

APPLICATION FOR A GCA FOUNDERS FUND  
AWARD FOR PHASE I OF THE

Restoration of the  
Temple of Love  
Untermyer Park and Gardens  
Yonkers, New York



THE  
GARDEN  
CLUB  
OF IRVINGTON·  
ON·HUDSON

THE TEMPLE OF LOVE  
AT UNTERMYER PARK AND GARDENS



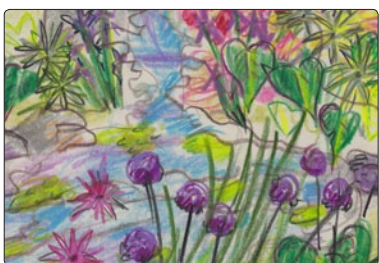
## Once Upon a Time

the Temple of Love gazebo, the most important feature at the southern end of this historic park, capped a rockfall with a plant-bordered watercourse that flowed over the rocks, towards the Hudson.



## Today

visitors enjoy the site, but there are no water features or plantings. The gazebo needs repair, and dry, weedy soil surrounds the broken remnants of the former watercourse.



## Tomorrow

restored to its former glory, with bubbling watercourses, pools and plantings, the Temple of Love will be a serene visitor experience, contributing significantly to the urban renewal of Yonkers.

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September 17, 2013

Ms. Kathy Andrews  
Chairman, Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60th Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Ms. Andrews and Members of the Founders Fund Committee:

The Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson, with the endorsement of our Executive Committee, nominates restoration of the Temple of Love at Yonkers' Untermyer Gardens for the 2014 Founders Fund Award.

In the early 20th century, Samuel Untermyer hired noted Beaux-Arts architect William Wells Bosworth to design his estate, then known as "Greystone." When completed, it was called "America's most spectacular private garden." Slides of Greystone, which were sent to the Smithsonian in 1940, are now in The Archives of American Gardens.

After Mr. Untermyer's death in 1940, the gardens fell into disrepair. Much of Yonkers also fell on hard times in the latter half of the 20th century. Today, both the city and the gardens are undergoing a renaissance. The Gardens' rejuvenation is being led by visionary architect Stephen Byrns, who formed the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy in 2011. A board of directors has been formed and a successful fund-raising gala was held in June, 2013. A chief horticulturist, assistant, and additional garden helpers have been hired, and renowned Wave Hill horticulturist Marco Polo Stufano is their advisor.

The Temple of Love overlooks the Hudson River Palisades on a tall rock outcrop that once capped waterfalls, pools and plantings. Our project would bring water and electricity back to the site so the watercourses can be restored and the Gardens renewed with plantings provided by our club.

Should this project be chosen for Founders Fund, it will bring full circle the Garden Club of America's early recognition of this American garden treasure.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora Galland  
President

MEMBER OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA  
106 EUCLID AVENUE  
HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK 10706  
914 4871358  
NORA@GALLANDFAMILY.COM





## THE LITTLE GARDEN CLUB OF RYE

September 10, 2013

Mrs. Kathy Andrews  
Chairman, Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60th Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mrs. Andrews and Members of the Founders Fund Committee:

The Little Garden Club of Rye is honored to second the nomination of the restoration of the Temple of Love at Untermyer Gardens for the 2014 Founders Fund Award.

We can think of no more worthy a candidate. This project encompasses so many of the initiatives with which the GCA is involved, from conservation and garden history and design to its mission of civic improvement and improvement of the environment.

Our commitment to Untermyer Gardens and the Temple of Love project are multi-layered. First is the site's intrinsic beauty and uniqueness – how many Persian gardens are west of the Alhambra? To walk into the Walled Garden is to be transported to a different world, a different time. However, until two and a half years ago, we, living less than 20 miles away, had never heard of it. Perhaps that was because of its state—neglect and disrepair.

Happily, there is the story of its renaissance. Stephen Byrns, a talented and enterprising architect with a background in historic preservation, took it upon himself to rescue the Gardens by founding a conservancy dedicated to its restoration. For his efforts, Zone III awarded Mr. Byrns its 2013 Commendation for Historic Preservation.

