



Mamie L Bass Service Award

Entry Form

District: **NINE**

Name of Altrusa Club **Altrusa International of Temple**
Address **P.O. Box 1251**
City **Temple** State **TX**
Country **USA** Zip/Postal Code **76503**
Contact Person **Tara Stafford**
Telephone **254-733-8473** Email: **Tara.Stafford@bswhealth.org**
Date (day. Month, year): **06-24-23**
Club Membership (as of entry date): **102**

Project Title: Healing the Healing Garden

Healing the Healing Garden

Name of Project

Nomination for Mamie L Bass Service Award

06-24-23

Date

Altrusa International of **Temple**

P.O. Box 1251

Temple, Texas 76503

USA

District Nine

Club Year

2022 - 2023

Executive Summary / Synopsis:

A 60-word count synopsis of your project providing brief outline of key aspects of the project. This synopsis will not be counted towards the project description count and will not affect submission eligibility. The synopsis will be used if your awards is selected as the winning entry.

To target mental health and wellness, Altrusa Temple members worked to Heal the Healing Garden at the local McLane Children's Hospital that had suffered drastically from multiple freezes and lack of care during the pandemic. Temple Altrusans transformed this forgotten gem into a beautiful oasis for pediatric patients and their families to escape the hospital room, complete with books specific to gardening life and insects.

Project Description: *(1,000-word limit)*

For the first time in a century, individual Temple Altrusans, had a shared experience with the entire community and, in fact, the rest of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic was easing in mid-2022, and the world was trying to move forward and heal from a time of fear, loss, and loneliness. These feelings resulted in a new epidemic, in which a greater number of people are facing an internal battle of maintaining mental health and wellness than ever before. Hospitals and health systems were on the frontline and Altrusa Temple identified a way to help both a local hospital and its patients start the healing process.

Intent on impacting mental health and wellness, Temple Altrusans banded together to Heal the Healing Garden at the Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Medical Center that had suffered drastically from lack of care and multiple freezes during the pandemic. This project was selected as a Make a Difference Day Project in October 2022. Altrusans contributed 105 volunteer hours and \$2,700 to transform this forgotten gem into a beautiful oasis for pediatric patients and their families to escape the hospital room, complete with books specific to gardening life and insects.

A Need for Healing

This project was selected by members as our MADD project because it was a tangible project that could be accomplished in a single day's work with monumental visual improvement. It was a symbolic way to show that we are all moving beyond the pandemic that had impacted our lives for the last 2 years and into the next chapter.

The garden at the Children's hospital was essentially forgotten and had suffered greatly from neglect over the past few years when COVID-19 became the hospital's primary focus. Dollars had been directed entirely inside the walls, where it was most needed, to care for the patients. The community had also been hit several times by very hard freezes that destroyed the plants and landscaping in the space walled off for sanctuary and peace at the Children's Hospital. Pre-COVID, the garden was maintained by the local Master Gardeners but, during the pandemic, their support subsided, and the dwindling members were not planning to continue the work. The hospital didn't have the manpower to devote to clearing out the old dead foliage and replace it with new flowers. This is where Altrusa was able to step in.

The Healing Plan

We compiled a MADD Committee to help think through and develop a plan for the garden. It started with a tour and a conversation with hospital leadership. We sketched out plans for each flower bed, determined which plants could stay and which ones were too far gone and needed to be removed. We considered which areas received the most sunlight and where there was adequate shade and available sprinkler lines. Our dreams were bigger than our budget, of course, so the committee had to prioritize which areas were the most important to address and which ideas should be let go. We relied on the skills and talents of many of our own members who are accomplished gardeners to make selections for plants

and flowers that would grow well in the various areas of the garden and would not require a lot of upkeep. We also sourced our materials from local nurseries who gave significant discounts once they learned about the project on which we were working.

We learned in conversation with the hospital's leaders that they had a local artist interested in painting scenes on the entryway to the garden depicting Pixar's A Bug's Life. So, to incorporate literacy into the Healing the Healing Garden project, we partnered with Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program to acquire children's books all about garden life, including insects and plants. These books were placed in baskets at the entrance to the garden and are free for kids to pick up and use to read while they are spending time in the garden, or to take with them if it piqued their interest enough to continue learning about the subject. Due to the timing of this project, we decided to do a little extra project and put together a special display for families to take pictures in the garden. This outdoor Fall photo booth was complete with haybales, pumpkins, metal yard art and large pots of mums.

