

# THE ARBOR

Awbury Arboretum...Groundbreaking in so many ways...

Newsletter  
of the  
Awbury  
Arboretum  
Fall 2008

## Educational Programs at Awbury



Awbury Arboretum created the Office of Public Programs and Outreach to offer education at the Arboretum to the community during school, on weekends, and in the summertime. More than 2,000 children played outdoors in our 6-week Summer Nature program, learning about watersheds, medicinal and poisonous plants, landscape art, animal shelters, gardening, and native and exotic trees – our biggest asset at the arboretum. The newly installed Children's Garden served as the location for the pilot of our 4-part farm lesson. Kidsville Learning Center sent 35 pre-K and kindergartners to the pizza garden, string-bean teepee, amazing maize maze, and the very popular salsa and candy gardens to have fun learning about the plants we grow in the ground and bring to the table to eat. Assistant Director of Kidsville Learning Center, Stephanie Williams, was thrilled to inform us:

*From all reports, the farm lessons have been a success with our children. I still am of the opinion that this sort of educational experience is invaluable and so necessary for children of all ages, but especially for those living in urban environments with few other opportunities to connect with the natural environment.*



Ready for fall with an expanded program in Environmental Education, and History & Culture, a growing team of part-time naturalist/educators supports the permanent staff in the office of Public Programs and Outreach to serve local schools, many of which have benefited from the short walk to Awbury for a field trip.

# A Message from the Executive Director

“Sustainability” is the theme that connects all that we do at Awbury; sustainability of the earth to the extent that we can have an influence and sustainability of people who participate in our programs and activities or simply walk their dogs through the Arboretum, walk streets where we have planted trees and in many other ways.

Sustainability of the earth includes the stormwater management project at Awbury in partnership with the City’s Office of Watersheds, Tookany-Tacony-Frankfort Watershed Partnership and the Department of Environmental Protection. To help protect the City’s drinking water, we remove polluted stormwater from Washington Lane and clean it through earth filtering. We also plant meadows, trees and shrubs to absorb runoff that also contributes to safe drinking water.

Awbury Landscape Services, our for profit subsidiary, with the Arboretum’s apprentices, is a major contributor to the greening of Northwest Philadelphia, planting hundreds of street trees, clearing open spaces of invasive plants and replanting with natives. We are partnering with community development corporations in Germantown, West Oak Lane and Mount Airy. Likewise ALS has planted hundreds of trees throughout Center City for members of the Center City Residents’ Association.

Our children’s education programs focus on nature & history using state environmental standards. Lessons include information on watersheds and wetlands, importance of and methods of recycling, and exploration of urban farming in Awbury’s Children’s Garden. Apprentices in Awbury’s landscape training program are connected to a natural environment in ways that often are not available to people living in urban neighborhoods.

Awbury has become a center for urban agriculture. We provide garden plots for over 60 local residents. This past growing season Awbury established an apprentice farm that enables apprentices to learn about all aspects of urban farming. We also planted a children’s garden where children learn how food grows and about different parts of edible plants. Many of these children have no idea that so much food comes out of the ground.

We also lease space to Weaver’s Way Coop for an organic farm, to Pennsylvania Horticulture Society and Penn State Extension for greenhouses. Weaver’s Way and Awbury will be able to use these structures to grow seedlings for planting in our farms.

So as we do our part to sustain our environment and our society, Awbury depends on contributions to sustain us. We are in difficult times and so many worthy nonprofits are competing for charitable dollars that are becoming scarcer. I hope we have earned your trust for the work that we do and that we can again count on your support.

Gerald Kaufman  
Executive Director

# Thank you to our supporters:

May 15, 2008 – October 15, 2008

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*These lists have been compiled by the staff of Awbury Arboretum who believe they accurately reflect the gifts received between May 15, 2008 and October 15, 2008. If we have omitted or misspelled a name, we apologize and hope you will let us know.*

# Update: Awbury's Apprentices

The landscape and horticulture apprentice program at Awbury has expanded its curriculum to include urban farming in an effort to connect students to the role that fresh, locally grown produce plays in the economy, the environment and in our diets. Kevin's usual lunch of two cheese hamburgers and double fries doesn't usually include fresh vegetables but this summer, at the Awbury apprentice farm, he was eating fresh tomatoes straight from the vine and tried string beans, beets and okra. Food security --having easy access to healthy food at an affordable price-- is essential to the well being of all.

The farm at Awbury was created to train apprentices in all areas of farming by having students work in marketing and distribution. Apprentices also attend nutrition workshops where they learn that eating healthy and being active helps combat the epidemic of obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

We have engaged the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Weaver's Way Farm in a project that would teach apprentices propagation and nursery skills using a greenhouse on the Arboretum's property.

A large variety of vegetable, herb and flower seeds were started indoors in late winter. In the early spring the ground was tilled and 30 beds were created. The planting began with rows of peas, lettuce, broccoli, root crops and cabbage – the cool weather crops. Companion planting continued with tomatoes, basil, hot and sweet peppers, squash, corn and beans. By mid-summer apprentices were harvesting fresh produce regularly with marketing and distribution taking place at the City Hall Farmers' Market.

