

Award #: 24
Memorial Award
Submitted by: Springfield Civic Garden Club

Award Name: Ruth Y. Benson
Number of Club Members: 255
Date: October 30, 2025

1. New Project: No

Beginning date: July 7, 2025

2. Brief Summary and Objectives of Project:

Each autumn Lincoln Memorial Garden (LMG) hosts a Fall Harvest Festival fund raiser with family-oriented activities. The 100-acre Garden started in 1934 as a joint cooperation between the City of Springfield, Springfield Civic Garden Club (SCGC) and the Garden Clubs of IL.

SCGC has supported this event since 2019 and continued to do so in 2025 as members contributed time, resources and manpower for the Scarecrow Factory activity and ticket sales as well as membership booths; to date, more than 1500 kits have been created.

3. Involvement of club members:

Club members were invited to donate items to be used for clothing and to sew faces and hats, all to be included in the kits used to create the scarecrows. Seven club members spent more than 50 hours sewing together Scarecrow faces and bucket hats; multiple club members spent personal time and money purchasing used clothing from a variety of shops. Each kit included children’s clothing, a bandana, patches, a fabric head, hat, safety pins, twine and a pool noodle for attaching the head to the body along with instructions. Bucket hats created by club members were supplied free of charge. Each child was encouraged to select the kit with clothing and hat of their choice.



Figure 1. 237 Scarecrow kits were created during 5 workshops

Beginning in July and extending to October, five work sessions involving 15 club members and 31 work hours were conducted at the Garden to compile 237 kits.



For the October 11-12, 2025, event, an area was prepared with bales of straw, tables and a collapsible shelter. Sample scarecrows were displayed around the work area.

Club members also volunteered at the Festival Fairy Garden and registration and membership tables as well.

A total of 25 club members contributed 52 volunteer hours at the Fall Harvest Festival by staffing the Scarecrow Factory and ticket sales booths.

Figure 2. Set-up prior to opening

Kits were sold for \$10 each, and children and their parents worked throughout the morning and afternoon stuffing the scarecrows, with some assistance from SCGC members. The net profit for LMG was \$2370.

At the end of the event, no kits remained.

More than 200 volunteer hours were donated for the 2025 Fall Harvest Festival. Club members also donated nearly \$330 toward the support of the Lincoln Memorial Gardens.



Figure 3. Families stuffing straw into the scarecrow kits.

4. Project expenses and Means of Funding:



The Garden Club did not incur any direct monetary expenses related to the Scarecrow Factory. Garden Club members donated more than 200 pieces of clothing and material used to construct faces and bucket hats. However, members averaged \$15 per kit, based on purchased clothing and donated time.

5. Continuing involvement, follow-up maintenance: Springfield Civic Garden Club will continue involvement with Lincoln Memorial Garden’s Board, their annual Fall Festival, and other events and activities throughout the year.

Figure 4. Finished product and proud owner!



Figure 5. SCGC members manning the event table.