

2020

RETREAT & REVIEW



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



At Allerton, we aim to keep our vision statement in the forefront of our minds, to use it as the window through which we see the Park, the buildings, the events, the staff, even the patrons.

Our vision statement, *to inspire a community to utilize and value nature, history, and the arts through sustainable programming, research, and facilities*, shapes and defines what we work for every day at Allerton.

As we look back on 2019, we can reflect not only on the year, but the entire decade at Allerton. We've been polishing our vision for the last ten years, and we are proud of what has shined through.

I'm fortunate to have been looking through Allerton's windows for almost fifteen years. I've seen how the positive changes that started during the last decade have begun a forward momentum that will carry us through the next ten years, and beyond. We reopened a bridge (and rebuilt a relationship with the community beyond it), created popular summer programming for kids and a successful outdoor concert series for seven years running, completed a Master Plan that was approved by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, significantly raised donation dollars and volunteer hours, and recreated a dedicated staff. This movement toward a renewed commitment has paid off in Allerton becoming the valuable community resource it was meant to be.

The 2010s were not without hardships, but the overall community support has helped build a foundation that will carry Allerton through any future difficulties. This foundation and our vision will be the blueprint from which we will reinvent ourselves, stay current, and continue to inspire and educate.

Please join me in joyfully recognizing where we've come from over the last ten years, and looking forward to the next era – one where we hope you will join us in being ALL IN for Allerton!

Derek Peterson

DEREK PETERSON, DIRECTOR

MAGICAL MEMORIES

JORDAN ZECH, RETREAT CENTER MANAGER

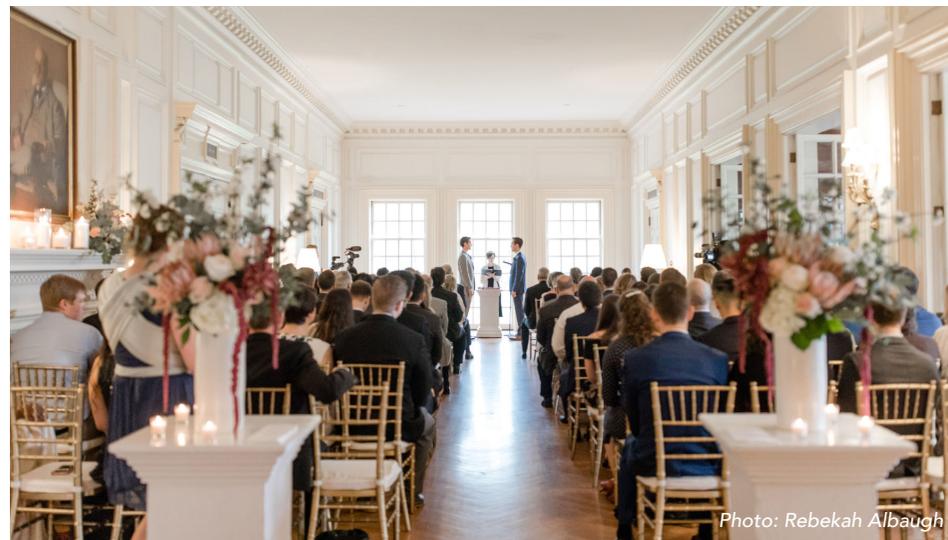


Photo: Rebekah Albaugh

"Our guests from all over the country couldn't believe how beautiful and unique the venue is – and just so suited for a weekend destination wedding where everyone can really relax and feel at home. We couldn't recommend Allerton more. It will be a special place for us for our entire lives. First class all the way around!" – **JOSEPH & RICHARD, APRIL 2019**



There is something truly magical about the Allerton Mansion. Many see it as the perfect wedding venue for happy couples to dance the night away, others enjoy the secluded atmosphere for corporate events, and some retreat into one of the quiet rooms for a night away. The Mansion has many uses, and we love when guests bring new events to this historic facility. This past year, we saw several event rentals that have us excited about possibilities for the future.

