

Rest ■ Stop ■ Ranch
Respite Retreat Center
& Accessible Gardens



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2025 Volunteer Handbook



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Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision

We are a trusted and inclusive community destination, for respite and recreation, education and healing, throughout and beyond the long-term-care journey.

Our Mission

We provide respite, recreation, and spiritual-psycho-social-emotional support to long-term-care givers and receivers.

Our Values

Creative, Accessible, & Sustainable



1 - There was none... Our Story

While journeying with Margaret, Mary's mom living with Frontotemporal Degeneration (d. 12/24/2008, age 67)

We experienced these gaps in 2008:

A. No Access to Talk to a Chaplain

free-of-charge, in the community
(not hospice or hospital).

B. No Access to a Support Group

for young-onset dementia care-partners.

C. No Access to a Memory Café

free-of-charge, in the community.

D. No Access to Smell the Roses

for Wheelchair-users & Care-partners.



2 - Now there's some... Our Programs

All Programs are Free-of-Charge, RSVP Required.

A. Individual Support for ANY Care-Partner

Spiritual-Care by appointment (since 2016).

B. Group Support for Younger Care-Partners

Young-onset dementia care-partners meetup (since 2017).

C. A Memory Café, Year-Round

Memory Café in the Garden® April - October (Since 2015).

Memory Café at Topsfield Library, November - March (Since 2017).

D. Wheelchair-Accessible Gardens

2011 - 0.1 mile Front loop with crushed stone built.

2013 - "Sunday Stroll," monthly, 10am - 2pm.

2017 - "Garden Rx" weekly, Tues/Thurs, 1-4pm.

2020 - 0.1 mile Front loop with brick completed.

2022 - 0.3 mile Cottage Garden and Secret Garden with brick completed.



2 - Our Programs... Continued

E. Garden Volunteers "Garden Crew"

Maintain the garden weekly,
Thurs, 9am - 12pm (Since 2019).

F. Student Interns

High-school, college, and graduate students (Since 2019).

G. Meet & Eat

Monthly, 2nd Saturday, 12pm - 1pm,
April - October (Since 2021).

Bring a brown-bag lunch to the Pear-Tree Picnic Table, Join us!



The Garden Crew, Fall 2022



Sam & Maya Evans, MASCO High-School Juniors, completed an 80-hour summer internship in 2020.

3 - Our Board & Year-Round Team

Mary E. MacDonald

Co-Founder, President,
Executive Director



Karl R. Ackerman

Co-Founder, Treasurer,
Gardens & Trails



Collette Hanlon

Secretary, Board Member,
Female Care-Partner Seat



John Coulon

Board Member,
Male Care-Partner Seat



Bukia Chavire

Board Member,
Development Committee



Year-Round Staff & Support

Sharlene Hemp

Office Coordinator
(Staff)



Beverly Flanagan

Outreach Coordinator
(Staff)



Laura Brady

Graphic Design
(Contractor)



Seasonal Staff & Support

Rosemary Shea

Garden RX Coordinator
(April - November) (Staff)



4 - Major Donors & Funding

A. Individual Contributions

Almost 100% of the operational budget is covered by financial gifts received by cash, check and online via Venmo and Facebook.

B. State of MA: DDS

Department of Developmental Services

We are a contractor to offer a Memory Cafe including individuals w/Brain Injury and/or Down Syndrome.

\$24,000 (2016-2019)

C. State of MA: MCC

Massachusetts Cultural Council

Grants for an Accessible Lilac Festival:

\$500 (2021)

\$1,500 (2022)

D. Cummings Foundation

\$2,000 (2023)

E. In-Kind Contributions

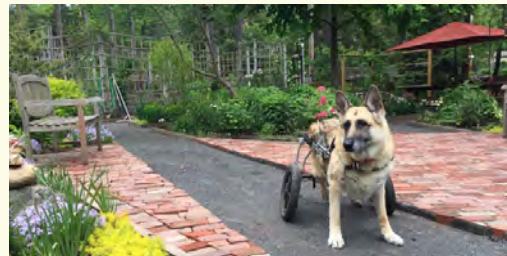
1. Family, Karen & Dave Moniz, Topsfield, MA contributed a truck-load of used red pavers (2019)
2. Georgetown Building Supply contributed 4 pallets, new gray pavers (2019)
3. Ryan Cain & Veronica Ranchul contributed 1/4 truck load of crushed stone (2023)



January 19: Karl Ackerman and Karen Moniz unload red brick pavers.



May 11: Red brick pavers are stacked (over several days) near the work area, by Garden Crew volunteers. Karl, Karen, and Mary are photographed.



May 28: Red Bricks fill the Broken Heart Patio, and Kiki the dog, with wheels for back legs, tests the unfinished trail.



