

## Deepening the Roots, Planting the Seeds, and Growing Together

### **I. Proposal Summary (Executive Summary) for use on ballot:**

We want to create a welcoming, comfortable, versatile outdoor space where young and old will enjoy get-togethers, quiet visits, jubilant celebrations or weekend picnics. The centerpiece will be a Biblical Garden, complete with seating, paths for walking, an exercise station, butterfly gardens and stepping stones. Intergenerational programs to personalize the area, foster relationships, and create special life moments would bring community together while allowing individuals to connect with nature, invigorating body and spirit.

### **II. Project Description (Program Narrative)**

There is significant evidence from evolutionary anthropology and developmental psychology that old and young are built for each other. The old, as they move into the later phases of life, are driven by a deep desire to be needed by the next generation and to nurture it; the young have a need to be nurtured. It's a complementary relationship that goes back to the beginning of human history.

Studies have concluded that elders feel a growing need for meaningful relationships as they realize that fewer days are ahead of them than behind. They have a deeply rooted instinct to connect in ways that flow down the generational chain. And they possess the virtues of age—patience, persistence and emotional regulation, among others—which are especially helpful in dealing with young people.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century most Americans lived in multigenerational households, but over the past century, American society has transformed from being the most age-integrated community to the most age-segregated. Today, young and old may not encounter each other on a regular basis.

Our goal is to strengthen the bonds between generations through pairing youth and elders for joint activities as well as the blossoming of new relationships with surrogate grandparents and surrogate children and grandchildren.

By receiving the Life and Legacy Grant, we can tap into the vast and largely underused talent of the older population to support the next generation, not only within families but across the broader community. Spending quality time through art, music, education, cooking, holiday celebrations, and an outdoor environment conducive to festive gatherings will provide opportunities to reimagine modern daily life so that connections across generations happen more naturally and frequently.

Our plan is to create a welcoming, comfortable outdoor area where young and old will enjoy get-togethers, quiet visits, jubilant celebrations or weekend picnics. The centerpiece will be a Biblical Garden, complete with seating, paths for walking, an exercise station, butterfly gardens and stepping stones. The project is long term with ample space to grow and expand to accommodate people with strollers, bicycles, wheelchairs, and walkers. We can even dream about covered areas for community performances and concerts.

To enhance and personalize the community outdoor space, we would have quarterly intergenerational community projects to make the stepping stones, place paver borders and help plant herbs and flowers.

The impact of this project is significant as people of all ages experience each other in a positive way enhancing the social fabric of our community.