One of those events was a knitter's retreat, where 50 people spent three nights on the estate utilizing all of our 41 hotel rooms. Guests enjoyed meals provided by our in-house caterer, workshops, shopping at a small vendor show, and, of course, plenty of knitting! The wonderful thing about Allerton being the venue for an event like this, along with all of our events, is that all of the activities can take place in one beautiful location – meals, overnight accommodations, indoor and outdoor inspiration, and so much more. We never tire of hearing how well attendees are able to bond and connect in this unique atmosphere.

In addition to 46 wedding receptions and 52 garden ceremonies, other 2019 events included several week-long family reunions, a vintage car show, and a weaver's workshop. Our Music Barn was also utilized for a variety of special events - a birthday party for a Monticello business owner where the entire town was invited, a barn dance for a University of Illinois student group, and a murder mystery themed office party.

We enjoy each and every person we get to meet throughout the year, and we thank you for thinking of Allerton to be your event location. Here's to a new year and new decade of memories and celebrations!



For more info on hosting your magical event at Allerton, contact Jordan at **JMGIFFOR@ILLINOIS.EDU**.



A POSITIVE MOMENTUM

ASHLEY SIMS, EVENT COORDINATOR

As you might have noticed, the growth of Special Events at Allerton has been exponential over the last few years. With this growth we have thrown open the Allerton gates to the community in hopes that you'll not only find a home within our walls, but also use our events as a way create new traditions and memories as we continue to grow and expand our offerings.

Two thousand and nineteen was another year of great events. From Experience the Hops to our Concert Series to our Holiday Showcase, we've continued to fill our calendar, and yours, with more reasons to come out to the Park and Retreat Center. Events that provide opportunities for all members of your family to join us in celebrating and nurturing the Allerton community that our staff is so passionate about.

Looking into the future, many of our events are reaching their fourth and fifth anniversaries. We're hoping to keep that positive momentum alive by taking a moment to not only reflect on the successes of each event, but to take into consideration how we can shape what brings each one of you to this magical place by evaluating what makes each experience great, and how we can improve it.

We're looking forward to adding more events that foster art, music, and nature; more events that shape the narrative and legacy of Allerton; and more events that create a space for you to take in all that makes Allerton Park and Retreat Center a year-round destination.



Prairie Sky Concert featuring Deana Carter



An Evening with Poe



Music Barn Festival



Kirby Winter Wellness Walk
Photo: Della Perrone Photography



Spring Soirée | Photo: Della Perrone Photography

"The 2019 season of Holiday Events was a year for the books! Sweets with Santa, the Holiday Showcase, and the Kirby Winter Wellness Walk all received a well-deserved touch of extra love this season with new activities for the kids, an expanded list of vendors, and more lights than ever along the Walk. With it being my first year experiencing the holidays at Allerton, I knew it would be magical, but the feeling you get seeing the Park lit up at night – words cannot describe." – **ASHLEY SIMS**

2019 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS & FACILITIES UPDATE

NEW VISITOR CENTER – There have been wonderful developments at Allerton over the last few years – developments that have improved accessibility, increased visitation, and enhanced the natural areas. Planning has now begun for a new space where visitors can learn about Allerton and decide how to get the most out of their visit. Our new Visitor Center will be located adjacent to the Café in a building currently used as office space. The planning process began with a public meeting last November to gather input from the community. If you missed this public meeting, you still have a chance to give us your feedback in a survey! We want to know what you care about. Visit “CURRENT PROJECTS” on our website to give your input on this new community space!



VOLUNTEERS – Allerton volunteers have shown time and time again that they are dedicated to supporting and protecting the Park. In 2019, Allerton saw a spectacular effort from volunteers coming out to complete major projects such as the restoration of the Triangle Garden, replanting of the Brick Wall Garden and Evergreen Allée, and landscaping the Rathje Drive. A heartfelt *thank you* to all volunteers. You make Allerton a truly special place!