Although there is much remaining to be done to further enhance Untermyer Gardens, a key element is restoring the infrastructure that will open up a whole new area to the public and that will make the water-courses once again cascade through the poetic, enchanting Temple of Love. In order to accomplish this, water and electricity are needed. The Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson has chosen this non-glamorous but essential phase of the project as an appropriate candidate for the 2014 Founders Fund Award.

We cannot recommend the project more highly, based on its historic importance, ability to endure over time, and the enormous number of people who will benefit—not only the 200,000 citizens of Yonkers—but tourists in the region and all those in the New York tri-state area who will visit. By association, the Garden Club of America will share in Untermyer Gardens' reflected glow.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine K. Murray  
President

MEMBER OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA  
29 PLEASANT RIDGE ROAD  
HARRISON, NEW YORK 10528  
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CRISSYKM@OPTONLINE.NET

## RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE OF LOVE AT UNTERMYER PARK AND GARDENS

# Proposal

**F**or funds to restore water and electricity to the Temple of Love in Untermyer Gardens, Yonkers, NY — Phase I of a multi-part restoration of this prominent feature of the Gardens. The water and electricity lines will come from the Cola Community Center at the entrance to the Gardens and will enable restoration of the waterfalls, plant-bordered watercourses and pool, powered by a circulating pump, all of which were once major features of this inspiring site.

### Objectives:

- (1) To restore the second most important feature in the Gardens, the Temple of Love.
- (2) To include GCA in the renaissance of a unique and significant American garden.

### How and where will the project make a difference?

In the days of Samuel Untermyer (1858-1940), Yonkers was a thriving manufacturing center and home to many prosperous families. After a dramatic 20th-century decline, Yonkers' multi-cultural population of 200,000 is undergoing a much-needed civic renaissance. As an oasis in this crowded city, the restoration of Untermyer Gardens is adding significantly to the open, green space in the area.

The Temple of Love will become an attractive destination in the southern part of the park, which is easily reached by public transportation or on foot from the Old Croton Aqueduct, a 26-mile walking-biking trail that traverses the park on its route from the Bronx to Croton-on-Hudson, New York.

### Whom will it target? How will it influence them?

The citizens of Yonkers will once again be able to enjoy the natural beauty of what was once called "America's most spectacular garden."

Its unique plantings, architecture and water features will provide endless education, recreation and relaxation opportunities. With its Indo-Persian garden, the largest in the Western hemisphere, and the Temple of Love in its unique setting on the Hudson, an American Heritage River, Untermyer Gardens will again be a destination for visitors from the New York area and beyond.

### When will the project begin and end?

Fall, 2014, through spring, 2015.

### Approximate amount of money needed for the total project:

\$56,000 is needed to bring water and electricity to the site from the Cola Community Center building at the park entrance (see site plan, page 11).

### Partnering organization:

The partnering organization is Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that was formed to restore Untermyer Gardens, "America's greatest forgotten garden."

### People who will be in charge of the project:

Yvette Hartsfield, Yonkers Parks Commissioner  
Steve Sansone, Yonkers Deputy Parks Commissioner  
Stephen Byrns, Chair,  
Untermyer Gardens Conservancy  
Timothy Tilghman, Chief Horticulturist

### How will additional funds be raised?

With receipt of the \$25,000, the Conservancy will qualify for a matching grant from New York State. Additional funds will be raised via board-directed fundraising and proceeds from annual galas.

### What has been accomplished so far?

The site has been studied and a proposal for restoration written by Glencar, a leading water gardens specialist. A Yonkers Eagle Scout troop cleared massive amounts of debris, weeds, and invasive vines from the site.

### How will the project be maintained?

The project will be maintained by the City of Yonkers Public Works and Parks Departments. Members of the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson will grow and divide plants for the area.

