

Abbey GARDENS

Inspiring Global Change Through Local Action





Who We Are

Abbey Gardens is a charitable community project (charitable #836125666), established in 2009 by a retired businessman John Patterson and a board of dedicated volunteers. John had a dream to transform a spent gravel pit into a vibrant, year-round destination in the Haliburton Highlands and be a model for other communities. He drew inspiration from the Eden Project in England, and envisioned a community hub offering beautiful gardens and employment opportunities.

At Abbey Gardens you can learn about local food, gardening, energy conservation or production, sustainable construction techniques, the importance of heritage breeds, biodiversity, land restoration, composting, or cooking. Be inspired by on site workshops and events, or just a stroll through our site which features opportunity for discovery and interpretive signage for all ages.

Our 380-acre site includes both forested area and the partially rehabilitated gravel pit and is developing incrementally as we learn more about community needs and interests.

Our Accomplishments

THE GARDEN

Abbey Gardens has demonstration gardens, hoop houses, educational & children's gardening space, and a bee yard. Every year we grow and enhance the garden by further remediating the soil, experimenting with different growing methods, and expanding to include new demonstration growing areas. For example, over the last 5 years children coming to learn about gardening have planted a pumpkin seed and then come back in the fall to pick their Halloween pumpkin. To celebrate Canada's 150 we partnered with our local Land Trust to create a new pollinator garden to showcase the importance of pollinators and how a beautiful perennial garden can contribute to our ecology.

THE FOOD HUB

Operated as a social enterprise, the Food Hub supports over 30 small local suppliers and caters to those looking for healthy, local food. We use our commercial kitchen to process and preserve local food and our grain mill produces a variety of Red Fife Wheat products. Our Food Hub sources more than 90 per cent of its products from within a 200-km radius. Visitors can enjoy a selection of healthy, local lunch options and in 2019 we will expand to include more "ready to eat" healthy foods.

EDUCATION /PROGRAMMING

Through collaboration with community partners, the Educational Programming encourages young people to take an active role in their food production and preparation, encourages seniors to stay active by getting engaged in the local food supply, promotes environmental awareness in ecosystems, biodiversity, green building and resource stewardship. Local individuals, businesses and organizations deliver workshops on-site. A team of over 40 volunteers contribute and gain experience with gardens, programs, and events.

Our site also boasts walking trails, natural play areas, and family-friendly activities including an Enchanted Forest - designed by children for children.

Partnerships & Collaborations

Abbey Gardens is working with six local businesses through a collaborative partnership with like-minded local businesses. They include Haliburton Highlands Brewing, Into the Blue Bakery, County Coffee, Sinabit Bakery, Butter Love and Haliburton Solar + Wind. They lease space from Abbey Gardens – and both parties benefit from the partnership. Perks include joint programming, marketing and event cooperation, sharing of best practices, staff resources and joint distribution. These businesses help attract more visitors to the site, and create year round employment for 12 people.

We are always looking for ways to work with other not for profits as well. We host a range of activities and events in partnership with groups like Grandmothers for Grandmothers; Haliburton Highlands Land Trust, Haliburton Garlic Association, Haliburton Farmers' Market; and more.

The Abbey Retreat Centre (ARC) is located in a 4-bedroom house on site. Through retreats and education ARC supports people living with cancer, and their caregivers, to make life enhancing choices to deal with their well-being. This partnership with the Abbey Retreat Centre embodies the shared vision and values of Abbey Gardens.

Innovation & Demonstration

The Abbey Gardens site has incorporated many innovative technologies which offer visitors the opportunity to see alternative practices in real life situations. Touring our site, visitors can see roof top solar, geothermal heat, rain water collection and recycling, a living roof over an outside porch, solar reflective tube lighting, straw bale construction, a biomass boiler that heats our on-site Brewery and the Haliburton Solar + Wind building, and innovative water management systems at the brewery.

In 2016, a collaboration between Abbey Gardens, Haliburton Solar + Wind, and Fleming College led to the construction of Ontario's first completely off-grid Alternative Energy Presentation Centre. It is home to Haliburton and Solar + Wind, and features their solar and wind demonstration centre outside. The 1,400-square-foot building, which is made of rammed earth and straw bales, was constructed by students in the Sustainable Building Design and Construction Program. Having Haliburton Solar + Wind at Abbey Gardens has created the opportunity for our community, and visitors, to see alternative energy in action and have access to expertise in this area.

Our Immediate Future

Our Educational programming is core to our vision of Abbey Gardens. We need to grow in order to continue to respond to community interests and expand the educational experiences we have to offer. Our goals for the next 1-2 years include:

- **Renovation of an existing building to create appropriate indoor program space.** This space will support larger class visits and enable us, and other educators in our community, to offer programs year round.
- **Rehabilitate an area of the gravel pit to plant cover crops and build soil.** Creating new green spaces produces new educational opportunities and engages the community. Every initiative we take on links to our educational programs, local production, and is inviting to the community.
- **Create a Community Root Cellar.** The Agri-food sector is growing in Haliburton County and so is the desire for local produce! Creating a Root Cellar at Abbey Gardens will enable us to purchase more locally grown food and ideally make it available year round. This initiative will offer opportunity for local farmers to sell their product at the end of the season, for not for profit food programs to add local fresh food all year round, and for businesses to keep “local” on their menu after the harvest season.
- **Youth Engagement.** At Abbey Gardens we are mindful that Youth in our community are the future for our development and sustainability. We also know that many are living on the margins, struggling with structured education, and feeling isolated. In consultation with partners in our community, Abbey Gardens has been exploring ways to engage Youth to create the environment where they can build confidence and resilience.

2019 Financial

INCOME

Donations	\$206,000.00
Fundraising Events	\$131,900.00
Facility Rental	\$90,800.00
Government Grants	\$12,600.00
Other Types of Income	\$16,155.00
Program Revenue	\$40,000.00
Sales	\$416,800.00
Total Income	<u>\$914,255.00</u>

EXPENSE

Administration	\$78,802.54
Property Mgmt & Maintenance	\$167,316.00
Community Garden	\$74,390.00
Food Hub	\$429,432.00
Educational Programs	\$99,333.00
Fundraising Expenses	\$65,000.00
Total Expense	<u>\$914,273.54</u>



Contact Us



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