The farmers' market at City Hall is held every Wednesday from May to November. Local farmers and bakers bring fresh goods to be sold right in the heart of Center City. The Penn State Extension Program staff and Awbury apprentices joined together to set up a stand at the City Hall Farmers' Market which not only included fresh fruits and vegetables from Awbury's farm but information about the apprentice program, nutrition, gardening and other Awbury programs and events. The big draw to the Penn State/ Awbury table was the recipe of the week along with recipe samples. The main ingredients of the recipes were purchased from the Awbury apprentice farm. Samples of crisp Asian slaw, moist zucchini bread and tangy sweet and sour carrot salad were some of the dishes prepared to inspire customers to buy fresh, buy local and eat healthy.

The apprentices now carry on the farming tradition at Awbury continuing from the European settlement of the area. Recorded history of farming at Awbury began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the Paramore family, who grew produce on the site providing nourishing meals for themselves and the Cope family. The Awbury archives hold several letters from the 19<sup>th</sup> century documenting "produce gardens for the unemployed". In the 1970's Penn State started the community garden where today, neighbors grow a rich harvest of food in over 60 plots.

While learning about plant production, marketing and distribution, apprentices will contribute to creating vibrant Philadelphia communities that support access to locally grown, healthy and affordable food.

## The Beauty of Storm Water Management



### *A Rain Garden doesn't have to be big to have a big impact.*

Improve your landscape, increase the value of your home, and help protect the environment all at the same time by building a Rain Garden on your property.

### *Benefits of creating a Rain Garden:*

Introducing native plants in natural depressions where storm water collects prevents the storm water from over-taxing drainage and sewage systems and ultimately flowing into our rivers and streams filled with toxins and pesticides.

Using the run off from your down spouts or driveway to irrigate an aesthetically pleasing garden slows the water down allowing it to filter naturally through root systems, and percolate back into the water table.

Gardens create habitats for small wildlife such as hummingbirds and butterflies.

A garden is the only improvement a homeowner makes that increases in value over time. Most work on your home depreciates with age where as maturity in a garden adds to its worth.

Arrange to have a Rain Garden installed on your property by calling Awbury Landscape Services at 215-849-2855 x 26 for an estimate.

# Upcoming Events

First Saturday of every month - **YOGA** 10am to 11am - this is the first Saturday morning program to reach out to the community. Included are morning strolls and special programs, Awbury's way of inviting everyone to walk and talk and make friends with our neighbors.

November 18, 2008 5:30pm - Awbury Arboretum Association Annual Meeting

December 13, 2008 - Annual Winter Green Sale and Celebration - Bundle up for a stroll along Station Road to appreciate the evergreen trees of winter and select your favorite greens to decorate your home. Enjoy hot cider or chocolate and a scrumptious cookie or two while listening to holiday music with your neighbors.

December 1 through December 11 - Winter Evergreen Wreath and/or Centerpiece Workshops - Create your own holiday wreath and/or centerpiece using various evergreens grown on the grounds and decorated with seed pods, dried flowers, candle and ribbon. Cost: \$25 per item. Hours: 9:30-Noon. Reservations are required. If you are interested contact Linda Brown at 215-849-2855 ext. 15 or linda@awbury.org

## Awbury Arboretum wants your email address.

We will be phasing in an email only communication with our members and friends. Realizing that some of you still don't have email we will continue to mail to you, but we want to stop chopping down so many trees to use for paper. Trees are our business after all.

# Bush signs charity tax provisions

A package of tax breaks for charitable activities was signed into law by President Bush as part of the economic rescue package passed by Congress.

The legislation allows up to \$100,000 donated to charities without a tax penalty when given from retirees' individual retirement accounts. That provision had been among the items that had stalled in previous attempts because of disagreements between the House and Senate over how much of the tax difference from the change should be offset by other spending cuts or tax increases.

Additional provisions will renew and extend other breaks related to charitable giving, including special deductions that businesses may take for gifts of food and donations of books and computers to schools. The legislation also creates tax incentives for charitable giving to help victims of summer storms, tornadoes, and floods in the Midwest.

The legislation also allows all business taxpayers, including farmers, franchisees, ranchers and other small business owners, to continue taking an enhanced tax deduction that is equal to the cost of the food they donate plus ½ of the fair market value. This provision means that small businesses, farmers, and ranchers will have a much needed tax incentive to encourage them to donate food to food rescue organizations and charities.

Always consult your financial advisor for the best way to proceed.

The mission of Awbury Arboretum is to preserve and interpret Awbury's historic house and landscape, thereby connecting an urban community with nature and history.



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## Support Awbury by using ALS!

Awbury Landscape Services, Inc is dedicated to providing a broad range of professional landscape services, creating work opportunities and improving Philadelphia's urban environment.

### Services provided include:

Tree planting, pruning & removal, spring clean-up, installations and mulching.  
Contact Steve Pascavitch or Sally Anderson, ALS managers, for all your landscape needs at: 215-849-2855.