



A Brief History About the Scheig Center & Gardens

In 1992 several local naturalists from the Fox valley formed the Friends of the Parks, Inc and began making plans for approximately 32-acres in Appleton's Memorial Park.

The original purpose was to promote harmony with nature by helping people recognize and appreciate plants native to Wisconsin and their role in the environment through education, preservation, propagation, and protection.

This committee consisted of community leaders with a wide variety of interests, talents and backgrounds.

The initial plan was to include an arboretum like the Madison Arboretum. This idea later became the Henry and Mary Scheig Learning Center named after the former president of AAL (Thrivent). The Center was designed by architects trained by Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin Architecture of Spring Green

Next to the Center volunteers interested in landscape, horticulture, botany were asked to develop and maintain the surrounding gardens. (Volunteers continue to be involved with garden maintenance and development.)

These gardens were created as an attractive setting to encourage visitors to explore the plants, flowers and trees.

The once open field became a collection of trees, trails, a pond and gardens. They were maintained and developed by city workers, members of non-profit organizations, professional landscapers and volunteers.

The gardens were created to provide an attractive setting where visitors could enjoy the outdoors and restore beauty in their lives through the senses.

At the time the various gardens included: native rose, an herb, all-season, fragrance, family, native wildflower, entry, and a prairie.

The Friends of the Parks wanted to focus on four groups: community leaders, donor prospects, volunteers, and the general community.

This committee wanted to "provide the community with an exceptional new resource and present a range of opportunities designed to meet the needs of body, mind, and spirit." They also wanted to have programs offered for all ages and a special place for family-oriented recreational activities.

Over the years more gardens have been constructed. Also, there have been various groups caring for the gardens, but the city of Appleton retains the ownership of the land and the Center. Volunteers continue to work alongside city employees to maintain the beauty of the gardens. This cooperation continues today with members from: Outagamie County Master Gardeners, Paper Valley Garden Club, Wild Ones, Friends of Scheig Center Gardens and other citizens of the Fox Valley interested in gardening.

The grounds now include the Scheig Center, the gardens, Memorial Park, and the plant community so as to provide recreation to refresh the mind and/or body.

More information can be found on the Appleton Park and Recreation web site, in the display case outside the Scheig Center or calling 920-832-5905.