

Marlborough Community Garden Community Mosaic Stepping Stone Project

Project description: Marlborough Park Community gardeners will collaborate in a stained glass mosaic stepping stone project consisting of 68 mosaic tiles that will be installed in the Marlborough Park Community Garden during the summer of 2014. Marlborough Park is located in the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood, south of the Beltline and west of Seminole Highway in southwest Madison, within the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association's (DMNA) boundaries. Marlborough Garden is a community garden established under the auspices of the Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin (CACSCW) within Marlborough Park. The garden has 170 plots with about 100 families participating each year. Many gardeners are also neighborhood residents.

These mosaic stepping stones will be designed and constructed by Marlborough Park Community gardeners, including young gardeners from the Allied Learning Center (ALC), and English language learners who are clients of the Dane County Parent Council (DCPC). Other residents of the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood will be invited to participate as well. The mosaic stepping stones will be created during several workshops to be held in Marlborough Park throughout the summer of 2014. Participants will receive training and assistance in designing and assembling the stepping stones from Christina Kantor, a Madison resident who spearheaded another community mosaic-making project with Allied Drive area residents in 2012-13 with funding from the City of Madison Neighborhood Grants project and assistance from the Vinery store in Madison. Community mosaic artists Marcia Yapp and Elizabeth Doyle will serve as project consultants and evaluators. The stepping stones will be set in the ground by trained garden volunteers following the recommendations of a landscape architect.

The stepping stones will be set in several locations. Thirty-two numbered stones will mark each end of the sixteen paths through the garden. A second set of 26 tiles will spell out "Marlborough Community Garden." These will be placed at the east end of the tilled garden, parallel to the asphalt path, so that they will be visible to passersby. (The garden management committee is in the process of deciding about the placement of a flower garden at this location also.) The other 10 tiles will be decorative and are destined for the ALC and DCPC plots.

Project goals: The stepping stones will do more than beautify the gardens. They will;

- provide an identity for the garden for community members and gardeners, and attract new gardeners;
- orient gardeners to the layout of the garden so they can easily find their plots;
- ease the monitoring of garden plots by the garden management committee and CACSCW staff;
- provide art experience and skill development to community members of every age and ability level (with the hope that many will either participate in creating the mosaic planned for the Verona Road project, or make mosaics for their own residences);
- enhance family cohesiveness because parents and children work together to design and create the stones;
- build community pride and spirit among those working together to create beautiful, long-lasting enhancements to the park and gardens;
- enrich community cohesiveness as residents from all racial/ethnic/language/economic groups come together to create the mosaics;
- and, finally, build or boost pride of place among all who use the park.

Key personnel: The three principal people responsible for carrying out the project will be Mary Mullen, DMNA President and member of the Garden Management Committee; Christina Kantor, community artist and volunteer; and Micah Kloppenburg, CACSCW staff. Mary is a long time community volunteer who is spearheading this project. Christina is a volunteer and former intern on Allied Drive who will plan and conduct the workshops. Micah is the garden specialist in charge of coordinating Marlborough gardens for CACSCW. He works closely with our neighborhood organizational partners to develop mutual project goals, and will provide Spanish language interpretation and mortaring/grouting assistance during workshops. The members of Marlborough Community Garden Committee and the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association officers are collaborating to develop all aspects of this project, building on substantial community connections and decades of experience with similar broad-based community building projects. Al Nettleton, Treasurer of the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association, helped secure their role as fiscal agent and provider of project insurance; and Anne Katz of Arts Wisconsin has assured us that AW can also provide insurance (and fiscal management) if Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association's insurance will not suffice. We are in the process of receiving formal approval from the Madison Parks Department and the project is on the Parks Commission's April 9 meeting agenda. The Marlborough Community Garden Management Committee has

agreed to release gardener fees for up-front funding of the project, and which will provide the matching funds. Our partners and supporters will be involved in all relevant planning as we proceed with the project.

Project Audience: Our primary audience is the gardeners in the Marlborough Park Community Garden, many of whom do not speak English or are just learning English. Many are native Spanish speakers, and some speak Hmong or other Asian languages. Gardeners include young people from the Allied Learning Center and English Language Learners from the Dane County Parents Council. Both organizations are located in the neighborhood, and serve an at-risk population of low-income families from minority populations. People with limited English and those with widely varying ages and physical and intellectual abilities will all be able to participate in making mosaic tiles, which are simple to create, even by children as young as 4 (with adult assistance). Everyone who frequents Marlborough Park will benefit, especially those in the Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood including Allied Drive. In addition, wheelchair users frequent Marlborough Park because of its paved pathways. Our free-to-the-public component is two-fold: all gardeners and neighborhood residents will be invited to participate the stepping stone making workshops free of charge. In September, the community garden invites the entire neighborhood to a "Garden Days" picnic to share the beauty and harvest of the gardens with the broader community. This will provide an opportunity to unveil the new mosaic installations to the neighborhood and showcase those who helped create and place them.

Project Outreach: We will promote this project to residents through several communication venues, including in-person, e-mailing, mailing, phone contact, and through Internet web pages. At garden registration events on March 15 and 18 gardeners will be informed of the pending grant project. Regular garden meetings and workdays will allow DMNA & CACSCW to invite gardeners to the mosaic making workshops. A full color multi-language postcard invitation featuring photos of sample mosaics and workshop dates will be sent to the gardeners two weeks before first workshop. CACSCW staff or volunteers will then phone non-English speakers about a week before each workshop to help assure good participation from all area sub-groups. The garden committee will also post invitations to upcoming workshops along the entrances to the garden and on the garden bulletin board as well as in the Allied Neighborhood Kiosk at Revival Ridge. The neighborhood as a whole will be informed through the *Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood e-News* (e-mail list of 270), the DMNA website, and the DMNA Facebook page. ALC and DCPC will use internally established communication channels to invite their clients. DCPC has offered space and staff for weekday evening workshops, as well. The Allied area Neighborhood Resource Team will be enlisted to encourage Allied area residents to participate through its own channels. Many Allied residents have expressed to Christina an interest in making more mosaics for the neighborhood, and clients of JFF will receive invitations from Allied Wellness Center staff and board members and the Allied-Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association with whom she has ongoing contacts.

DMNA goals and objectives: The Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association works to enhance the Dunn's Marsh neighborhood through resident involvement in defining and developing a sense of place in this culturally and ecologically rich neighborhood. Recently we have lobbied WisDOT to improve what they term "community sensitive solutions"--aesthetic treatments and art--in connection with the Verona Road Project. We have promoted artist-led events such as community input and design sessions for art installations to be placed close to Verona Road and the Beltline. Private front yards and flower gardens in our neighborhood show our residents' value of creativity, and demonstrate our commitment to beautification of our local environment. However, there is very little public art in the neighborhood. Our mosaic project will bring public art to the center of the neighborhood by making it visible from the bike path and to any casual walker who chooses to stroll the garden paths during warmer weather. In addition, mosaic workshops participants will develop or improve their own creative skills and begin to understand that everyone has artistic capacity, making these folks more likely to participate the upcoming Verona Road mosaic project. Mosaics make pleasing, colorful, inexpensive, environmentally friendly, long-lasting public art installations. In addition they are very simple to make for even those with little skill or experience, and use sustainable or recycled materials.