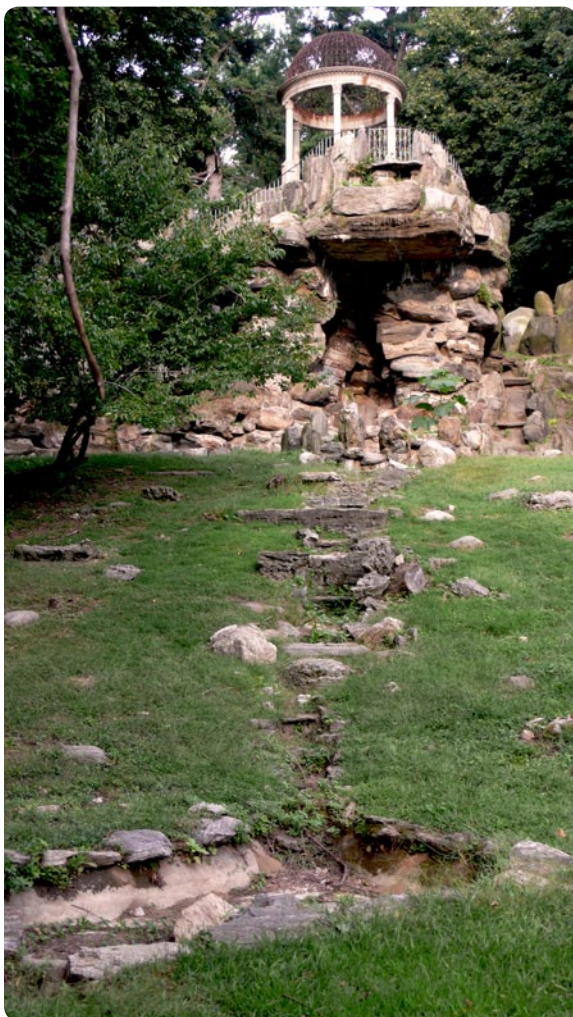
### Importance to the GCA:

Members of the GCA recognized the importance of Untermyer Gardens in the 1940s when slides of the Gardens were sent to the Smithsonian by GCA members. Significant in the history of American garden design, the Gardens' revival exemplifies GCA's mission: *To stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening... and to restore, improve, and protect the quality of the environment through... action in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.*



THE TEMPLE OF LOVE  
AT UNTERMYER PARK AND GARDENS

# Envisioning the Restoration



The site, photographed August 31, 2013. This is all that remains of the watercourse and pool.

“It’s inspiring for people to be willing to take on a long-term project that might not be completed in their own lifetime—to realize that it’s part of our responsibility for today as well for future generations. I think the time is right for this Garden to be restored as a symbol of harmony among people, brotherly love, and peace. In the times we’re living in, we need this sort of inspiration. If we just focus on what’s quick and easy and flashy, we’re going to lose a lot of treasures like this. One of our services to society is to preserve the things that are worth preserving.”

Mary Reyes  
Friend of Untermyer Gardens



Artist's rendering of the planted area below the Temple of Love, envisioning restorations of the cantilevered terraces, the winding steps and watercourses, and plantings surrounding the pools and streams.

Proposal design, photography and rendering: Ellen Shapiro,  
member of the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson

# RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE OF LOVE AT UNTERMYER PARK AND GARDENS

## Budget

Developed by Glencar Water Gardens and Lighting, Inc., Stormville NY

### Phase I — Laying the Groundwork Expenditures

Utilities: Install new water and electric lines from the Cola Community Center.	\$56,000
Subtotal	<b>\$56,000</b>

Phase I, the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson's Founders Fund project, makes all the rest of the restoration work possible.

### Sources of Funds

Proposed GCA Founders Fund Award	\$25,000
Donation from the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson	3,000
Matching Grant from New York State	28,000
Subtotal	<b>\$56,000</b>

The Founders Fund Grant plus GCI's donation will make possible the New York State matching grant that will allow the completion of the phase.

### Phase II — Bringing in the Infrastructure Expenditures

Repair and waterproofing of waterfall, pond and underground chamber areas	\$33,750
Installing drains and lines	23,125
New waterfall and pond	31,065
Pump system	78,325
Filtration and fill	38,735
Subtotal	<b>\$205,000</b>

### Phase III — Planting Expenditures

Grading, applying seed and hay	\$8,700
Design and installing the aquatic landscape	5,300
Subtotal	<b>\$14,000</b>
TOTAL	<b>\$275,000</b>

It is anticipated that the \$219,000 for completion of Phases II and III will be raised through Board-directed fundraising and the Untermyer Garden Conservancy's annual galas, which have raised more than \$450,000 in the last two years, which has been gone towards the restoration of the Persian Garden.