SUMMER CAMP – Campers arrive at Allerton not long after school has let out for the summer. They're full of energy and ready to get outside. They're antsy and eager to play. They say hi to old friends and reconnect with Camp Leaders. Then, it's time to head out. Morning hike gets legs moving and blood pumping. There's laughing and jumping, running and skipping. Visitors smile as this group of happy kids go by. The sight of kids being kids outside, getting dirty and tired, would make anyone smile. When these kiddos come to camp, they make a second home at Allerton. One that we hope leaves lasting memories. Camp registration opens in mid-February. We can't wait to see them!



For more info on youth programs visit, **ALLERTON.ILLINOIS.EDU/YOUTH-PROGRAMS**. Interested in volunteering for public events? Contact our Public Engagement Coordinator, Mindy Brand, at **BRAND@ILLINOIS.EDU**.



YOUTH ART STUDIO: COMING SPRING 2020!

MINDY BRAND, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Robert Allerton used the landscape as a canvas. Throughout his former estate we can see the designed formal gardens blend effortlessly into the neighboring natural areas. These are the areas where the beauty of design sits adjacent to the beauty of nature. That relationship between art and nature, so flawlessly created by Robert Allerton, has inspired a new program that will kick-off this spring. The Youth Art Studio, a collaboration between the Monticello Area Arts Council and Allerton, is a one-day workshop that will encourage young artists to find inspiration in the surrounding gardens and natural spaces. Designed for participants in 3rd-8th grade, it will provide high level resources and experienced instructors in order to facilitate an immersive experience that allows participants to communicate through art.

Youth Art Studio is perfect for the young artist with a genuine interest in fine arts and communication through art using a variety of mediums. The goal of the Studio is to highlight and expand skill sets and foster mastery of working with art materials, art theory, and culture. This program is not only about the final result, but about the learning experience and ambiance of creating art in nature. Artists will work both indoors and outdoors. The day will culminate with an art exhibit where artists will have the chance to display and discuss their projects with family and friends.

Complete details and registration will be available on our website in early February.



The Brick Wall Garden will be restored and maintained in perpetuity, thanks to a gift from Deborah and Michael Westjohn of Monticello. Originally Robert Allerton's vegetable garden, this space was designed by John Borie, the same architect as the Mansion, and is the oldest of the Formal Gardens. The walkways have been hardened using aggregate concrete, making it fully ADA accessible, and this Spring new plantings will be added to revive the historic garden.



The historic Evergreen Allée at the South Entrance of the Park is getting a fresh start, thanks in-part to Monticello residents Gus and Wendy Schupmann. The Schupmanns noticed the dying trees were being cut down and offered to cover the cost of two replacement trees. Additional community members have stepped up to help as well, funding 19 trees and allowing the project to progress faster than originally planned. Donations are still being accepted (\$225/tree) to purchase a variety of Norway Spruce similar to those originally planted, once again creating an evergreen canopy and upholding the original vision of Robert Allerton.



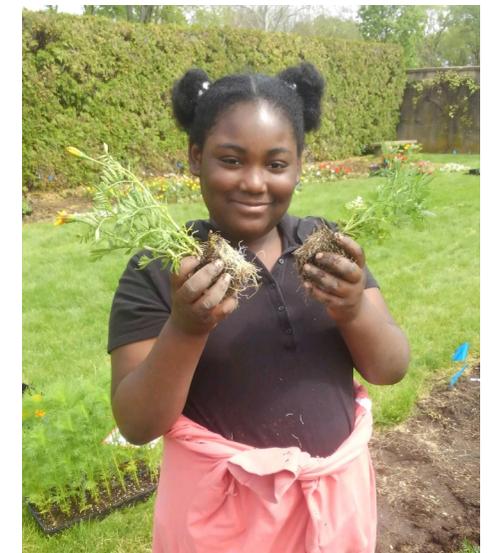
GROWING PLANTS – AND STUDENTS!

