

Little Rock Garden Club

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2029

WHO WE ARE...

Little Rock Garden Club

a member of:

The Garden Club of America, since 1960

National Garden Clubs, Inc., since 1929

Arkansas Federation of Garden Club, Inc., founder 1931

The Little Rock Garden Club is a 501(c)3 organization with the purpose of advancing and encouraging the knowledge of, practice of, and interest in horticulture, garden history and design, floral design, conservation and photography. The club is engaged with civic improvement through a variety of community projects.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO...

The purpose of the Little Rock Garden Club shall be:

To advance and encourage the knowledge and practice of horticulture and development of gardens.

To promote an active interest in floral design.

To aid in the protection and conservation of our natural resources.

To cooperate in civic improvements and to further the projects of The Garden Club of America (GCA).

The purpose of The Garden Club of America is to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to share the advantages of association by means of educational meetings conferences, correspondence, and publications, and to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through educational programs and action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.

Founded in 1913, the Garden Club of America is a volunteer, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization comprised of 201 member clubs and approximately 18,000 club members throughout the country.

SUMMARY:

The Strategic Planning Committee surveyed our membership requesting their input regarding the focus of the future and strategic planning of the priorities, activities and initiatives of the Little Rock Garden Club.

We are pleased to report a 92% response rate to the survey, and the responses were direct, thoughtful and insightful, and provided feedback which will help inform the future focus of the work of the club.

The survey questions focused on all aspects of club life and requested feedback on **WHAT, WHEN and HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO...**

OUR FINDINGS:

Overall, the membership is pleased with their involvement and values their membership in the Little Rock Garden Club.

However, after a busy and exciting decade of focused activities revolving around

- the preparation and execution of hosting a GCA Zone IX Meeting,
- achieving 100% participation in the GCA's Second Century Campaign,
- preparing for the LRGC's Centennial Celebration Year of special activities,
- raising the funds to award \$100,000.00 in community grants in honor of our 100th anniversary, and
- navigating the challenges presented during an unprecedented pandemic,

as the LRGC enters our second century, our membership desires we turn our focus to the inner-workings of our club structure and activities by assessing and evaluating *what we do and when and how we do it* while being mindful of our members' financial and time commitments.

To support that goal, we propose the following
**AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS and ACTION
STEPS:**

Goal One: *Focus on the membership experience from new members to long-term members to promote a positive lifelong engagement.*

A. MEMBERSHIP

1. New Members

- a. The Admissions Committee will evaluate and recommend ways to ensure a good fit between the LRGC and the proposed prospective candidate.
- b. The Admissions Committee will evaluate and recommend ways to improve the new member experience through orientation with the continued involvement of the proposing sponsors in the process of educating and mentoring new members into the work and activities of the club.

2. Active Members

- a. The Membership Committee Chair will evaluate and propose a plan for annually providing reminders to Active Members of club membership requirements and expectations.
- b. Committee work will be evaluated to propose and recommend expectations for meaningful committee involvement to benefit both the club and enhance the committee experience for individual members.
- c. The club will work to ensure that all Active members have leadership opportunities to

build both knowledge and confidence in the work of the LRGC.

3. Affiliate Members

- a. Affiliates will continue to be included in all aspects of the membership experience.
- b. The club will continue our commitment to recognizing the value our lifelong members bring to the overall club experience for all members.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- a. The LRGC Program Chair will work with the President to schedule interesting meeting speakers on a variety of topics within the mission and purpose of the club.
- b. The LRGC will offer hands-on workshops and training opportunities in gardening, horticulture, floral design, conservation, photography, and community involvement to meet the needs of the diverse interests of the LRGC membership. This could involve the occasional substitution of a speaker with a participatory workshop at meetings to actively engage the membership.
- c. The Communications team will continue their focus of working to improve and support the technology skills of our membership in order for members to fully utilize the LRGC website and electronic communication regularly, and by encouraging the use of the resources the GCA website provides for technology training.
- d. The LRGC will encourage participation in all aspects of club and Zone Flower Shows.
 - i. The LRGC Flower Show Steering Committee will recommend and propose the scheduling interval between our club Flower Shows to

ensure optimal planning time for the work of the Flower Show itself and the necessary budgeting requirements.