# History

## A Private Golden Age Garden Reborn as a 21st-Century Public Garden

**T**he national garden treasure that is now Untermyer Park and Gardens in Yonkers, New York, just north of the Bronx, was the creation of lawyer, businessman, philanthropist and garden enthusiast Samuel Untermyer (1858-1940). In the 1920s and '30s, this property, then called Greystone, was the most celebrated private garden in America.

Greystone was developed during the first 40 years of the 20th century, when the area was part of Mr. Untermyer's 150-acre estate. The estate was previously owned by former New York governor and Presidential candidate Samuel Tilden, from whom Untermyer purchased it in 1899.

In 1915, Mr. Untermyer hired William Welles Bosworth, who had just completed the gardens at Kykuit, John D. Rockefeller's Hudson River estate, to design the gardens. Charged with creating "the finest garden in the world," Bosworth created as a centerpiece a magnificent walled Persian garden that featured statuary, colonnades and water features. Outside the west wall, a "vista" stairway modeled after Italy's Villa d'Este with ancient monolithic Cipollino marble pillars framed the view of the Hudson River and the Palisades. The property, which included 60 greenhouses filled with rare and exotic plants, was tended by 60 gardeners.

To the south of the walled garden, Bosworth placed a river-view gazebo he called the Temple of Love, with cantilevered terraces, cascading water features and rock gardens. It was constructed by Charles Davite, a Genoese rock artisan who did significant work at the Paris Exposition and the St. Louis World's Fair.

Mr. Untermyer and his wife Minnie—denizens of Yonkers' golden age when thriving industries and mansions lined North Broadway—hosted private recitals and political events at Greystone and opened their garden gates to the public on a weekly basis.

The magnificence of Greystone was recognized by Garden Club of America members, who saw to it that glass slides containing photos of the gardens were sent to the Smithsonian Institute. Copies of those slides are now in the Archives of American Gardens. The slides can be seen on the Untermyer Gardens web site ([untermyergardens.org](http://untermyergardens.org)) and in the 1992 book, *Golden Age of American Gardens* by GCA members Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller.

Mr. Untermyer's stated wish was to bequeath the Gardens to New York State, or failing that, to Westchester County or the City of Yonkers. But because of the great cost of upkeep and the lack of an endowment, the bequest was refused by all three parties. In 1946, six years after Mr. Untermyer's death,

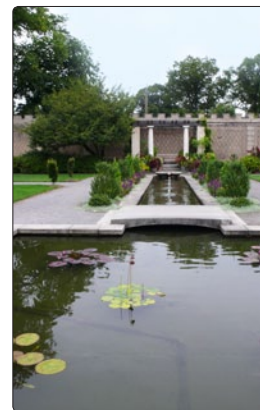
continued



Inside the Persian Garden  
c. 1920.



The dancer Irma Duncan,  
an Isadora Duncan dancer,  
performing on the rocks below  
the Temple of Love.



Today, inside the Persian  
Garden, water features and  
plantings have been restored.



it was accepted by the city of Yonkers and made a public park. Many acres were sold, some reacquired; the property now comprises about 43 acres.

In the late 20th century, both the city of Yonkers—the fourth-largest city in New York State—and the Gardens went into a decline. Masonry crumbled, many water features dried up, and the grounds became covered with weeds and litter. Despite all this, in 1974 the Persian Garden was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2010, former Yonkers resident Stephen F. Byrns, a noted architect, former long-time commissioner of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission and director of Wave Hill in Riverdale, NY, formed the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy to resuscitate this once-magnificent landscape. His timing was right: the city of Yonkers was undergoing a renaissance with a new downtown library, top restaurants and modern office and apartment buildings rising along a renovated waterfront just 2.5 miles south of Untermyer Gardens.

Mr. Byrns enlisted the aid of the founding horticultural director of Wave Hill, Marco Polo Stufano, as a *pro bono* horticultural advisor. A protégé of Mr. Stufano's at Wave Hill, Timothy Tilghman, who had also been head horticulturist at the Garden Conservancy's Rocky Hills, was hired as head horticulturist for Untermyer. An additional gardener has since been hired.

