

Project Grow is one of the few area non-profits that is member-driven (like a co-op) rather than director-driven. Unlike director-driven non-profits, the Project Grow Board is elected by the gardeners to represent their interests.

Each year, four people are elected to the Project Grow Board at our annual meeting. If any board members have resigned, then additional candidates may run to serve out the terms of the people who resigned.

As a gardener, you are a member of Project Grow and are strongly encouraged to attend the annual meeting to meet other gardeners, the current Board and the candidates. As an added enticement for members to attend, Board members will be bringing a dessert potluck for everyone. Please bring your appetite but not a dessert!

The 2014 annual meeting is at 7:00pm on Thursday, October 9th, in the Leslie House, at the Leslie Science Center at 1831 Traver in Ann Arbor.

This year five people are running for Board positions. David Corsa, Joet Reoma, Pam Schwarzmann, and Marcella TrautmannLucas are already on the board and would like to be re-elected. Dan Noble was appointed to fill out Craig Urwin's 2013-2016 term and is running to have that appointment confirmed by the membership.

All candidates submitted a short statement of why they would like to serve the members on the Project Grow Board, and those follow below.

Dave Corsa

My name is Dave Corsa and I am running for a third term as a member of the Board of Directors for Project Grow. I have been a gardener with Project Grow for over twenty years, first at Zion (now closed) and now at Lakewood. I am currently site coordinator at Lakewood.

One of my volunteer tasks over the years has been to hook up the water lines to hydrants at Zion, Greenview, and Airport. I have helped to negotiate the water line connection at Wines Elementary and helped with the water line planning at Hunt Park and West Park. Lakewood had an underground waterline installed this summer.

I became a Master Composter last spring and am a strong supporter of the Compost Education Center at the Leslie Science and Nature Center. I am also organizing the collection of all of Eberwhite Elementary School's lunch fruit and vegetable waste for vermiculture (worms) composting on site. I believe that we need to increase the number of garden sites in Ann Arbor as long as there is demand, but we need to do so with caution and care. The Board has been doing that. We are always looking for opportunities to provide more gardening space for the residents of Ann Arbor, as long as those potential sites make sense for good gardening at a cost that is equitable. I also support the educational outreach of Project Grow and approve of the many classes and projects that we continue to offer and promote.

I joined the board during a time of great transition, where the Board has clearly decided, with member input, that we want to be a member-driven organization. In the past few years, we have updated our bylaws, improved our website, hired new managing directors, built a hoop house, and improved the accountability and management of our money. The board and our outstanding managing director have maintained a strong, stable organization over the past several years.

Dan Noble

I joined Project Grow in 2010 when I had time to garden and no longer had to travel for work. I garden at Chapel Hill and Airport. I have had a garden off and on for many years, time permitting, and value the service Project Grow provides the community. I look forward to helping Project Grow continue and expand its programs into the future.

Joet Roema

I am currently a Board Member of Project Grow and would like to run for another term starting this October 2014. Here is a brief highlight of what I have done as a Board Member during the period 2011 Oct to the present.

1. As member of the Leslie Discovery Garden Committee, I summarized in a spreadsheet the historical archive of the description and designs of the Leslie Children's Garden (now called the Leslie Discovery Garden). Based on this document, I proposed some improvements to the existing garden design that included alternative pathways around the garden to minimize erosion, an aerated pond for child safety and to avoid petrid water, a rain garden to divert and capture runoff, an experimental mushroom garden, and a perennial nursery on hugelkultur beds of native plant suites for pollinator gardens and rain gardens for future revenue or cost-saving.
2. As a member of the Volunteers Committee, I helped establish the Compost Education Center (CEC), and served as the first Director. I served as volunteer workday leader, teacher and consultant in compost gardening. With the help of a co-director, we have added a Vermiculture to CEC. We now have capabilities to demonstrate hot-composting and cold-composting methods at CEC. In part because of our efforts, Project Grow is now a managing partner in the Washtenaw County's Master Composting Certificate Program.
3. As member of the Education Committee, I served either as teacher, co-teacher or as teaching staff support in gardening topics as ecosystem garden design, water conservation gardening, composting, and beekeeping. In the past 3 years, I have tried to improve my gardening skills in part because I love gardening and also to better my work at Project Grow. I have gained some formal education as a certified Master Composter, Master Rain Gardener, Michigan Master Gardener and Michigan Conservation Steward.

If elected to the Project Grow Board, I would continue to focus my term on

1. Improving the County's Master Composter program to increase its audience,
2. Designing a volunteer program to sustain the continuation of CEC,
3. Formalizing the design of the Leslie Nursery of Native Perennial for rain garden and pollinators garden, and
4. Continuing my work in conservation gardening research.

Pam Schwarzmann

My first year on the Board was educational and energizing. Project Grow is a vibrant organization, one which derives much of its energy from its members. Being part of the Board means taking members' ideas and considering how the organization as a whole can learn and benefit. I want to continue to serve on this Board to promote member participation and continue to respond to the changing needs of the Project Grown community.

Marcella Trautmann

I have been a member of the Project Grow board for the last five years, during which time we have worked hard to restructure it into a leaner and fitter organization. We did so by restructuring the board into a truly working group, paring down the number of paid employees, expanding the number of sites, enlarging our single fundraiser, the Plant Sale, all without increasing fees or decreasing services to our

gardeners. I would like another term as board member to continue this work, to ensure the long-term stability of Project Grow. I would also like to focus more on the most important aspect of Grow, it's members, especially our new gardeners, who need help getting started in gardening, let alone organic gardening. I would like to reach out more directly to them via email as soon as they are registered, to discern their areas of need, to direct them to classes which can provide them with answers and to explore the possibility of securing on-site help for them, with the aid of experienced gardeners. With your support and re-election, I plan to work on these projects over the winter and have them in place for the next growing season in 2015. Thank you very much!