fellowships and advocacy to promote conservation and environmental stewardship.

THE ENDOWMENT FUND ensures that the GCV will maintain its leadership role in restoration, conservation, education, and beautification well into the future.

THE RESTORATION FUND helps the GCV restore, preserve, and protect historic public landscapes and gardens for future generations.



History Blooms

The Garden Club of Virginia partnered with the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, Oct. 2023, for a new event, History Blooms, aimed at telling the living stories of Virginia through flowers, while showcasing the work of the GCV. The luncheon sold out for speakers and authors Thomas Lloyd (L) and Bryan Huffman, shown here with Debbie Lewis.

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The Garden Club of Virginia ended Fiscal Year 2024 in a strong financial position. We are poised to continue advancing our mission throughout the commonwealth.

The Garden Club of Virginia operates on a fiscal year that began July 1, 2023, and ended on June 30, 2024. The budgets for the fiscal year were presented by the Treasurer to the Board of Directors and then to the membership

for a vote of approval at the May 2023 GCV Annual Meeting.

The Garden Club of Virginia’s largest source of revenue is our annual Historic Garden Week. The 2024 tour enjoyed its most impressive financial success in its 91 years with a net income of \$824,531. These monies fund our restoration and ongoing support of historic public landscapes throughout the commonwealth as well as landscape architecture fellowships. We are excited for the future of our restorations under the GCV’s new landscape architect firm, Nelson Byrd Woltz.

The sources of operating funds for the GCV include membership dues, the annual fund, donations and sponsorships of events, such as the Conservation Forum. In addition, we receive income from publication advertising, workshops and special programs, and rental of our carriage house. Any shortfalls are funded by a draw of up to five percent from our endowment fund. For FY24, we took a 3.5 percent draw.

The expenses for the GCV include funding our restoration projects, fellowships and cash awards for community projects, educational programs for members and for the general public, our management/ staff salaries (six full-time and two part-time staff), property maintenance and operations of our headquarters, development, communications, and our yearly audit.

To communicate with our membership, we maintain our website, produce a monthly e-newsletter and publish the quarterly *Journal*, leverage the District-at-Large network, as well as



Photo courtesy of Hoggan

meet with the member club presidents three times a year. We also host and facilitate meetings for 17 standing committees and five special committees. We fund two awards each year, the Common Wealth Award and the Bessie Bocock Carter Conservation Award. The GCV funds two classes of fellowships each year: the Conservation Fellowship and the Landscape Restoration Fellowship.

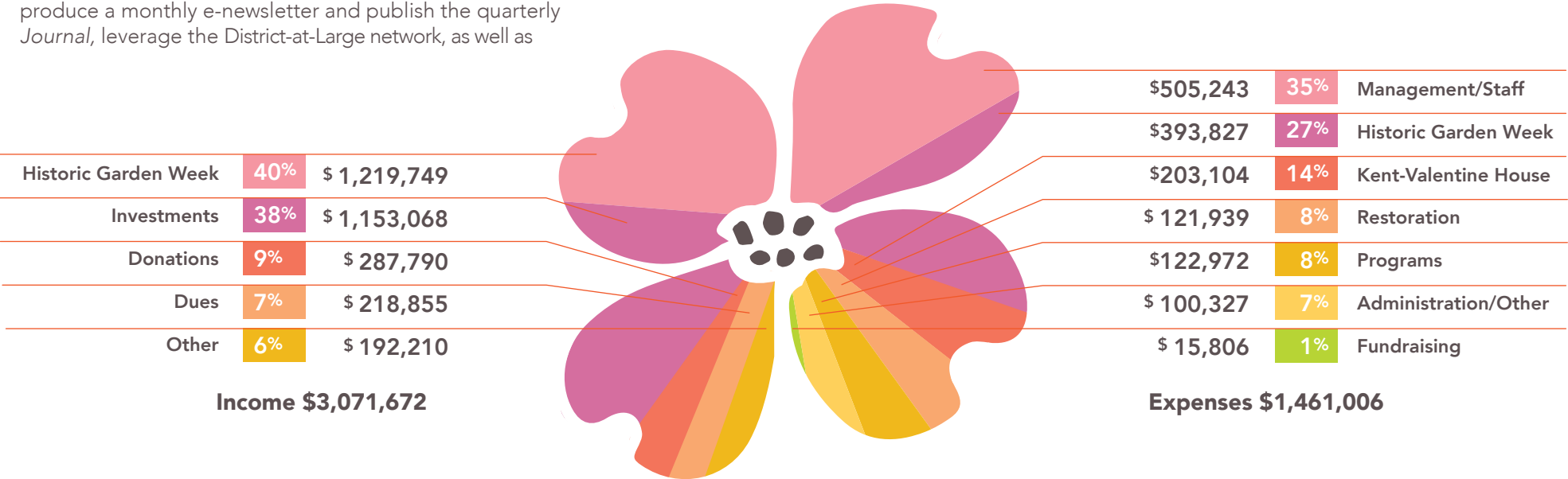
Our assets of approximately \$12.3 million include the Kent-Valentine House property, cash accounts and investment portfolios. At the end of June 2024, the GCV investment portfolios were valued at \$9.6 million, which is approximately 78 percent of GCV’s total assets. Our financial records for the 2022-23 fiscal year were audited, and we received a clean opinion. As a 501(c)(3) organization, our Federal Form 990 was filed this year and is available for public review.

It has been my honor and pleasure to serve as your treasurer for the past four years.

The GCV leadership remains prudent in overseeing its finances. Through these actions, we are in a stable financial position as we head into fiscal year 2024-25.

Tricia McDaniel

Tricia McDaniel, Treasurer, 2022-2024
GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA





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Thank you for helping the
Garden Club of Virginia this year

To learn how you can support the Garden Club of Virginia,
contact Andrea Butler, Executive Director, at 804-643-4137

THE MISSION OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

To conserve the gifts of nature, to restore and preserve historic landscapes of the commonwealth, to cultivate the knowledge and love of gardening, and to lead future generations to build on this heritage.



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