- e. The President and Program Chair will evaluate and propose an annual meeting schedule calendar within the directives of our LRGC Bylaws to optimize the desire of the membership, the necessary work of the club, and the financial and budgetary constraints of the club meeting calendar.

C. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- a. The structure of the Nominating Committee will be evaluated to ensure our current structure follows the best practices of other GCA member clubs.
- b. The club will encourage members to develop new skills and consider new roles in the LRGC and will remain committed to ongoing training to support those efforts.
- c. The club will encourage members who are interested to consider GCA and Zone positions.

D. TEAMWORK AND CAMRADERIE

- a. The club will appreciate and celebrate the diverse interests, abilities and achievements of our members.
- b. The Awards Committee will continue the LRGC's commitment to recognize the achievements and leadership of members through LRGC, Zone and GCA awards.
- c. The LRGC will propose and organize projects and activities which support the unifying effect of the whole membership working together.
- d. LRGC committee field trips and pilgrimages will be planned with the goal to encourage bonds and friendships among our multigenerational

membership, while being mindful and considerate of our members financial and time constraints.

E. HISTORY AND HERITAGE

- a. Provide “History Moments” when appropriate during membership meetings to provide a historical perspective and remind members of the LRGC’s long-standing efforts in the community.
- b. Provide “GCA Moments” when appropriate during membership meetings to support our membership’s understanding of our connection and relationship as a member club of the Garden Club of America.

GOAL TWO: *Community Involvement*

- A. The LRGC will investigate ways to broaden and strengthen our community support and impact through our LRGC Projects and our Community Grants.
- B. The Projects Committee will evaluate and recommend protocols and procedures for proposing new projects, evaluating current projects, and sunseting projects to ensure the LRGC’s efforts in the community are relevant, impactful and supported by our membership.
- C. Priority will be given to developing projects which allow for a hands-on gardening experience for our members and which support the mission of the LRGC and the GCA.

GOAL THREE: *Maintain responsible fiscal oversight and governance.*

- A. The LRGC will maintain required federal and state registrations and renew on the required basis.

- B. The club will ensure that annual operations stay within budget, and review and adjust dues as needed to maintain the current level of club operations.
- C. The club will propose appropriate fundraising efforts in order to support necessary LRGC funding needs, and to maximize the benefit to the community and the mission of the LRGC.
- D. The LRGC Finance Committee will investigate the possibility of creating a reserve fund for Community Grants to support growth in the club's ability to provide financial support to worthy projects in the community. This reserve fund could eventually evolve into an endowment fund managed by the LRGC.

GOAL FOUR: *Communicate the activities, resources and accomplishments of the LRGC.*

- A. Continue to offer multiple modes of communication to ensure the membership is well-informed.
- B. Continue to encourage and train our members to fully utilize the resources on the LRGC website.
- C. Schedule committee topics for discussion on the Board and General Meeting Agendas at appropriate intervals and limit the number of repetitive announcements.
- D. Report updates on the Strategic Plan implementation to the membership annually at the March business meeting.
- E. Review and revise the LRGC Bylaws and Policies and Procedures as needed.

GOAL FIVE: *Utilize available Garden Club of America resources to support LRGC activities and the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.*

- A. Encourage board members to communicate regularly with their corresponding Zone Representatives, if applicable, to utilize the information, guidance and training offered by the GCA.

- B. Utilize the GCA website when researching future LRGC projects to benefit from the experiences of other GCA member clubs.
- C. Continue to inform and encourage LRGC members to explore and utilize the GCA educational opportunities, publications, and committee resources which are available on the GCA website.

Proposed and submitted by the LRGC Strategic Planning Committee:

Jeanne Joyner, Chair

Debbie Bass, Cathy Crass, Christy Davis, Libby Davis, Laura Doramus, Terri Erwin, Mary Ann Gammill, Jan Murphy, Anne Orsi and Jane Rogers.

(As an example of utilizing the resources available to the LRGC through our GCA Zone IX connections, the LRGC Strategic Planning Committee acknowledges with appreciation the Garden Club of Nashville for sharing the template of their recent Strategic Planning Report which was immensely helpful in the creation and preparation of this document.)