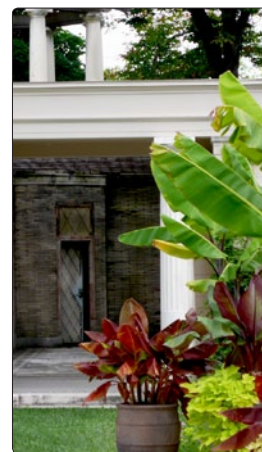
Although much remains to be done, the work that has been accomplished in just two short years is well nigh miraculous. The walled garden has been restored to a point where it is a serene, green oasis in a crowded multi-cultural city. Rehabilitation of the Temple of Love and its flowing water features will further enhance the unique beauty of the Gardens.

Untermyer Gardens have been featured in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Garden Design* and *The Garden Conservancy Newsletter*.

The grounds are open to the public daily from dawn to dusk with guided tours on the weekends or by appointment. Members of the Garden Club of Irvington-on-Hudson and the Little Garden Club of Rye serve as docents.

*The Temple of Love restoration in Untermyer Gardens will be a significant contribution to the urban renewal of Yonkers and to the annals of American garden history and design.*

On a recent weekday, employees of nearby offices and health care facilities enjoyed eating their lunch on the steps above a water channel.



Unusual plantings delight visitors.



However, many areas are still in need of restoration.





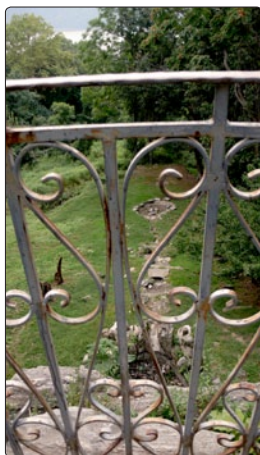
## A LATE-SUMMER SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT THE TEMPLE OF LOVE AT UNTERMYER PARK AND GARDENS



Visitors contemplated the views of the Hudson River and the Palisades.



The structure stands majestically over the Hudson, but much needs to be done to restore its former glory.



With restoration, the Temple of Love will overlook a watercourse, a pool and plantings.



Longtime Yonkers residents stopped along a walk on the Croton Aqueduct and photographed the rock promontory.



As the sun set, a wedding took place.



# Map and Site Plan



New York State

Westchester County

**Site**  
on the Hudson River at  
945 North Broadway, Yonkers

Site of Proposed Restoration  
The Temple of Love  
and its watercourse

Water will be brought from the  
Community Center





33 South Broadway, Yonkers, New York 10701  
[www.untermyergardens.org](http://www.untermyergardens.org)

September 5, 2013

Mrs. Laurence Y. Andrews, Chairman  
Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60th Street  
New York NY 10022

Dear Mrs. Andrews:

I am the Chairman of the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, which I started 2 ½ years ago. The more I learn about this garden, the more I am convinced that it is truly a national treasure.

Earlier this year, I was approached by members of the Irvington Garden Club and Little Garden Club of Rye about submitting a grant proposal for the Founders Fund Prize. We decided that the restoration of the Temple of Love was our next large project.

The Conservancy strongly supports this project and its grants proposal. We have called Untermyer "America's Greatest Forgotten Garden", and we hope that with more restoration and publicity bestowed on it, we will soon be able to find a new appellation!

Sincerely,

Stephen F. Byrns

Chairman



*Marco Polo Stufano  
Horticulturist  
625 West 252 Street  
Bronx, New York 10471*

September 9, 2013

Mrs. Laurence Y. Andrews  
Chairman, Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60th Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mrs. Andrews:

I am writing in support of the proposal to restore the Temple of Love at Untermyer Gardens. It is being considered for the Founders Fund Prize by the Garden Club of America.

Untermyer, one of the most important gardens in America during its heyday, fell into ruin after 1948, and is now being restored by the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy in partnership with the City of Yonkers. I serve as Horticultural Advisor to the Conservancy, and believe that it is perhaps the most significant garden restoration project in the country.

The Temple of Love is the major romantic feature of the gardens, and was the centerpiece of a major rock garden. The immediate project is to restore the waterworks and lower falls. Once this work is done, it can be planted, which we very much want to do!

The fact that this garden is only five miles from New York City and is located in Yonkers, a city with significant financial challenges, makes this project likely to become a major tourist attraction and a source of pride for a city that desperately needs one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Marco Polo Stufano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marco" and last name "Stufano" clearly legible.

