



G R O U N D S F O R S C U L P T U R E

Generous Grant Furthers Grounds For Sculpture's Wellness Initiative

Grounds For Sculpture receives major funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences to support its Wellness Initiative

HAMILTON, NJ – August 31, 2023 – Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) FY2023 Museums for America program. The IMLS grant is an incredibly competitive national grant and one of the largest GFS has ever received. This funding will be used over the next three years to support and expand wellness initiatives at the organization. The distinct combination of art and nature, alongside programs centered on mental and physical wellness at GFS, has offers our regional community a place for post-pandemic recovery and self-nurturing. The funding includes hiring a new Wellness Manager to oversee the current programs and take the lead on expanding program offerings and engagement. This professional will be joining a team of educators transforming ideas into practice and partnering with the community to deepen ties and broaden engagement.

Executive Director Gary Garrido Schneider responded to this impactful funding, "It is an honor to be awarded this significant multi-year grant for this initiative by the Museums for America program. It will allow Grounds For Sculpture to maximize resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations, and advance opportunities for our Wellness Initiative to benefit more guests. We are excited to fully explore the potential of this Initiative throughout the grounds and with our health and wellness partners."

GFS began its wellness work nearly two decades ago with a project, Grounds For Healing, in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ), Hamilton, NJ. GFS landscape architects designed plans to create Grounds for Healing at every hospital entrance, including a private garden for cancer patients. Since then, GFS's wellness programs have grown to include a wide range of activities on the GFS grounds such as Wellness Walks; Tai Chi; Meditation and Mindfulness; Introduction to Herbalism; Sound Baths; and corporate and non-profit wellness retreats.

GFS' Wellness Initiative has continued to grow with new iterations, including monthly Wellness Walks. These walks, a cornerstone of the Initiative, are designed for adults 55 and over to provide an exercise for people of all physical abilities. The Walks are coupled with workshops that incorporate art making, mindfulness, and movement. Established in 2011 and expanded in 2015 to serve seniors from Trenton residing at Trent Center West, participants come to GFS as a group to build community, walk and enjoy the grounds. This partnership was a turning point for GFS, specifically increasing our audience and helping broaden racial and economic diversity among our existing wellness attendees. Movement classes promoting mind & body wellness have also gained momentum. These classes include Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese art that blends exercise with stress reduction. The Tai Chi sessions are led by Anthony Jackson of DAO CONCEPTS, a veteran who has been a GFS partner since 2017. In spring 2023, GFS hosted a special meditation workshop for military veterans and their families with acclaimed meditation instructor and journalist, Jeff Warren. The event included a meditation practice and emotional conversations about the needs of our veterans. As a result, GFS and DAO CONCEPTS created Tai Chi for Veterans, six-week workshop sessions in the summer and fall of 2023, offered at no cost to veterans and family members.

GFS sees a unique opportunity to be a catalyst for change through its Wellness Initiative. The broadening of its wellness programs can serve as a conduit to decreasing anxiety and stress related to mental health challenges like isolation and cultural exclusion. This funding will help

GFS continue deepening relationships with Black and brown communities, seniors, individuals with varying abilities, veterans, first responders and healthcare professionals as well as intersectional audiences among these groups.

Wellness partnerships are another component of the Initiative that will be expanded with this funding. GFS currently partners with corporations and nonprofits who prioritize employee health and have utilized GFS as retreat venue, utilizing workshops and garden spaces with their teams. Through ongoing relationships with healthcare systems, such as Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton , GFS has served as a venue for programming for their Seniors Better Health Program. In addition, GFS hosts Capital Health System's Cancer Survivor Day, where former patients and families gather to celebrate their successful treatment and enjoy the park's restorative environment.

"Capital Health System has a long-standing partnership with Grounds For Sculpture. Last year GFS Executive Director Gary Garrido Schneider was a guest speaker at that Capital Health Cancer Conference where he presented 'Arts, Nature and Wellbeing: Non-Clinical Interventions in Health' sharing the benefits of arts and nature to compliment healing and recovery for cancer patients as well as the needs of caregivers and medical service providers. GFS has been, and continues to be, an active partner with Capital Health in creating collaborations for improving the health and wellness of the communities we serve. We are excited about this important funding from IMLS and the opportunities we have to continue our partnership." Cataldo Doria, MD,PhD,MBA,FACS Medical Director, Capital Health Cancer Center

Wellness Programs

To learn more about and to register for current wellness programs, visit the events calendar:

https://www.groundsforsculpture.org/calendar/?fwp_event_type=wellness

About Institute of Museum and Library Sciences

The mission of IMLS is to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development.

The agency carries out its charge as it adapts to meet the changing needs of our nation's museums and libraries and their communities. IMLS's mission is essential to helping these institutions navigate change and continue to improve their services

The IMLS Museums for America program supports museums of all sizes and disciplines to undertake projects that strengthen their ability to serve the public through exhibitions, educational/interpretive programs, digital learning resources, professional development, community debate and dialogue, audience-focused studies, and/or collections management, curation, care, and conservation.

About Grounds For Sculpture

Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) is a 42-acre not-for-profit sculpture park, arboretum, and museum, founded by the late Seward Johnson. Featuring over 300 contemporary sculptures by renowned and emerging artists in a beckoning, ever-changing landscape, Grounds For Sculpture combines art and nature to surprise, inspire, and engage visitors from all backgrounds in the artist's act of invention. In addition

to its permanent collection, Grounds For Sculpture offers exhibitions in six indoor galleries, alongside experiential art, horticulture, and wellness programs for all ages. Located in Hamilton, New Jersey, Grounds For Sculpture is easily accessible from the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan areas by public transit and is open year-round. For more information, visit groundsforsculpture.org.

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