MICAH PUTMAN, ASSISTANT FACILITIES MANAGER

The Annual Garden at Allerton Park is a quaint little garden tucked away around the corner of a tall arborvitae hedge, across from the visitor-favorite Peony Garden. Two one-hundred foot long rectangular flower beds dominate the space. Traditionally, the garden was used by Robert Allerton's head gardener to try new plants and determine what he liked and what was suitable to use elsewhere on the estate. To this day, the garden's annual display is designed by Allerton's head gardener. But this past year, three fifth grade classes from Stratton Academy of the Arts Elementary School designed and installed the annual display!

The fifth graders worked through a design packet made by Stratton's art teacher, Priscilla Putman, that included exercises on color theory, patterns and symmetry, and art themes. The classes' teachers, Monty Rose, Chris Gratkins and Brandon Rutherford, were able to use the packets and work with the classrooms at their own pace. I was fortunate to volunteer at the school, working with the students to develop their designs. It was amazing to see these young people think creatively while practicing the math and science concepts they've learned in the classroom.

The student group plots showed care and interest in creative themes such as emojis, fish, pixels, and the queen of hearts. Students were able to get out of the classroom and into another classroom – the garden at Allerton Park! The end result was an engaging project, fun and educational for students and adults alike, and a beautiful annual garden.



ACCESSIBLE ALLERTON

BRIDGET FRERICHS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Most of you reading this have had the pleasure of enjoying Allerton in one way or another. Walking the Garden walls... hiking secluded trails... gathering in the historic Mansion... picnicking in the Meadow... and more. We love hearing about the many ways this special place has been a part of your life. As we look towards the future, we want to ensure that even more people will be able to experience the unique history, nature, and art found here.

Funded by a lead gift from Sandy Haas, our newly created Accessible Allerton Fund will help make this vision a reality, focusing on physical accessibility into the Gardens and Mansion, improving access into the natural areas for those with limited mobility, and eventually, increased accessibility for other types of disabilities

Transforming a former private residence built in 1900 to comply with ever-expanding accessibility technologies and trends is no easy task, but our staff is up to the challenge, and has been inspired by Sandy's passion. Since we first met Sandy, it was clear she wanted to help create equal opportunity for all, drawing on inspiration from Timothy Nugent, a former University of Illinois' professor and pioneer for disability rights and accessibility. She explained: "Tim worked tirelessly towards a goal of making every aspect of the University accessible to all, and after a period, his vision for accessibility spread throughout our country and to other parts of the world. I'm sure Tim would have loved the idea of Allerton Park being accessible to all, and I'm honored to play a small part in continuing his legacy by making this gift."

We are honored to have Sandy's support in making this initiative come to life. Over the years, the way you experience Allerton may evolve, but we hope it will only get better as we work to improve and sustain this peaceful place. As we continue to re-purpose historic buildings and increase community programming, the Accessible Allerton Fund will help to ensure everyone is able to enjoy these opportunities equally.



Allerton supporter Sandy Haas (second from right) joined (L to R), Allerton Director Derek Peterson, Associate Director for Gift Planning at the U of I Foundation Justin Seno, and Allerton Natural Areas Manager Alex Lourash for a hike on the McDonald Family Trails in April 2019.



"As we all grow older, at some point, accessibility improvements will be a blessing to all of us. Nearby accessible parking, combined with accessible paths to and throughout the gardens, will allow us to continue to glory in the peony garden in full bloom, and an accessible nature trail will allow us to continue to delight in the songs of our favorite birds or the sight of our favorite wildflowers." – **SANDY HAAS**

Interested in helping ensure Allerton is accessible to all? Visit ALLERTON.ILLINOIS.EDU/DONATE-TO-ALLERTON to lend your support



ELMER'S CORNER

NATE BECCUE, NATURAL AREAS MANAGER

The small grassland located at the south entrance off Allerton Road has long been known as "Elmer's Corner", named after Allerton-era staff member Elmer Priebe. The earliest land cover records for Piatt County indicate that most of what is now Allerton Park was forested at the time of settlement. One exception to this is "Elmer's Corner".