A Healing Timeline

About 4 weeks before MADD, the committee made final selections on plants and flowers, but it wasn't until the week of the project that we could begin picking them up. We worked with the hospital to ensure that the garden sprinklers were run several times during the days leading up to the service project so that the ground wasn't too hard to garden in. The day before we planted, a small team went to power wash the fountain in the middle of the garden that had gotten covered in mud and bird droppings. We opted to do this early so that the ground wouldn't be wet while we were working, and considering it was a noisy and time-consuming task. Then on the day of the event, we acquired clearance for our volunteers to

access the garden and restrooms as needed. Members hauled in all the plants, flowers, and mulch along with gardening supplies that each person contributed.

The Healing Impact

We shared this opportunity with upcoming leaders and were pleased to have four ASTRA members give up their Saturday to help us with this project. Dozens of hours went into the preparation for this project, and, with more than 20 Altrusans and 4 ASTRA students, we made quick work, planting more than 60 plants and 200 flowers, followed by laying 75 bags of mulch. A mighty undertaking in a day's work with the potential impact of touching 6,000 pediatric patients, families, and healthcare workers annually as they walk by and through the newly healed Healing Garden.

PLEASE NOTE:

Optional Supplemental Material (No points) Judges place primary importance on the written narrative. Substantiating materials do not earn points and are considered only in a supplementary perspective.

ENTRY SUBMISSION:

