July 13, 2023



Jason, Elia, and Charlie working in the Sundial Bed

One important aspect of All Hallows Guild’s mission of responsibility for the gardens and grounds is our annual sponsorship of summer interns. These interns are pursuing college and university studies in horticulture, landscape architecture, or environmental management in some form. What we provide is their summer salary, hands-on work in practical horticulture in the gardens and Olmsted Woods, and special visits to other local public and private gardens. Our interns acquire skills in gardening, plant identification, and understanding how design factors into maintenance. They are privileged to work side by side with our experienced and dedicated horticulturists – and they lend youthful energy, curiosity, and certainly welcome muscle to the program.

Plant Identification an Educational Key

Yearly, our summer horticultural interns universally note that Plant ID is one of the overarching educational benefits to their summer here. They begin to understand the how and why of garden design – plant selection and maintenance, shape of plants, layout of a garden from tall background down to ground cover plants of equal importance. This knowledge is critical to so many possible fields of study and career in the horticulture/landscape/environmental areas.

Summer Work Project

Each summer part of the learning and teaching equilibrium is to design a garden area; to plan, source and price plants, and to calculate and price the labor. This summer the project is to redesign the Sundial Bed. This bed changes each year with its seasonal displays of bulbs and colorful annuals, so it can be a blank palette for the students. They must take into account the colors of the surrounding beds, the blooms of the pomegranate tree in the bed, and the scale of the namesake sundial. The sundial is an 18th-century English bronze sundial sitting atop a 13th century Gothic column of Caen Limestone discovered in monastery ruins near Rheims Cathedral in France.



Sundial Bed in full Summer Glory

Meet our 2023 Interns

Charlie Thompson is a native of the District of Columbia and is entering his second year at Montgomery College, studying Environmental Horticulture. His professor at Montgomery referred him to the job notice posted with the American Public Gardens Association. When asked what is his favorite part of the job so far, Charlie enthusiastically replied, “The people!” [We’re pretty fond of our staff too.]

Charlie noted the discussions among the students involved what feeling they wanted to convey with the Sundial Bed and how the history of the gardens and the cathedral are central to the overall plan. However, they are encouraged to feel free to take other steps not rooted in that history.

Elia Choi lives in Boyds, Maryland, and is a rising Junior in University of Maryland's Landscape Architecture program. She was encouraged to apply to our internship by former intern Maia Kessler who was with us for two summers. Elia is amazed by the scope of the entire Cathedral Close and its 57 acres, including the much less-known spaces at the different schools. She finds her work to be invaluable in planning her career in landscape architecture. Understanding the maintenance requirements for a garden in a micro sense helps her in looking at the big picture as a landscape architect must do. Elia continues to admire how well our staff work and care for our gardens, large and small.

Jason Parker hails from Olney, Maryland, and will enter his senior year in the Ecological Restoration major at Virginia Tech. Our job opportunity was posted on his university website. Jason finds the beauty of the Bishop's Garden in the quiet of early morning compensates for the 6:00 A.M. start to the workday. He reports that the three have their design for the Sundial Bed sketched out and are working on plant selections and winnowing down the many possibilities. Jason values both the daily plant identification and the interaction with our professionals and with his fellow students – learning the give and take of the process of maintenance and design.



Charlie, Elia, and Jason in front of the Upper Perennial Border

Our Gift to Future Gardens

All Hallows Guild is proud not only to continue to beautify and conserve our landscape, but to give a boost to the horticulturists, landscape architects, and environmentalists of tomorrow. We know they will make us proud.