

# Tending the Garden

For 6 years, the Village Church Environmental Action Committee (EAC) has overseen and monitored the Pollinator Garden/Monarch Waystation west of the Food Pantry at 99th and Mission Road.

During the winter of 2016, Dr. Herbert Young spearheaded an EAC project to start a Monarch Waystation because monarch butterflies were in decline. He learned that an old unattended butterfly garden existed west of the Food Pantry Building. He recruited Jacob Rubesch of Boy Scout Troop 91, who developed plans to plant a Monarch Waystation as his Eagle Scout project. Under Jacob's leadership on a sunny June day, 25 plus volunteers (scouts, parents, friends) converged on the garden to re-mulch a walking path, clear debris, and plant 64 milkweed seedlings and 16 nectar plants. The garden was officially registered as Waystation #14671.



Over the years, EAC members and volunteers have been involved in weeding, planting, transplanting, caging, staking, watering, composting, and mulching—as individuals and as small work groups. During Youth Week in June, Village youth have helped by weeding and mulching the garden path.

During the last 3 years, EAC has been blessed by Gardening Angel Marie Hunter. Because of her gardening knowledge, outstanding work, and ongoing dedication to keeping the garden alive, she has become the volunteer coordinator. Single-handedly she has been tilling, tending, and designing the garden, which has included removing crown vetch, placing stepping stones, adding a birdbath, and expanding the garden southward to surround 2 benches donated by eagle scout Will Swan in October 2019.

Marie talked to the Child & Family Development Center teachers about putting in an area for annuals (zinnias) at the north end of the garden where the kids can plant seeds and watch them sprout, grow, and bloom. Bees, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, hummingbirds, a hummingbird moth, and a resident toad have been seen in the garden.

Last summer, with timely and above average rainfall, the garden looked magnificent! It was flourishing and blooming. The cup plants at the south end were "as high as an elephant's eye." See photos.

When launched in 2016, Dr. Young envisioned the pollinator garden /monarch waystation to be a long-term evolving project that would serve nature as well as honor Village Church's commitment to God and to the Earth Care Pledge passed by its Session in 2011.

If you are interested in helping with this garden, contact Jerry Rees or Rev. Dr. Rodger Nishioka.