We believe the area east of Old Levee Road and north of Allerton Road was originally prairie, and is an excellent site for ecological restoration work. Future work on the site will include: (1) Tree and shrub removal aimed at expanding the grassland habitat to the north along Old Levee

Road, (2) Winter seeding and spring planting of native warm season grasses and prairie forbes, (3) Spring and summer removal of non-native species, and (4) Installation of a water control structure designed to increase soil moisture in the immediate area. Ultimately, this project will create an aesthetically pleasing and healthier habitat at the south entrance to Allerton Park.

To learn more about management of our Natural Areas, visit ALLERTON.ILLINOIS.EDU/MANAGEMENT.



CARDINAL FLOWERS BLOOM

ALEX LOURASH, NATURAL AREAS MANAGER

Cardinal Flower is an Illinois native wildflower that is found mostly in mesic soils, and generally blooms from late August into mid-September. This flower attracts different species of Swallowtail butterflies, larger bumblebees, and the ruby-throated hummingbird. Each individual plant can produce thousands of extremely small seed - estimated around 400,000 seeds per ounce! Once the plant is finished flowering and is ready to go to seed, we collect seed to plant in other areas of the Park.

Pictured above is an area of the Park's woodlands that tends to stay wet for most of the summer with little-to-no vegetation. This specific spot

is in one of the areas where we spend a large amount of effort removing invasive species via forestry mower and herbicide spot spraying. Collected Cardinal Flower seed was spread in the fall of 2017 and last summer the plants were showing off their first year of flowers! We focus on this plant because it responds very well in areas where sunlight can penetrate the forest's canopy. In areas that have high density of dying ash trees due to emerald ash borer, the Cardinal Flower seems to grow very well. Look for this native wildflower throughout Allerton as we continue to collect the seed every fall and plant it in suitable areas.



In late September, we gathered on a beautiful fall day to officially dedicate the restored Triangle Parterre Garden in memory of Barry L. Brehm, who found joy sharing the beauty of Allerton through his photography. Thanks to everyone who attended to celebrate with us, and to Dana Brehm and Larry Baumann for their generosity and investing in the future of Allerton!



Larry Baumann and Dana Brehm pose with the plaque recognizing their gift to restore and endow the Triangle Parterre Garden in memory of Dana's brother, Barry (UI Accountancy, '76).

Photo: Scott Pacey

2019 RESTORATION PROJECTS

KOI POND – Donations from the Spring Soirée Fundraiser were used to renovate the Koi Pond last fall. Originally Robert Allerton’s swimming pool, this water feature outside the Mansion’s Solarium is now home to about 40 koi fish. Money raised at the Soirée funded complete rebuild of the plumbing and filtration, as well as the addition of plants and gravel to aid in filtration and aesthetics.

THE GAZEBO – Robert Allerton’s original Gazebo in the Spring Grove Garden was restored, thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor. Over the years the gazebo had fallen into disrepair, and unfortunately due to budget constraints had not been given the attention it deserved. Now, this little-known hideaway looks as good as new, and serves as the perfect resting spot between the Reflecting Pond and Visitor Center. (Little-known fact: Near the Gazebo you will notice two pieces of limestone—the markers of the final resting places for two of Robert’s many loved dogs!)

GREENHOUSE CAFÉ SIDING – During the summer the Greenhouse Café siding was replaced and repainted, giving the Café a new and refreshing appearance.

Shout-out to the best maintenance guys around, Dave and Tom, for their work on these projects!



THE DOME

Be sure to check out our newest special event spaces! Placed in picturesque locations throughout the Park, our Domes offer protection from the elements (plastic cover and a space heater in winter, or a mosquito net in summer) so you can enjoy the outdoors no matter the weather!

Whether you're hosting an intimate gathering of friends, a special night out with your sweetheart, or looking for a creative workspace, the Dome is a new way to experience Allerton!