July 13: Karl finished laying the bricks donated by Georgetown Building Supply, the 400' Lightning Bolt Trail. A Danvers NE ARC Group Home is first to test the trail with a wheelchair-user.

5 - Volunteers ... an Overview

Help Us With:

- Programs/Hospitality
- Gardens/Horticulture
- Outreach/Marketing
- Administration/Office

Join a Team:

- More than 1x per week
- 1x per week
- 1-2x per month
- One-time, Contribution of Individual or Group Time

An Invitation

Become part of a dynamic and highly participative me-we communittee consisting of Mary, Karl, team members, program participants, volunteers, donors, mentors, and stakeholders.



Experience meaningful and gratifying activities:

1. Support families living with long-term illness and disability.
2. Meet guests with disabilities and care-partners with kindness and love.
3. Develop wheelchair-accessible gardens for the present and future.
4. Meet like-minded friends and experience therapeutic benefits.



Volunteers at Rest-Stop-Ranch Are:

- At least 14 years old (may be younger if accompanied by an adult supervisor).
- Reliable, responsible, respectful, friendly and flexible.
- Reporting to work on time and in uniform/dress code.
- Contributing with a positive, can-do attitude with all guests and members of the team.
- Enthusiastic about Rest-Stop-Ranch Programs.
- Committed to life-long learning & service.
- Able to talk informally to children and adults, in groups and one-on-one.
- Able to communicate Rest-Stop-Ranch rules effectively in a non-threatening manner.
- Able to tolerate local weather.



Karen Moniz
Programs "Ambassador"

Karen is a treasured volunteer. In 2021, she was responsible for referring over 50% of garden guests to our garden hospitality programs. Thanks for your help spreading the word on Facebook and throughout your friendship circles!

Minimum Time

- A one-time contribution of project time, or a regular commitment of your choosing is appreciated.

Training

- Volunteers are oriented, then paired with a member of our team to perform tasks. Additional on-the-job training will be provided as needed by the team.

Uniform/Dress Code

In the Office/In the Community Business Casual

- Long pants (work pants, dress khakis or dress pants; no jeans, no skirts)
- Long sleeve shirt (pullover professional knit top, button up, or button down; no sweatshirts or t-shirts, unless with Rest-Stop-Ranch logo)
- Closed-toe walking shoes and socks are required; no heels, no sandals.
- Please refrain from wearing perfume.



Uniform/Dress Code

In the Garden

Garden/Landscape Professional

- Long pants (work pants, casual khakis and blue jeans are acceptable).
- Long sleeve shirt (pullover professional knit top, button up, or button down; no sweatshirts or t-shirts, unless with Rest-Stop-Ranch logo)
- Closed-toe walking shoes and socks are required; no heels, no sandals.
- Please refrain from wearing perfume.
- All volunteers supporting guests will be issued a volunteer ID name tag, which must be worn during events.
- A hat, sunscreen, and water bottle are encouraged (also, work gloves if working in the garden).

No Smoking Policy

- Smoking is not allowed in the gardens or buildings.

No Drugs Policy

- Anyone behaving impaired will be asked to leave.

Dog Policy

- Trained service dogs are welcome. No pets please.

In Case of an Emergency

- If a volunteer or guest has an emergency we will call 911.
- We will also call the emergency contact the volunteer has listed on their volunteer application. This contact may be updated anytime.

Support

- Rest-Stop-Ranch team members are available to provide assistance, supervision, and mentoring as needed.

COVID Guidelines

- Rest-Stop-Ranch follows local and state guidelines. Volunteers and Guests practice their own safety measures, and are respected for wearing masks, or needing more personal distance.

How to Apply

Fill out a Rest-Stop-Ranch volunteer application.

- Download an application at: <https://rest-stop-ranch.org/team/> E-mail programs@rest-stop-ranch.org ; or call us for help.

Mentors & Youth

Opportunities are here for mentors or parents with teens or children. Let's teach youth the benefits of the outdoors, away from handheld devices!



Marlene and Cory Bettencourt, Sunday Stroll Volunteers, since 5/2013

6 - Volunteer Roles Described in Detail

Programs/Hospitality

Help us host people with special needs at events.

Program Name	Frequency	Required Time Commitment Per Event	Required Seasonal Commitment
Garden Rx	Tuesdays or Thursdays (Apr-Nov.) twice-a-week events	12:30pm - 4:30pm,	most of 25 week
Sunday Stroll	2nd Sunday (Apr. - Nov.) once-a-month event	9:30am - 2:30pm,	at least 6 of 8 events
Memory Cafe in the Garden (3-seasons)	2nd Saturday (Apr.- Oct.) once-a-month event	9:30am - 12:30pm,	at least 5 of 7 events
Memory Cafe at Topsfield Library (winter)	2nd Saturday (Nov. - Mar.) once-a-month event	9:30am - 12:30pm,	at least 4 of 5 events

In the Garden



Indoors - The Library



Tips for Hospitality/Program Volunteers

Dress Appropriately for Guest Support Outdoors

Sunscreen, sunglasses, sun and/or rain hat, washable clothing (long pants, long-sleeve shirt, socks), and supportive shoes will help you as you greet, companion or interact with guests for a significant amount of time.