Marco Polo Stufano

# *Lynden B. Miller* *Garden Designer*

September 12, 2013

Mrs. Laurence Y. Andrews  
Chairman, Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60th Street  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Mrs. Andrews:

As an honorary GCA member, I am writing to urge your committee to award the Founders Fund prize to the fabulous Untermyer Gardens for the restoration of their Temple of Love.

Bringing Untermyer Gardens back to life is a most exciting development in American garden history. I visited it recently and was astonished and thrilled with what is being done there to bring this important garden back to life for the public.

The Temple of Love is a most amazing, unique, and romantic garden structure. It needs to be filled with cascading water once again.

To help with this restoration would fit perfectly with the GCA's history of contributing to American gardens, and I do hope you will give this award.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynden B. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lynden Miller





## BARBARA ISRAEL GARDEN ANTIQUES

September 19, 2013

Dear Mrs. Kingsley,

It is my great pleasure and honor to write you on behalf of the Untermyer Gardens in Yonkers, NY for the 2014 Founders Fund Award.

I first heard of the property when Stephen Byrns, chairman of the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, stopped by my garden antiques booth at the New York Botanical Garden Show and introduced himself. At his invitation I visited the Gardens soon afterwards. Though I've been fortunate to view some extraordinary gardens I was rendered quite speechless by the quality and wealth of features.

The Untermyer Gardens is without question one of the finest layouts that Welles Bosworth ever did and happily much of the original structure and sculptural elements still exist. My enthusiasm led me to donate four stone benches and soon thereafter I agreed to serve on the Conservancy's board. The restoration work underway is of the highest quality with Marco Polo Stufano consulting and Timothy Tilghman delivering. Steve Byrns' ability to navigate local politics is just amazing and I have no doubt that this will become one of the most visited and renowned gardens in the Northeast.

That being said there is more work to be done. The rusticated Temple of Love that overlooks the Hudson is possibly the most dramatic feature that Samuel Untermyer had built. It is literally carved out of and into a rocky outcropping, harking back to the grotto-like structures of ancient Rome. In 1978, art historian Naomi Miller, wrote of the timeless appeal of grottoes, "the common denominator is the memory of the sacredness of water in antiquity." Without water coursing through it the Temple of Love lacks the cooling and meditative effect that was so valued in these artificial caves. This is especially necessary as the scheme of the central Indo-Persian garden at Untermyer Gardens features long, crossed reflecting pools, thus water is a constant throughout.

I hope you will give every consideration to the application of the Garden Club of Irvington for the award that would provide the funds for water and electricity to reach the Temple of Love at the Untermyer Gardens.

Thank you,

Barbara Israel  
Bedford Garden Club member  
Untermyer Gardens Conservancy Board member  
Historic Hudson Valley Board member

t 212.744.6281 f 212.744.2188

Correspondence: 21 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10021

Site: 296 Mt. Holly Road, Katonah, New York 10536

[www.barbaraisrael.com](http://www.barbaraisrael.com)



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
MIKE SPANO

September 13, 2013

Mrs. Laurence Y. Andrews, Chairman  
Founders Fund Committee  
Garden Club of America  
14 East 60<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Mrs. Andrews:

I am pleased to write to you on behalf of the City of Yonkers, for your consideration for Untermyer Park for your Founders Fund Award for 2013. As the highest honor that the Garden Club of America can bestow, this grant will greatly help to continue ongoing renovations, such as the Temple of Love, that are occurring throughout the park.

Untermyer Park and Gardens plays a huge role in this continuing renaissance, as it is a Historic Registered Landmark and provides countless residents and those outside of Yonkers with a diverse, multi-cultural knowledge of the Park. Both the City of Yonkers and the Untermyer Conservancy have come together to provide a greater effort towards this endeavor and to showcase the beauty of these historic gardens and to make it a place for all to enjoy and to bring back a love of nature and gardening. Tours take place in the gardens to educate all those who come to the gardens.

Untermyer Park and Gardens is also the home of the Untermyer Performing Arts Council, which receives tens of thousands of people who come to enjoy the diverse entertainment provided by them.

Again, thank you for your consideration of the Founders Fund Award to Untermyer Park and Gardens.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Mike Spano", is written over a circular blue ink stamp.

MIKE SPANO  
Mayor