



August News from Isles

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**Thanks for your
 service to Isles!**



A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Marty Johnson".

Marty Johnson

Greetings!

This summer, the news in Trenton seems focused on violence and disorder. It's important to view our challenges through clear lenses - the annual murder record will be set soon, and it's only August - but it's also important to see the good work and positive news. The Trenton region has strong groups and leaders with integrity that, like us, live and work here. We choose to be here, investing in places and people with thoughtfulness and yes, high expectations for the long haul. Isles is one of numerous groups that collaborate across the region to see meaningful change happen.

They may not get the media coverage, but these collaborations are evident all across the city and county. You can see them building 50 community gardens and beautifying the Princeton landscapes of Morven Museum & Garden and Drumthwacket. Working with residents and other organizations, Isles and volunteers have created lush oases and beautiful art in Trenton, while encouraging young people to learn and grow outside the city. At the same time, volunteers gain new skills and knowledge, and the landscapes of the county become more beautiful.

This newsletter highlights a few of those collaborations. Enjoy the rest of the summer and keep your eyes on the prize - not just the challenges we face.

In community,

Community Building Through Collaboration!



National Night Out in the Gandhi Garden

East Hanover Street is now home to two new gardens that began taking shape in the fall of 2012. The Crisis Ministry, a hunger-prevention and social services nonprofit, partnered with Isles to develop a garden on the site of an abandoned building adjacent to its headquarters. After the fire-damaged building was demolished, a number of community partners and volunteer groups began working together to transform the space into a thriving garden. Isles and Urban Mission Cabinet coordinated the project,

which includes raised beds constructed by Isles YouthBuild students, a rain garden designed by Thomas' English gardens with plants donated by Pinelands Nursery, and a mural by local artists from S.A.G.E. Coalition.

Less than a block away, the Gandhi Garden has elevated recycling to an art form. Led by the S.A.G.E. Coalition with support from the Trenton Downtown Association (TDA), a vacant tire-strewn lot next to the Gallery 219 is being transformed into an arts driven community hub. Rather than being disposed of, hundreds of tires were turned into flower planters and wooden shipping pallets were repurposed into vegetable beds. Isles and TDA hosted a community barbecue for National Night Out, featuring live music, local produce, and a mobile bread oven. We are excited to have these two new gardens join our network and look forward to seeing them continue to bring the community together.

The process of transforming city lots into gardens requires many hours of hard work and many hands. [Click here to see the evolution of the Crisis Ministry Garden!](#)

IYI Student Interns: Landscaping in Princeton

This spring, Isles YouthBuild Institute students fulfilled an internship with Morven Museum & Garden, where they worked on landscaping projects at historic Morven and Drumthwacket, the official Governor's residence.

During the five week internship, students acquired basic landscaping skills that included preparing flower and vegetable beds, composting, and landscape maintenance.

Additionally, the students participated in a variety of educational sessions and field trips - visiting local farms and Princeton University. At Morven, they attended talks on climate change, African Americans in the Civil War, and organic farming.



IYI students at Drumthwacket



Landscaping at Drumthwacket



IYI students working at Morven Museum & Garden

Announcing: Plate & Place Film Series and Cooking Workshop, Summer Garden Social, and First Time Home Buyer Workshop!

Register for upcoming Isles' events! [Community Events Calendar](#)

[Isles, Inc.](#)

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