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City Cutbacks Threaten Queens Botanical Garden

Strenuous efforts on the part of city residents and friends have resulted in an award of $86,255 to Queens Botanical Garden by the National Heritage Trust, after this valuable source of funds had dwindled to $45,000 in 1979. Another grant has been awarded for $21,000 for summer youth dance employment through the Youth Conservation Corps. Casting a shadow over any elation, however, is the threatened 12% cut in the funds supplied to the Garden by the New York City. 

"Many people do not realize that cultural institutions such as the Queens Botanical Garden are funded in divided ways," according to Hon. Joan Durante, president. Services to the public, educational programs for school children, senior citizens and the handicapped, and cultural events are all funded with money raised through grants and membership dues. All trees, plants, etc. are also purchased with money from these sources, as well as donations. All of these fund­raising efforts are meaningless without that part supplied by the City — the actual grounds and their maintenance. The City of New York supplies 50% of the funds used by Queens Botanical Gar­den for gardens, security personnel, maintenance men, a secretariat, and a bookkeeper. "With the City's financial difficulties," said Durante, "the budget of the Queens Botanical Garden has been cut repeatedly, and at this point cannot bear more cutting and still survive to carry out the many exciting programs and planned for the future. Under the National Heritage Trust grant, agricultural therapy programs for the hand­icapped, with outdoor hard­ening, on-the-job training, and naturecraft workshops are to be expanded. There are to be physical modifications and braille labeling to accommodate the handicapped, as well as bilingual educational labeling of outdoor plantings. Educational programs are planned to reach new audiences, with increased outreach into the schools to circumvent current bus dif­ficulties, and weekend programs to reach working people. The Youth Conservation Corp grant, awarded by the Forest Service of the Dept. of Agriculture and the Dept. of the Interior, will supply summer jobs for 25 young people. They will rebuild the deteriorated pond and stream area into a working natural ecological system, study the pollution of the Fla­ushing River, and learn gardening principles constructing an All American Garden. The Garden urges letters of support and protest against these proposed budget cuts to your local elected official," Durante concluded. "Without your sup­port something very valuable will be lost to Queens Botanical Garden!"

Muller Elected Bank Vice-pres.

August Muller has been elected a vice-president of the Bank of Commerce. He supervises the administration and approval of branch consumer credit files.

Elderly Crime Victim Program

Mayor Edward J. Koch and Commissioner Janet S. Saimer of the department for the Aging have announced a $185,000 one year program to provide special neighborhood level aid for elderly victims of crime. The Mayor said the program was made possible by a grant to the Department for the Aging by the New York City Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. The grant will enable emergency financial assistance to be given for services such as transportation, and a medical office; the installation of window gates to secure an elderly person's apartment after it has been burglarized, and expenses for temporary shelter, food and clothing, provided in cooperation with the American Red Cross. "The program is designed to provide elderly crime victims with the kind of social services that help them to minimize the trauma of the crime," the Mayor said. Commissioner Saimer said special efforts are made by the Department to help elderly crime victims to the network of services available to them in their communities. An elderly victim can report information about a crime directly to a senior center designated by police to help in such cases, or to the local precinct or the Department for the Aging's Senior Victim Services Unit at 92-7359.

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