Photo: Gary Simms
Taken during the Kirby Winter Wellness Walk

WELCOME BACK, THE LITTLE SHEPHERDESS



In the fall we welcomed back a Robert Allerton-original, *The Little Shepherdess and Her Dog*. This 40" limestone figure, created in 1940 by artist Lew Wagy (1884-1968), can now be seen tucked away on the path from the Mansion Parking Lot to the Mansion. Thanks to Connie and Fred Fairchild for funding her new pedestal!

SAVE THE DATES FOR THIS YEAR'S CONCERT SERIES!

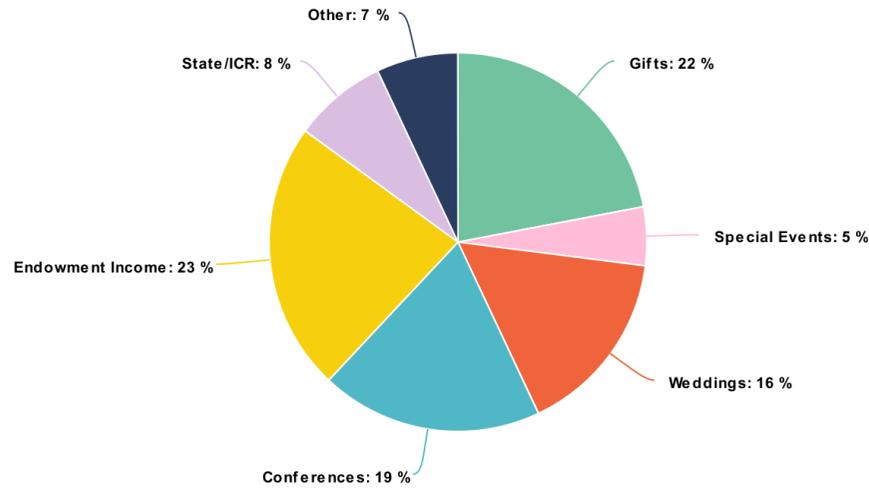


- June 5, **Love for ALLerton**
- July 10, **Reds, Whites, and the Blues**
- August 7, **Irish Fest**
- August 29, **Prairie Sky**
- October 9-11, **Music Barn Festival**

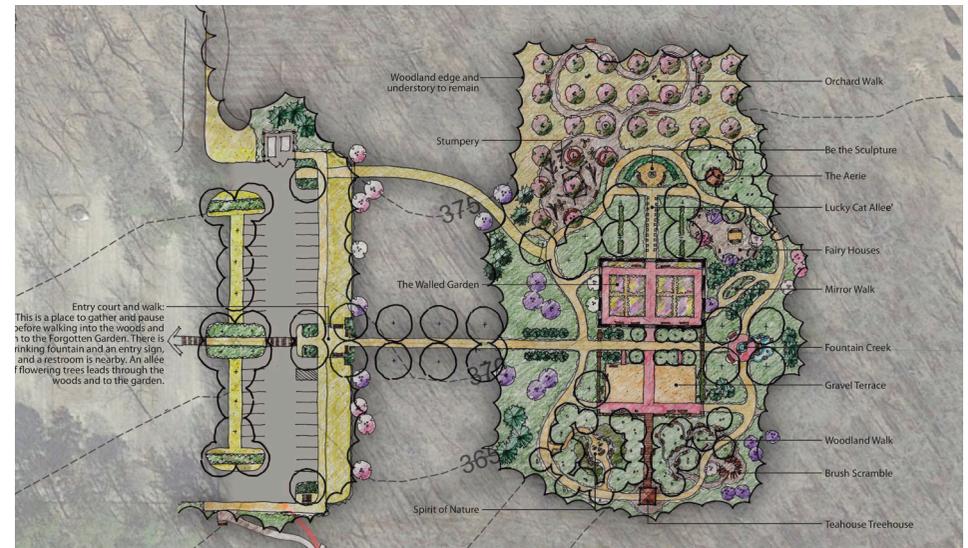
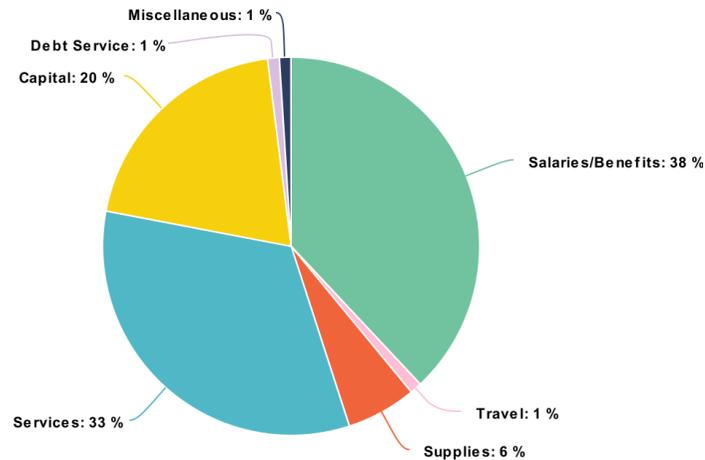
A SNAPSHOT OF ALLERTON'S FY19 FINANCIALS

