

Gardens: Another Reason to Love Philadelphia

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

"When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden."

— Minnie Aumonier

Over a period of five years, Greater Philadelphia Gardens has been working hard to brand Philadelphia as *America's Garden Capital*. Thirty gardens are members of Greater Philadelphia Gardens, including two that were named among the top gardens in the nation. *USA Today Readers' Choice* 2016 survey ranked Longwood Gardens the best botanical garden in the U.S., and *FlipKey* by *TripAdvisor* ranked Chanticleer one of the top botanical gardens in the U.S. worth traveling for.

The 11-county Philadelphia area claims to have more gardens within 30 miles of the city than anywhere else in North America, according to Susan Crane, a member of the Marketing Committee for Greater Philadelphia Gardens and Director of Marketing for the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania.

Eight of the member gardens are located within the city of Philadelphia: Awbury Arboretum, Bartram's Gardens, Centennial Arboretum Horticultural Center, Morris

Arboretum, Philadelphia Zoo, Shofuso Japanese House and Garden, The Woodlands, and Wyck House. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is also a member. For information on Greater Philadelphia Gardens, go to: americasgardencapital.org/.

We know that walking is good for physical health, but its effect on mental health may not be as widely known. A 2014 research study conducted by the University of Michigan Health System found that group nature walks are linked with enhanced levels of mental health and well-being. Researchers partnered with academic organizations in the U.K. and studied nearly 2,000 people from the Walking for Health program in England.

Walking also contributes to the health of the economy. According to an October 2016 economic-impact study by Econsult Solutions, commissioned by Greater Philadelphia



Enhancing Philadelphia's claim as America's Garden Capital is historic Bartram's Garden, which offers bird-walk tours, one of many programs held among 45 acres of woodlands, meadows, farmland and Early American buildings. In April, the Schuylkill River Trail marked the opening of Bartram's Mile, another link in the chain that will join the Schuylkill Banks to Bartram's Garden. Plans call for eventually extending the Schuylkill River Trail to Fort Mifflin, down by the airport.

Gardens, Philadelphia's public gardens, arboreta, and historical landscapes attract an estimated 2.5 million visitors annually. In 2016, one-third of garden visitors came to this area from out-of-town and, on average, stayed two to three days. The total economic impact of the gardens is estimated at \$256 million per year and 1,500 jobs. The full report is available at: <http://americasgardencapital.org/economic-impact>.

CCCulture

Textile Artist Leslie Sudock Supports Art Studio for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Textile artist and SAORI® weaver Leslie Sudock, of Philadelphia's Ready to Hand Studio, organized an exhibition in February with the Naudain Street Art Collaborative to raise funds for the Center for Creative Works, an art studio for adults with developmental disabilities in Wynnewood, PA. Textile art, drawings, paintings and sculptures by disabled artists were exhibited and sold at the Naudain Street exhibition. Proceeds from sales helped to purchase a SAORI® loom with adaptive aids for people with physical disabilities at the Center's Wynnewood location. www.centerforcreativeworks.org/

SAORI® weaving is free-style hand-weaving, originated in 1968 by Japanese artist Misao Jo. The Ready to Hand studio and gallery, on 22nd Street, teaches classes for adults and children. www.readytohand.org

Textile art is available for sale at the Ready to Hand studio, and all sales year-round benefit the Center for Creative Works' special-needs artists. Ready to Hand continually raises funds to purchase equipment to enable more special-needs artists to participate at the Wynnewood location, and will be establishing a SAORI® weaving program at that facility. The Center needs community volunteers to assist weavers who come to the studio



Artist Leslie Sudock with some of her work.

every week. Those wishing to volunteer or donate funds, please contact Leslie Sudock: saoriphiladelphia@gmail.com

Sudock's studio will be open on Sunday, October 15, during the Philadelphia Open Studio Tour. She exhibits with the Naudain Street Art Collaborative.