

# Congratulations

## Award of Excellence Recipients

*National Garden Clubs, Inc. announces the 2023 winners of its highest honor, the Award of Excellence. Each year, this Award recognizes exceptional individuals, organizations or institutions that advance NGC's goals and purposes.*

Donna Donnelly, 2021-2023 AOE Chair



### Dan DuPre

Dan DuPre, nominated by the Garden Club of South Carolina, is the Executive Director of Camp Wildwood in Blacksburg, SC. Dan attended Camp Wildwood in 1989 and won a Garden Club of South Carolina scholarship. He was voted Boy Camper of the Week, eventually becoming a camp counselor and a Counselor of the Week. Dan encourages fun and learning through teaching conservation, habitat preservation, leadership, and environmental protection. He cultivates the whole camper, as he has done with over 6,000 students.



### Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation for YMCA, Bob Markey, Founder

Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation, nominated by the Garden Club of New Jersey, was founded by Bob Markey in Rahway, NJ. Bob is a talented Master Gardener and certified Square Foot Garden Instructor. His lesson plans at the YMCA Square Foot Gardening Summer Camp include hands-on planting, educational videos, and garden-related activity books. Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation supports the YMCA's core values of youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. He encourages youth to develop a deeper relationship with nature and the food they grow.



### Abbey Nilson

Abbey Nilson, nominated by the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania, is a Sustainability Instructor at Shaler High School in Pittsburgh, PA. She teaches sustainability to high school students in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. She inspires students to examine the impact of their own water and energy use, transportation, and food choices. Abbey encourages her students to work with community leaders on environmentally-themed projects. They worked with the Allegheny Land Trust to preserve Girty's Woods - 155 acres of natural area to help mitigate flooding, raising over \$30,000.

**Maine** (State Garden Club with 1,000 – 2,999 members) The Garden Club Federation of Maine created *Show and Grow Open Gardens* with garden open houses and presentations across Maine. The sessions included floral and garden design plus unique plants and how to grow them.

**Illinois** (State Garden Club with 3,000 – 7,999 members) The Garden Clubs of Illinois created *PLANT AMERICA – Starting at Home with Food*. Seventeen clubs donated 8,600 pounds of home-grown fruits, vegetables and herbs.

**Central Atlantic Region** The members of the Central Atlantic Region began their *Online Seven States Program*, which created solidarity. It did not matter if you belonged to a small or large garden club, the online programs were open to all and were free. The program broke down barriers to feel connected to others in the Region.