



The Pulse

L.A.N.D. That I Love
By Dominique Agnew

Landscape and Nature Discoveries (L.A.N.D.), the brainchild of Garth Seely, brings together Garth's love of land and children with his dream of creating a link between children and their community through hands-on adventures in gardening and land-



Garth Seely

scaping. "I want to form a connection between the kids, the land, the community, and the environment," states Garth.

A landscaper all his life, Garth credits a Potomac couple as his inspiration. At the age of fifteen, Garth began working at the home of Ralph (now deceased) and Jane Reed. They had about seven acres "landscaped in a natural woodland setting." This experience led him to begin his own landscaping company, Gardens by Garth. At his property in Dickerson, Garth has tried to create what he used to take care of in Potomac—but it isn't enough. He wants to share his love of woodland gardens, landscaping, nature, and the Agricultural Reserve with children, so they will have the same wonderful experiences—and he

wants to do it on a grand scale, think a Hundred Acre Garden. "There is nothing up here like that," Garth says, "nothing like a natural garden."

L.A.N.D., a non-profit organization, has been up and running for over a year. Through field trips to his property for preschoolers and elementary school students, and after-school activities at Monocacy Elementary involving the grounds of the school (seeing is believing), the feedback from parents, teachers, principals, and kids has been good. Because many of the field trips take place on

his property, the house has to be mentioned. "I always wanted a house that fit in the woods," says Garth. Does it ever. About twelve or thirteen years ago, Garth and his wife, Amy, ordered the logs, and they peeled the bark off the logs. Then log smiths came and camped out for six to eight weeks to put the house together. The clay, mortar, and sand for the chinking (between the logs) are all from the Poolesville area. The house, the setting, the woods (the landscaping) are just astonishing.

Another upcoming project will be creating a landscaped entryway for the Woodstock Equestrian Center on Route 28 sometime in November. Twenty kids of varying ages from different parts of the area will work on the entrance with some two thousand daffodil bulbs being planted. Garth has many ideas and plans for future projects for children, and he's open to new ideas. Some of the special days he has in mind include Edible Plant Day and Native Plant Day. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Back to the Hundred Acre Garden, Garth hopes the community will see the value of his vision of bringing together as a way to preserve the Ag Reserve, the environment, and agriculture through a meaningful long-term project incorporating children. "I can see properties connecting and hooking up," Garth muses. "If people see this in motion, it might inspire them." Most of the Hundred Acre Garden would reside on private property with easements allowing its creation. Garth also hopes to gain funding through grants and private donations for the Garden to become a

reality. "Funding is crucial in the long run," he adds.

While certainly the Hundred Acre Garden represents future aspirations (maybe not too far in the distance), Garth is happy to be busy getting L.A.N.D. rolling. With his two children attending the Elf School and Monocacy Elementary, these schools have been the primary beneficiaries of his enthusiasm, but he's now ready to start working with other schools in the community. If they receive

L.A.N.D. with half the enthusiasm the Monocacy kids have shown, we'll be hearing and seeing many more L.A.N.D. projects in our area—maybe his L.A.N.D. will become your L.A.N.D.

Garth would welcome thoughts and ideas from the community. He can be reached by email at landdiscover@comcast.net. "Nurture the kids, feed their natural curiosity, and watch them flourish."



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