Pack a water bottle and snack

While volunteering at an event, you will become thirsty and may appreciate a handful of almonds, a few apple slices, or granola bar.

Greeting & Companionship Guests with Disabilities

People with disabilities like to be spoken to directly - not about. Use direct eye contact. Smile. Use the guest's name. If companionship a wheelchair-user, you may sit on a chair, kneel or crouch down to facilitate face-to-face communication.

Guests with Disabilities Needing Assistance

Volunteers are not responsible for the direct care and/or assistance of guests. *Please do not push a wheelchair or physically assist guests needing assistance. **Guests who require assistance must bring a care-partner, and use their own cane, walker, wheelchair.***



Guests & Care-Partners

Guests requiring assistance must bring a care-partner. Rest-Stop-Ranch staff and volunteers are not responsible for the personal care of guests. This includes assistance with:

- Dressing
- Eating
- Ambulating
- Toileting - Hygiene

Administration/Office Support

Help us in our office to coordinate and organize everything needed to support our programs.

Administrative Task	Frequency	Required Time
CRM Database Entry	flexible hours	flexible hours
Files (Paper & Digital)		
Filing, Copying, Printing	flexible hours	flexible hours
Office Organizing	flexible hours	flexible hours
Mailings	flexible hours	flexible hours
Special Projects	flexible hours	flexible hours



Outreach/Marketing

Help us spread the word about our programs.

Outreach Type	Frequency	Required Time
Social Media Posts	flexible hours	flexible hours
Distribute/Post Literature	flexible hours	flexible hours
Spring and/or Fall	twice-a-year	Spring Outreach happens over 2 weeks, after March 1st; Fall Outreach happens over 2 weeks, prior to November Veteran's Day.



2023 Fall Rest-Stop-Ranch was featured on WCVB 5 For Good.

Gardens/Horticulture

Help us maintain year round garden trails for our seasonal events, or help design & build for the future.

Garden Task	Frequency	Required Time Commitment	Required Seasonal Commitment
Clean-up (Spring - Fall)	Weekly; every session	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Year Round
Maintain Trails	Weekly; every session	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Year Round
Maintain Gardens	Weekly; every session	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Year Round
Manage Forest	As Needed	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Year Round
Maintain Lawns	Once a week	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Mar 21 - Nov 21
Prepare for Garden Programs/Events	Once a week	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Mar 21 - Nov 21
Build New Garden or Trail	As Needed	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Mar 21 - Nov 21
Harvest	Weekly; every session	Thursdays, 9am - 12pm	Sep 21 - Nov 21

Our 4 Seasons...



Spring Cleanup

2023: Starting in January, Bonfire Events mark milestones towards Spring. The Garden Crew cleans trails and garden beds from Winter storms. Leaves are gently raked from garden beds, to reveal emerging Spring bulbs.



Summer Projects

2023: Karl shows the relaxing Pond View Overlook Patio, under development, July 21. The Garden Crew assists managing project materials; There is always a large project underway!



Fall Cleanup

2023: John demonstrates the Accessible Flower Display at the Topsfield Fair Flower Building, September 30. The Garden Crew cleans up perennial plants and prepares the garden for winter.



Winter Projects

2023: Mary demonstrates the Accessible Holiday Walk & Wheel Light Display. The Garden Crew sets-up thousands of lights in October and cleans-up in January.

Tips for Horticulture Volunteers

Dress Appropriately for the Wilderness

A hat, work gloves, long pants and long-sleeve shirt will help protect your skin from sun and undesired bites or rashes due to unintentional contact with irritating plants such as poison ivy.

Pack a water bottle and snack

While working in the garden for any length of time, you will become thirsty and may appreciate a handful of almonds, apple slices, or granola bar.

Before you dig in! Safety check your work area!

Our gardens are organic. We support bees and birds! Please notice who is living in your garden work area before disturbing the habitat. Do not disturb nests.

Avoid bees

Do not wear perfume. Remain calm if a bee is close. Slowly move away from the bee.

Avoid ticks

Tuck long pants into socks. Light colored clothing helps to see ticks and remove them. During and after your work session, check for ticks and remove them.

Avoid poison ivy

Notice the weeds growing in your work area. Know how to identify poison ivy and stay away.

Garden Crew 2024

