

## **Riverside International Friendship Gardens Annual Report**

In 2024, the Riverside International Friendship Gardens (RIFG) were focused on planning for the new Ho-Chunk Garden, which included creating the garden design and plans, soliciting the required approvals, and fundraising. This work was undertaken in partnership with representatives from the Ho-Chunk Nation. A press conference was held to announce the project publicly in December. We hope that the new garden will be completed this summer and that we can hold a dedication ceremony on Monday, October 13, 2025, Indigenous Peoples' Day.

RIFG also formed an Operations Committee to help manage the transition out of some long-term lead volunteers. The Operations Committee is working to ensure the continued care and maintenance of the gardens.

Unfortunately, the gardens were a victim of several instances of vandalism this year. The Board of Directors are working with the City of La Crosse to put additional, improved security measures in place to help prevent future episodes.

The gardens were pleased to host several groups of volunteers throughout the year, including members of local Rotary clubs and students from the WTC Horticulture program, in addition to our regular volunteers who keep the gardens beautiful all season long.