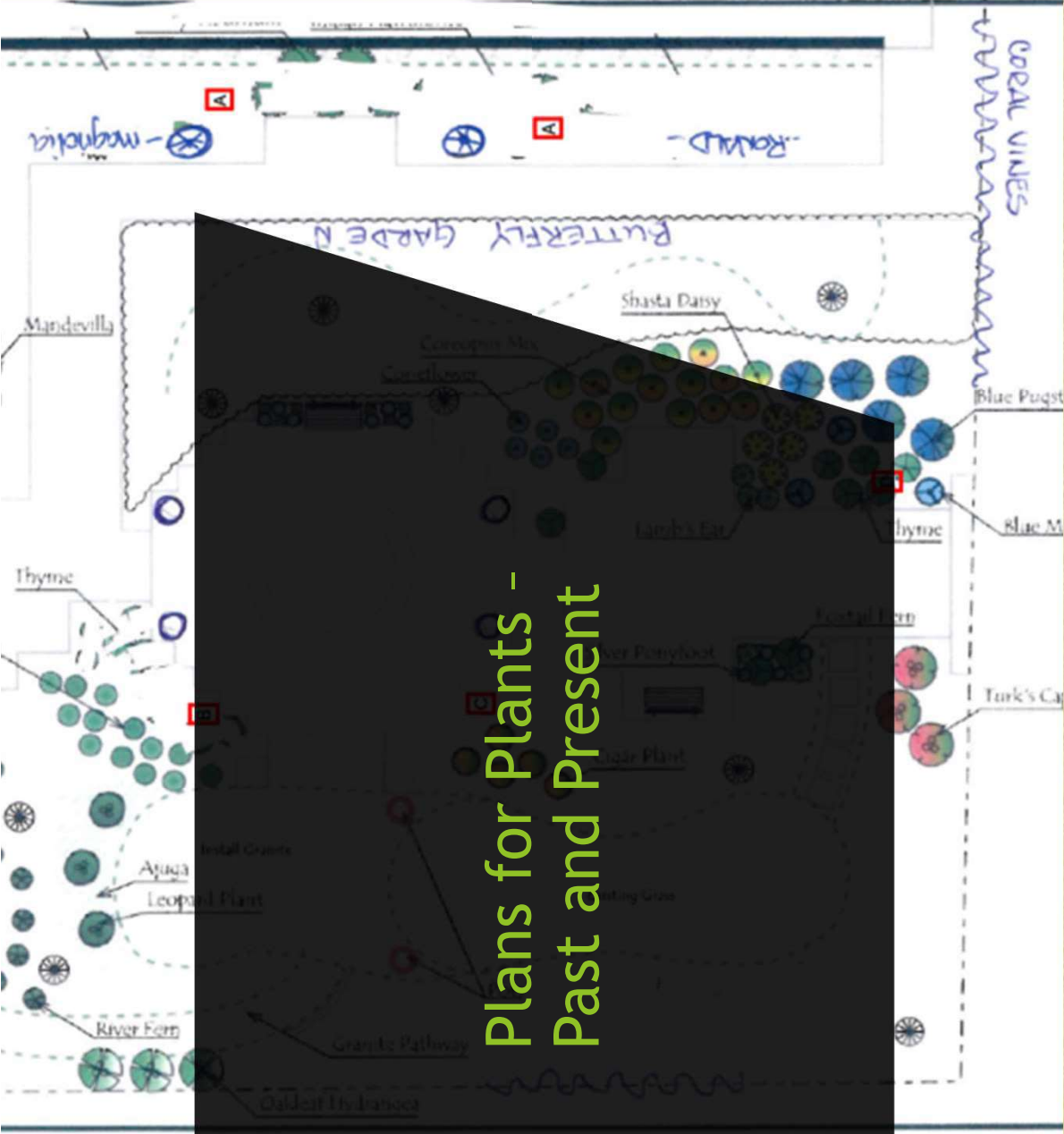
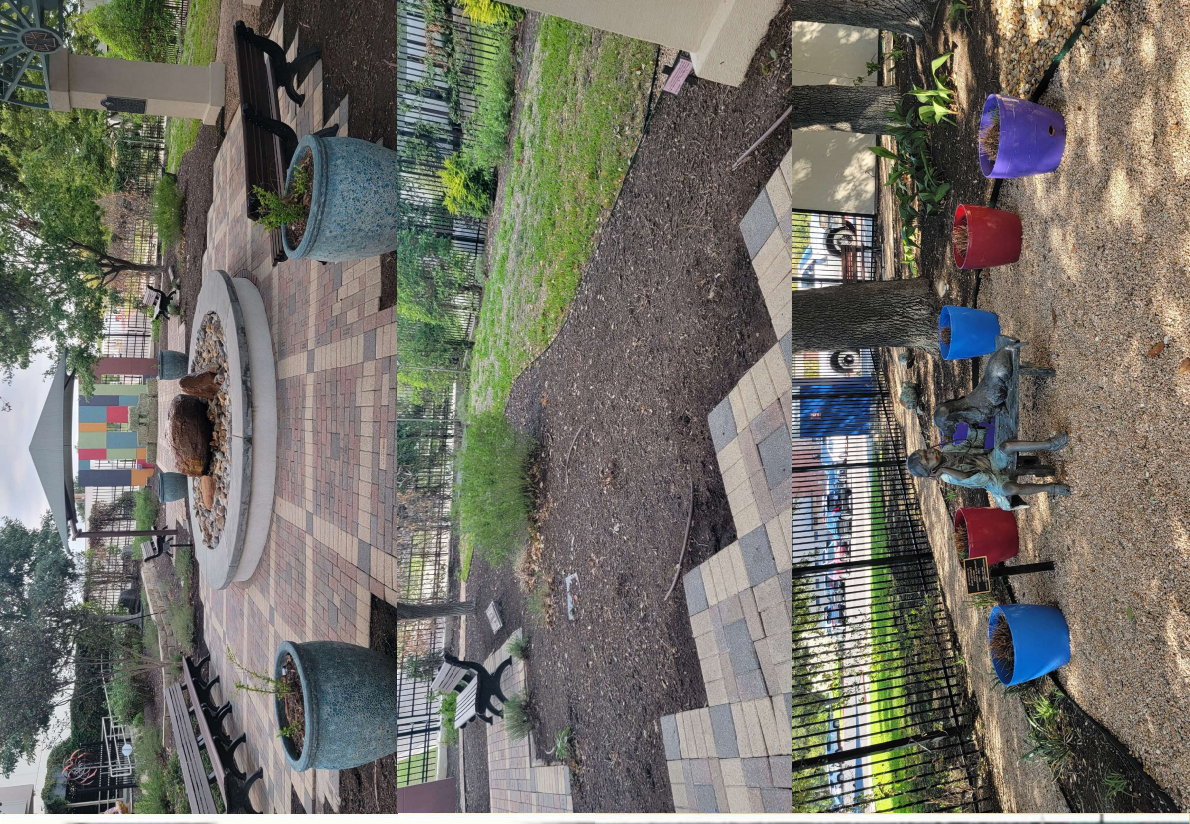
Submit your entry by June 30 to the email address shown on the District Nine Webpage www.altrusadistrictnine.org under Members Only/Reports and Awards.



