GROWING TO INSPIRE

A Campaign to Enhance and Expand the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens
Phase 1

- 22,000 sq. ft. Visitor Center
- Expanded parking for 200 vehicles
- New outdoor spaces to enhance the everyday visitor experience and become a destination for family and community celebrations and events
- Landscaping that includes a new pond, manicured lawns, gardens, and - of course - trees
- Pathways, water features, and seating areas

...all in all, improvement of 38 acres of property.

The Visitor Center design concept provides panoramic views of the gardens to the east and south. A café will feature interior and exterior seating for a casual dining experience. The gift shop will offer remembrances of visits. Spaces abound for learning opportunities and meeting space for garden and nature clubs. There will be a 4,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose room overlooking a lovely waterside patio, a community room, and a catering kitchen for wedding receptions and other festive occasions. A wing of the building is reserved for administration and volunteer support. Outdoor spaces will enhance the visitor experience every day and offer unparalleled locations for family events and community celebrations.

Programming

Education – By definition, a public garden exists not only for visitors to take pleasure in abundant, interesting and beautiful plant life and surroundings, but to grow their knowledge of horticulture and learn to be stewards of our environment. Success of the Growing to Inspire Campaign will ensure that the Arboretum has the facilities to grow its educational program. When the two classrooms designed into the new Visitor Center are built and we have the current visitors center available to be the Environmental Education Center, Arboretum staff will be positioned to partner with Johnson County Community College, our K-12 school districts, and private schools to increase the scope and the depth of education programs they can present. We will be happy to share with you our plans for the robust education program envisioned as a result of the success of this campaign.

Art – Across the country, botanical gardens have truly become outdoor art museums, and the Overland Park Arboretum is no exception. With the opening of Phase 1 of the sculpture garden, the Kansas City metropolitan area will have a unique space for visitors to enjoy outdoor sculpture. This Arboretum sculpture garden will eventually cover 250 acres – by far the largest sculpture garden in the region – and provide a tranquil area for displaying monumental sculpture that can be enjoyed to its fullest when it’s setting is an expansive natural landscape. We will truly be able to showcase art of the land, not on the land.

Celebration – The Arboretum has already become a destination for community events, fundraisers, private parties, and weddings. The setting is unmatched in our community! But options are currently severely limited. There is no space for a formal reception or a served meal. Catering facilities are inadequate. The size of the current visitor center makes it difficult for staff to host a private event and serve the needs of other visitors. The new Visitor Center will take weather out of the equation with its large interior spaces and protected outdoor patios and terraces. And revenue generated by events will greatly contribute to the operations budget, and that’s an important consideration for a public facility.

Long ago, Overland Park had the foresight to acquire and set aside 300 acres of land as the City’s Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. In this, we are very fortunate. Now, that legacy has been passed on to us . . . a responsibility to nurture and grow it for our children and children’s children.

If you believe that the preservation of communal spaces, cultural amenities, and quality of life are important to keeping Overland Park an outstanding place to live, work and raise a family, then growing the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens deserves your affection and support.

Our History

In the late 1980’s, the City acquired 300 acres at its southern most reaches, and in 1990, the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens opened to the public.

In 1995 civic leaders founded The Arts & Recreation Foundation of Overland Park, a nonprofit organization, for the purpose of assisting the City with funding and expansion of recreational amenities – including development of the Arboretum & Botanical Gardens. Since then, the Foundation has raised more than $20 million to support not only the Arboretum, but also Deanna Rose Children’s Farmstead and public art programs and installations throughout the city.

In 2002, the City was gifted 320 acres of property immediately to the west of the Arboretum (Kemper Farm) which doubled the size of the green space to be conserved and will provide a permanent home for the City’s expanding sculpture collection.

Today, thirty years after it opened, the Arboretum receives more than 125,000 visitors annually who enjoy four nature trails covering over five miles through eight unique ecosystems, 45 acres of botanical and specialty gardens, 38 sculptures, and a multitude of annual educational programs, exhibits and events for all ages.

Phase I of the Future

With the Master Plans adopted in 2006 and 2013 in place, the Foundation is committed to developing strategies for their realization over the next decade. The first step toward that goal is building the long-anticipated visitor center, event spaces and the sculpture garden.
The Visitor Center will provide a place for lifelong learning, meditation and celebration - a bridge between nature, art and science - offering visitors unique experiences that should bring them back time and again.

The Campaign

In the spring of 2016, the ARFOP board of directors began a $10 million fundraising drive for phase 1 of the Growing to Inspire capital campaign. By early 2020, private donations surpassed $8.5 million, and the campaign is in its final stages with construction slated to begin as soon as all funding is in place. Growth of the Overland Park Arboretum & Botanical Gardens is a shared responsibility beginning with each and everyone of us who recognize the value of a world-class communal green space for our community. We ask you to consider a personal gift in support of this project.

How might I give to the campaign?

There are several opportunities available to you to help the Arboretum while gaining tax and income benefits for yourself, including: cash gifts pledged over three years; appreciated stocks, bonds and other forms of securities; real estate; bequests; life insurance; life income plans and trusts; family business gifts and commemorative or memorial gifts. We would be happy to discuss these options with you, or we urge you to consult with your own legal or financial counsel to determine which plan is best for you.

How much should I give?

Staff or volunteers may offer an amount for you to consider, but no one can tell you the amount you should give to this campaign. You are encouraged to plan a gift over multiple years to enable you to make a more substantial pledge.

Are there naming opportunities?

There are a number of areas at the Arboretum and within this project where a donation of a particular size can be permanently identified. For more details on special commemorative or memorial naming opportunities, contact us.

Will I be notified when a pledge payment is due?

Yes. Unless you request otherwise, ARFOP will send you a reminder at intervals specified by you.

When will I see the results of the campaign?

Design work is complete. The City of Overland Park has committed funds for the project in its Capital Improvements Plan budget. Construction of the Visitor Center and surrounding improvements will begin when ARFOP has secured commitments totaling $10,000,000. Later phases of development of the Arboretum are dependent on future fundraising.

For further information, whom do I contact?

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