



Finding Funding Sources For Healing Gardens

Improving Quality of Life

"A growing body of research shows that connection to the natural world aids healing by reducing stress." (Berry, Parker, Coile, Hamilton, O'Neill, Sadler, 2004)

The implementation of a healing garden hinges on a fundamental factor that makes the project possible: **Funding**. Obtaining funding is not as difficult as it may seem. Besides typical capital budgets, there are several funding sources such as donors, grants, fundraising campaigns and corporate sponsorships.

Where to Begin

The project begins with a vision and champions. The most successful projects result from collaboration between healthcare facility administration and staff, patients, caregivers and design professionals. Start by considering how a garden project can help to achieve the goals of the healthcare facility and result in better outcomes. Gardens provide additional venues for a variety of therapies, attractive areas for staff to reduce stress and comfortable settings for fundraising and community healthcare events. Working with a Landscape Architect, a conceptual plan can delineate garden size, features and costs. Once a concept is in hand, it is remarkable how funding sources begin to appear.

An initial starting point for the project can be allocating funds from the capital budget. Because there are no sales programs for healing gardens and healthcare staff are usually too busy to consider such amenities, projects like these are often overlooked when yearly budgets are being considered. Usually a champion within the healthcare facility can present the idea for the garden and its benefits to the administration so that the initial activities can be funded.

The start up costs for these projects make up a small percentage of the budget when compared to the cost of other major capital expenditures. There is considerable return on this small investment that provides alternate therapy modalities, benefits staff and

caregivers and improves public relations. Ultimately, returning clients will offset the initial investment. At a minimum, the capital budget can fund professional design fees to develop the concept into a preliminary or conceptual plan or sketches.

Once an idea is delineated in a drawing or sketch, the project can secure other forms of support. Donors are attracted to projects that can have a lasting, positive impact on the healthcare campus. The Jacqueline Fiske Healing Garden at Jupiter Medical Center and the Cancer Memorial Garden at Good Samaritan Hospital were funded by single donors.

Often donors get involved in the planning phase; this can be important to establish a sense of security in their investment or donation. The Fiskes were involved with the details of their sponsored garden and because of their donation and support, the garden actually included much more than the initial concept.

The planning process familiarizes potential financiers with the finished product and can establish a sense of security in their investment. The Fiskes also donated funds for an endowment to maintain the garden in perpetuity. One of the stipulations of their donation was that changes to the garden could not be made without approval of Jacqueline Fiske, her daughter, and when she comes of age, her granddaughter. This approach ensured that the garden would be a lasting legacy for the Fiske family.

Besides typical capital budgets, there are several funding sources to be tapped such as donors, grants, fundraising campaigns and corporate sponsorships.

Besides construction costs and maintenance funding, donors can consider funding programs within the garden including horticultural therapy and education programs to reap maximum benefits from their garden investment.

Grants

Once a preliminary concept is on paper, grant applications can be filed for construction and programming. There are many grants available that will fund all or portions of the garden project. The main focus of a patio at the Pavilion Nursing Home at Jupiter Medical Center was a severely eroded retention pond that overlooked the hospital parking lot. The Pavilion applied for a grant to "improve water quality" which funded planting, bird habitat creation, and an aerating fountain. It is important to think of projects as outside the healing garden envelope when looking for grant opportunities.

Funding Campaigns

Group Donor participation is another possibility for funding a garden project that allows employee or community groups to fund a project. The Johnny Appleseed program at the Jupiter Medical Center raised \$17,000 from employee donations and funded a major portion of a rehabilitative garden. The well thought out program resulted in 15% employee participation.

The Johnny Appleseed program began with baskets of apples distributed around the hospital campus to announce the program. A kickoff meeting described the healing garden project to potential employee donors. Contribution forms invited participation through payroll deductions or a one time gift. All donors received a thank you letter from the foundation for tax purposes and name recognition in the garden. The success of the campaign was celebrated with an apple pie and cinnamon ice cream party in the finished garden. Donors were given an apple pin in recognition of their support.

Corporate Sponsorships

Some large corporations such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart make grant contributions to the community if they meet certain criteria. For example, The Home Depot supports 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations with grants up to \$3000. Wal-Mart has a grass roots style of giving which enables them to identify and support organizations that are improving the quality of life in their local communities by distributing matching funds (up to \$1000) and direct grants.

Pulling It All Together

Dedication to the success of your healing garden goes far beyond the initial design. The designer can work as a catalyst in all phases of project

Campaign Materials



Flyer announcing Johnny Appleseed funding campaign

Employee contribution form resulted in \$17,000



Credit: Sue Ellen Mann, Jupiter Medical Center Foundation

fundraising and grant applications. Illustrative plans and sketches serve as essential communication tools. Presentations attract potential donors.

To ensure a return on your investment for years to come remember to consider long term maintenance costs and programming. Successful planning and implementation of a healthy environment can yield restorative effects that can make your healthcare institution a competitive player in today's market with results that are hard to ignore. With a small initial investment, vision and energy, these projects are easily funded.



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