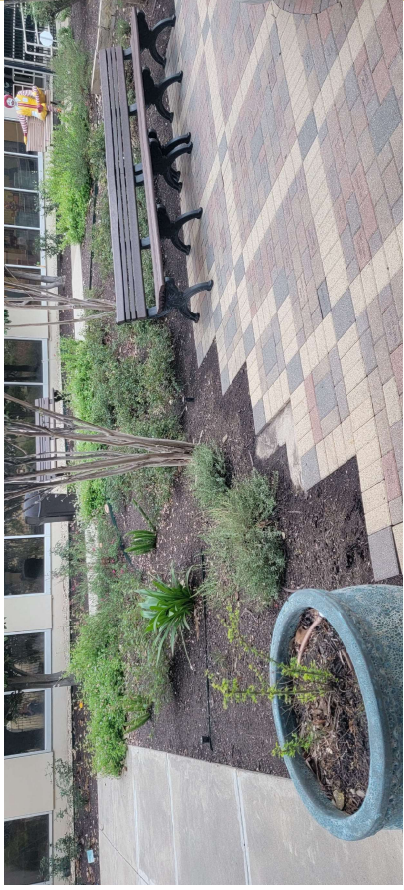
Mamie L. Bass

Altrusa Temple

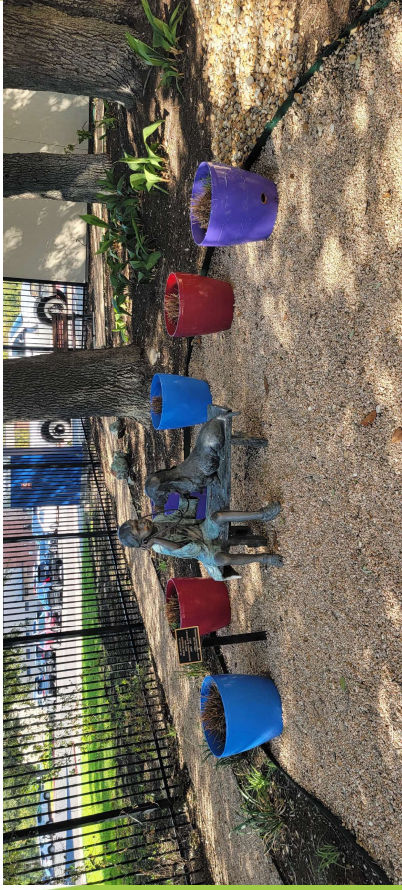
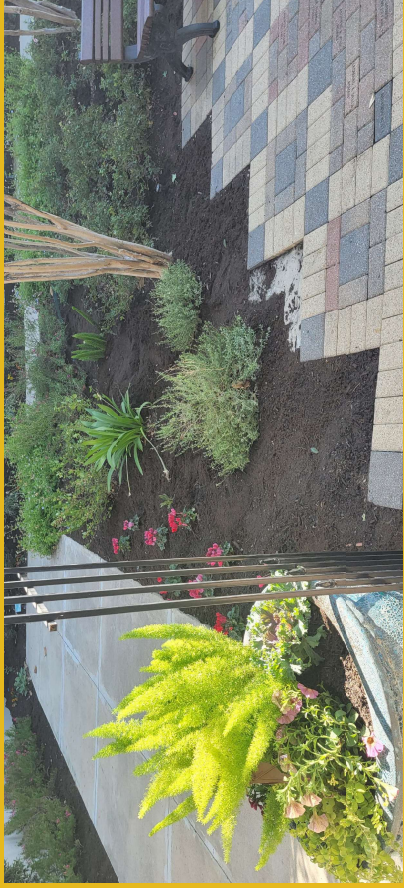
“Healing the Healing Garden”



Before



After



Before



After

