

NEWS

from

LENDONWOOD GARDENS

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May 30, 2008

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LENDONWOOD SHOWS OFF IMPROVEMENTS FOR TOURISTS AND LOCAL CITIZENS

Summer visitors to Lendonwood Garden will see plenty of improvements this year, in addition to the colorful flowers and trees that have made the garden an asset to the Grand Lake area.

Cindy Reynolds, president of the Lendonwood Board of Directors, summed it up this way: “Lendonwood is putting its best foot forward for 2008, thanks to the help of many people and organizations in this community.”

Volunteers are working hundreds of hours, organizations are helping financially, and special events are bringing support and involvement by area residents. As a result, the garden is looking better than ever, Reynolds said. She pointed to a few examples that are helping Lendonwood shine this year.

The most visible, and perhaps most symbolic, change is a new gateway, built and installed with volunteer help and contributions. The gate was built by students at Northeast Technology Center in Afton and installed by local volunteers. Reynolds emphasized the importance of making a good first impression with the beautiful new gateway. A new self-guided tour map of the garden is located just inside the gate-house.

New electrical lighting in the garden extends the hours for uses of the garden for special events and weddings. The floor of the Japanese Pavilion has had a “facelift,” enhancing the overall attractiveness of the area.

Colorful brochures, funded by the Walton Family Foundation in Arkansas, continue to help tell Lendonwood's story to potential tourists throughout the state. Photos contributed by professional photographer Terri L. Shaffar of Grove highlight the beauty and serenity of the botanical garden.

Beyond appearances, however, Lendonwood is set to be a "happening" place in 2008. Special events are scheduled to draw in crowds of people, from young children to senior citizens.

On May 3, area artists of all ages displayed their talents as part of Art in the Garden, organized by Angie Duff of Grove. For the first time, the event placed an emphasis on young artists from schools throughout the Grand Lake area.

June 7 will see the community come together in support of Lendonwood at the "Summer Soiree," planned as a casually elegant gala to benefit the garden. Chairing the planning committee is Sharon Houck of Grove, who anticipates a lively evening of music, food and a silent auction of "Grand Gourmet Parties."

This year, Lendonwood is hosting a number of tour groups, ranging from the American Rhododendron Society to the Grove Newcomers Club to the Broken Arrow Garden Club to the Ponca City Senior Circle to the MENSA organization. Scheduled tours are led by a volunteer guide and often include a break for tea in the Japanese Pavilion.

Lendonwood also is a popular site for weddings and other private events scheduled throughout the year. A wedding gazebo, located in the American Backyard section of the garden, provides a scenic backdrop for nuptial ceremonies, Reynolds said. Springtime brings many families to the garden for prom and graduation photo opportunities.

"We are delighted when area residents share in the garden's beauty for those special moments in their lives," Reynolds said. "In many respects, those opportunities are made possible by scores of volunteers and donors who give of their time and resources to make Lendonwood beautiful."

In particular, she expressed appreciation for the cadre of dedicated gardening volunteers who do everything from spreading top soil to pulling weeds to installing new lighting to picking up limbs.

More than 500 hours of volunteer work already have gone into preparing the garden for summer visitors, according to Linda Moore, a Master Gardener and coordinator of volunteers. “Getting Lendonwood in shape for the tourist season is not easy, but we manage to have a lot of fun getting to know each other and learning about gardening at the same time.”

Besides engaging in normal spring clean-up this year, volunteers have tackled ice-storm recovery, rock removal and leveling pathways. They have installed more accessible ramps for the restrooms, rejuvenated the conservatory plants, and pruned rhododendrons, to mention just a few chores.

One of the highlights of Lendonwood Gardens is the Japanese Pavilion, which overlooks a koi pond. Moore said that the winter season takes a toll on the structure and the pond. As a result, volunteers have had to replace boards in the pavilion’s entry ramp, scrub the deck boards, wash seating cushions, and clean the pond filtration system.

“Quite simply, Lendonwood could not exist without the help of volunteers,” said Reynolds. “As a non-profit community-based organization, we must rely on voluntary workers to keep the garden open. Now, with summer here, we need them more than ever.” Weekly work sessions are scheduled on Wednesday and Thursday mornings, depending on the weather, to help maintain the garden’s beauty.

Thanks to a donation of funds, Lendonwood has the assistance of one part-time gardener, but the needs far exceed available funding for paid help. The garden property includes a rental house, whose tenant provides many hours of help for minimal compensation.

“We are so grateful for the help of our tenant, Maggie Patrick, who can be found working in the garden practically every day,” Reynolds said. “Maggie joins in all the organized volunteer efforts, as well as doing many daily gardening chores on her own initiative.”

Reynolds said she also appreciates the hands-on work by members of the garden’s board. “This definitely is a working board. Members get involved, whether it be cleaning debris, pulling weeds, raking pathways, leading tours or making signs.”

“We know Lendonwood is important to the community, helping attract tourists and providing local citizens a beautiful space to visit and hold weddings and special

events. The garden, along with Har-Ber Village and other Grand Lake highlights, helps enhance the quality of living for all of us,” Reynolds noted. “That’s one of the reasons volunteers are so generous in giving of their time and effort.”

Among the volunteers who have worked in the garden so far this year, according to a recent report, are: Maggie Patrick, Harding Collis, Roger and Janice Endo, Robyn and Norm Carnett, Dr. Leonard Miller, Louis and Karen Ord, Margie Murphy, Jane Montgomery, Mardee Dodge, Cindy and Jim Reynolds, Judy Bradley, Judy Beyer, Joan Vermaire, Carol Linn, Gary Lawrence, Ginny Baker, Linda Moore, Lee Oldham, Jim Bailey, Pauline Hale, Jim Corbridge and Nancy Boyette.

Lendonwood Gardens comprises six distinct areas: the Display Garden, Oriental Garden, English Terrace Garden, Japanese Garden, American Backyard, and the Angel of Hope Statue Garden. Highlights include 25 varieties of dogwood and one of the largest collections of *chamaecyparis* (false cypress) in the United States. Springtime brings stunning displays of azaleas and rhododendrons.

During summer months, Lendonwood features about 500 varieties of daylilies and a variety of other colorful perennials. Also in the garden are many varieties of Japanese maples, peonies and hostas.

Lendonwood was founded by retired Grove dentist Dr. Leonard Miller, but is now operated as a non-profit organization by a volunteer Board of Directors. The garden is open year-round from dawn to dusk. No admission charge is required, but a \$5 donation is suggested to help care for the garden.