

Pittsburgh Botanic Garden
IDEA Cohort Project Summary Submitted May 31, 2023

Wonder on Wheels

Pittsburgh Botanic Garden participants

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Where we started:

When we started this journey, the Garden representatives wanted to focus on accessibility. This is an easily identifiable IDEA opportunity within our Western Pennsylvania topography.

The original concept:

The Garden will be workshopping with this resource the concept of Wander on Wheels, which will provide designated areas of the gardens and woodlands friendly to those with low mobility. The project will assess current paths to identify non-construction solutions to improve selected paths to be friendlier by a walker with wheels, a wheelchair or simply a stroller. Wander on Wheels will be a pilot project for providing additional “garden adventures” regardless of any physical or cognitive need. This concept will not detract from future accessibility planning as more of the gardens and woodlands are developed.

What happened on the Journey:

- Held lots of conversations on “how to message” what a person with low mobility can/can’t do in the Garden
 - Included reviewing the visitor guide map and possibly identifying accessible spaces. The map already indicates the varied pathway materials such as paved, woodchip or gravel
- Realized that none of these conversations actually included a person with low mobility
- Discovered Trail Chairs through conversation with other Cohort participants
- Determined that offering a tool to help maneuver around the Garden was better than a message
- Found a partner organization to work with to educate and inspire staff and board members

Where we are now:

- Three Trail Chairs ordered – 2 Juniors and 1 Adult -- and made possible through a grant from Allegheny County Regional Asset District
 - Chairs provide users independence to Wonder on Wheels throughout the gardens and woodlands
 - A promotion plan for the availability of these trail chairs
- A partnership with Allegheny Land Trust, a regional conservation organization. Together the two organizations have selected a consultant to provide:
 - joint educational and assessment sessions with staff and board toward “why” statements
 - customized plans to continue the IDEA work with/for staff, board and visitors
 - consultant fee covered through grants from Allegheny County Regional Asset District and Forbes Funds