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT OUR BUSINESS MANAGER, JAN GILL, AT JKGILL@ILLINOIS.EDU.

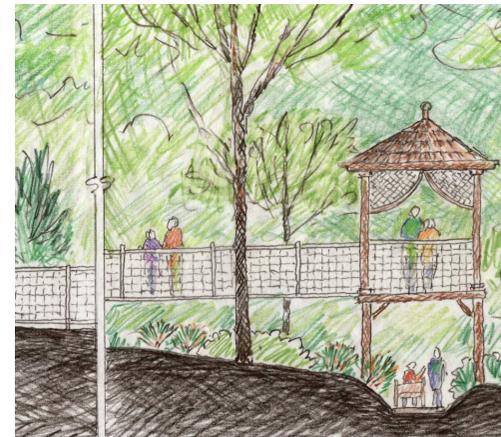
FY19 REVENUE BREAKDOWN



FY19 EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

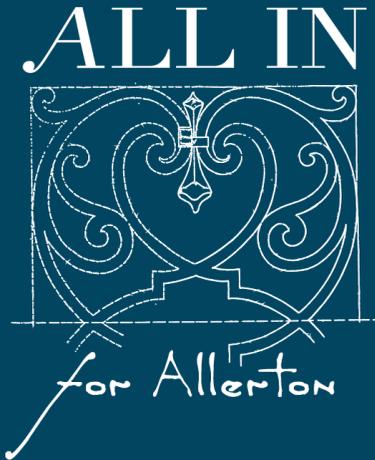


Thanks to support from DiAnne and Terry Hatch, Allerton has completed a feasibility study for a new children and family space, created by W. Gary Smith and the Hitchcock Design Group. "The Forgotten Garden" is designed to further Allerton's mission of increasing accessibility and engagement, as well as highlight the value of nature, history, and the arts in our community. The first phase includes an additional parking lot bay and a quarter-mile accessible woodland walk, which will serve as a cross-generational immersive nature experience.



The implementation of additional garden spaces will occur over the years as funding is acquired. Many of the spaces draw on inspiration from the Park, including the Teahouse Treehouse (above, left), which was modeled after Robert Allerton's original tea houses, previously found in the Lost Garden (above, right) and currently found in the Triangle Parterre Garden. The space would be an ideal retreat in the woods, allowing for birdwatching, nature observation, and fun for both adults and kids.

YES! I'M **ALL IN** FOR ALLERTON!



ARE YOU ALL IN FOR ALLERTON?

We wouldn't be where we are without the support of our donors. Join a family of loyal patrons today, by giving to Allerton Park & Retreat Center! Find out more at allerton.illinois.edu/all-in-for-allerton.

PLEASE MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM WITH YOUR CHECK TO:

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For more information on giving opportunities or specific projects, please contact Bridget Frerichs at bridgetf@illinois.edu or 217-333-3287.

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