



Greening Community by Design!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Outreach Group for Landscape Design makes its first appearance at the New England Spring Flower Show

BOSTON, February 15, 2006 – The Community Outreach Group for Landscape Design (COGdesign), a non-profit service organization of landscape design professionals and students, will display its recent projects and educate visitors about its mission at the New England Spring Flower Show, March 11 through 19, at the Bayside Expo Center.

Flower Show visitors already recognize the importance of gardens to a sense of well being, and they know that an inviting landscape adds value and color to a neighborhood. COGdesign brings those benefits to schools, affordable housing, and community parks. While home gardeners may marvel at the dream landscapes featured in the show, COGdesign's display serves as a reminder that well-designed outdoor spaces play a key role in positively affecting the lives of urban residents.

“COGdesign provides a vital link between the professional design community and reviving neighborhoods and charitable institutions that serve some of our most at-risk neighbors,” says Thomas Herrera-Mishler, executive director of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, which sponsors the Flower Show. “Studies have shown a link between greener environments and better health. Good design can decrease maintenance costs and improve the viability and effectiveness of community-improvement investments. COG enhances lives through promoting better community environments. They are a vital resource in a resource-starved urban environment, bringing the skills and training of creative and caring individuals into situations in which they can make a real difference.”

The display at the Flower Show will include visuals from recent projects, including the Fran Hintsa Memorial Garden for a senior residence in Newton Center designed by Janice Reilly and Sara Kish; Mitchell Elementary School's Outdoor Learning Center in Needham designed by Alice Evans; and the Columbia Point Community Garden designed by Lilia Weinstein.

These projects are typical of the three basic constituencies that COGdesign serves: affordable housing for elders, families, and people with disabilities; schools; and parks and community gardens. In each project, the client's and the community's needs are determined through a participatory process that aims for inclusiveness. The results are gardens and parks that engage each person who enters. For example, designer Alice Evans' intent was to bring structure to the Mitchell School's barren courtyard “without filling in too many details – leaving that for the teachers and students as a process of

creation and discovery....” The two parents who campaigned for the outdoor learning center, Martha Bassett and Judy Chin, had this to say about the garden, which opened Sept. 15, 2005: “Our Outdoor Learning Center is more beautiful than we could imagine and brings joy to the entire Mitchell School on a daily basis.”

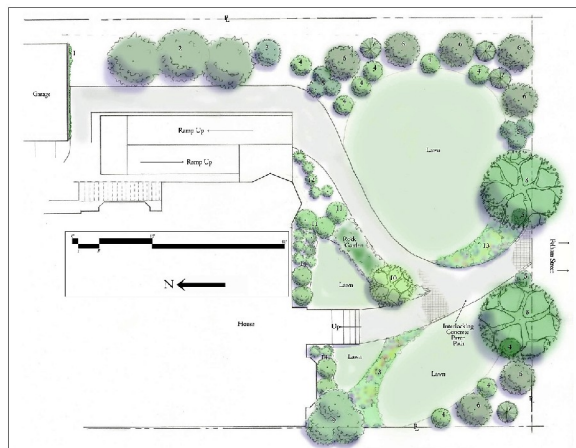
The Fran Hints Memorial Garden is a tribute to its namesake, a supporter and neighbor of the Community Living Network. CLN had requested a design for the grounds surrounding a large house that was to be adapted to affordable housing for seniors. Janice Reilly and Sarah Kish took the front yard and created both small spaces, where seniors could enjoy privacy, and larger, more social spaces. The grounds were designed to be attractive to neighbors and passersby as well.

Columbia Point Community Garden acts as a bridge between the UMass/Boston campus and its nearest neighbors. A group of volunteers and residents built the new community garden, cheered on by Boston Mayor Tom Menino. They cleared debris and installed plants with an emphasis on vegetables and fruits. The first crop of blueberries was picked last summer.

Creating a teaching landscape, a place for rest and refreshment for seniors, and uniting a commuter campus with its neighbors – these activities all flow from COGdesign’s commitment to enriching communities through design.

The Community Outreach Group for Landscape Design (COGdesign) is a non-profit service organization of professional and student landscape designers, landscape architects, architects, and greenspace advocates dedicated to bringing quality landscape design services to under-funded community organizations and neighborhood groups. COG designers work pro bono in exchange for the experience and satisfaction of contributing to the community landscape.

For more information, please call 781-642-6662, or visit www.cogdesign.org



Design for Fran Hints Memorial Garden, Newton
Sarah Kish, Janice Reilly, COG designers