

**1. Brief summary and objectives of project:**

National Garden Week is an opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of garden clubs, to promote the value of gardening in our communities, and to encourage community members to get involved in “Plant America – Play Outside!” The Garden Club of Decatur celebrated National Garden Week through activities at our local libraries.

In honor of National Garden Week, a member of the Garden Club of Decatur created a beautiful exhibit in the north display case at the Decatur Public Library. The display case is located just inside the main entrance to the library, a high traffic area in which many people pass by daily. The display was brightly colored and featured many of the projects undertaken by the Club – planting, community service, education, creativity and more – with photos and titles. Many of our projects have been recognized by the Beautify Decatur Coalition and this was a means of promoting our projects to keep our community beautiful.

During National Garden Week, the Garden Club of Decatur embraced the “Plant America – Play Outside!” idea by targeting the younger gardeners. Two planting days for youth were held during the week at two local public libraries; Forsyth and Mt. Zion. Most of the needed materials for the two events were donated and the Club provided the tools, plant selection, direction and assistance to the children who participated. The children were encouraged to select a plant that appealed to them and find a place in the garden they liked. Garden Club members then would assist them in digging the hole, preparing the soil with water and fertilizer, carefully removing the plant from the pot, placing it in the hole, filling in with soil and watering. The children enjoyed the process, learning how to grow healthy plants that will look beautiful and keep pollinators happy as well.

The Decatur City Council and Mayor Julie Wolfe presented a proclamation promoting National Garden Week and the work of the Garden Club of Decatur within our community. The presentation of the proclamation was held at the Decatur Public Library was given to our Co-Presidents – Linda Gross and Linda Ostrander. Following the presentation many members of the club then went to Central Park to enjoy lunch and the beautiful hanging baskets the club provides to the community.

**2. Involvement of club members, other organizations, etc.:**

Approximately ten Garden Club of Decatur members assisted with each of the youth planting days at the libraries with Youth Chairs – Jo Caulkins and Fran Jones taking the lead on organizing the work days. Both libraries had staff from their summer reading programs who also assisted in the plantings of the gardens and they all found the day to be very rewarding.

**3. Project expenses and means of funding:**

The projects for the local libraries were paid for through partnerships with community businesses, foundations and donations from individuals. The club member who created the display for the Decatur Public Library donated her time and talent to the project and did not cost the club any funds but allowed us to promote the Garden Club of Decatur to the community.

**4. Continuing Involvement, follow-up, maintenance:**

The Garden Club display at the Decatur Public Library remained in place for the month of June, brightening the entryway and offering information about Club activities. The gardens at the two local libraries were maintained throughout the summer by the library staffs. However many Garden Club

members often checked on the progress of the gardens and to pull a few weeds. As the children attended the summer reading programs we hope they admired their work as the gardens grew. These activities we hope will instill an interest in gardening from adults to children and the ideal of “Plant America – Play Outside!” and to share our love of gardening.