

“A Place That Heals”: Whistling Gardens and PaRx Partner to Support Community Health Through Nature

Wilsonville, Ontario — When nurse therapist Carey Ferris first visited Whistling Gardens with her mother and sister, she was struck by the beauty of the early blooms and the winding paths, and the immediate effects they seemed to have on her mind and body. “The Garden had a feeling about it,” she says. “Something serene. I felt calm and happy, and excited to know that I’d be back.”

Carey did return—again and again, drawn by the fragrant flowers, the therapeutic sounds of the musical fountain, and the peaceful walking trails. She found that her time in Whistling Gardens helped her cope with life’s stresses, from being a widowed single mother, to caring for aging parents, to supporting her patients through their own challenges. “I didn’t expect it, but the Garden became an integral part of my own wellness journey,” Carey shares.



As a nurse therapist and registered PaRx prescriber, Carey is now thrilled to be able to share the gift of Whistling Gardens with her patients. Thanks to a new partnership with PaRx—Canada’s national nature prescription program—patients with a nature prescription can now receive 25% off admission to the gardens.

“It’s the perfect setting for mindfulness and healing,” says Carey. “There’s something for every sense—sight, scent, sound. The peace of it settles your nervous system. I’ve

seen the mental and physical health benefits in myself, and I'm so excited to start prescribing time here. I know it will make a real difference for the people I work with."

PaRx (www.parkprescriptions.ca), launched by BC Parks Foundation in 2020, empowers over 17,000 licensed health professionals to prescribe time in nature as part of a patient's overall health plan. Supported by evidence showing nature's powerful impact on stress, cardiovascular health, mood, and more, the program is being embraced across the country.

"We know that when people spend time in nature—especially with their families—it supports both their health and a deeper connection to the places that sustain us," says Jennie McCaffrey, Vice President of Health and Education at BC Parks Foundation. "Partnerships like these help more people experience that connection firsthand. A child chasing butterflies, a parent taking a rest under a blooming tree—these moments of joy and healing grow into lifelong care for the planet. We're so proud to help make places like Whistling Gardens more accessible to those who need them most!"

Tucked away in Norfolk County, Whistling Gardens is an award-winning botanical garden destination known for its serene walking trails, peaceful fountains, a conifer collection, and the largest public peony collection in North America. Each visit offers something new—whether it's the seasonal blooms, a musical water show composed by Founder/Owner Darren Heimbecker, or quiet corners perfect for reflection.

"At Whistling Gardens, we've always believed in the healing power of beauty and peace—beyond the plants themselves," says Wanda Heimbecker, Owner Representative of Whistling Gardens. "Time and again, we witness visitors slow down, breathe deeper, and reconnect—with themselves, with one another, and with nature. It's a joy and privilege to provide a safe, welcoming space for rest and renewal. This partnership with PaRx deeply reflects our values and the spirit of the garden, and we're honoured to support community wellness in such a meaningful way."

The partnership marks the latest step in connecting Ontarians with accessible, local nature experiences that can improve health and well-being. Whistling Gardens offers paved trails and benches for rest, making it suitable for visitors of all ages and abilities.

Carey recalls one of her most meaningful days at the Gardens: her wedding, held under a tent in early October rain. "The fall colours were just breathtaking," she says. "Time in nature has a way of anchoring our most vivid memories because it calms the mind, lifts the spirit, and reminds us of what really matters." After being widowed, Carey found love again and chose Whistling Gardens as the setting to begin this new chapter of life with her husband. "Health isn't just physical—it's mental, emotional, and spiritual too. Whistling Gardens touches all those aspects. It's a place of beauty and a place that heals."

Photos of Whistling Gardens can be found [here](#).

Media Contact:

Chelsea Rooney
BC Parks Foundation
media@bcparksfoundation.ca

About BC Parks Foundation

The BC Parks Foundation is on a mission to create the best parks system in the world, connecting people to the life-changing power of nature and inspiring personal, community, and planetary well-being. Through initiatives like PaRx, the Foundation works with partners across the country to support access to nature, conservation, and healthy communities. Learn more at bcparksfoundation.ca.

About PaRx

PaRx is Canada's national nature prescription program, supported by the BC Parks Foundation and over 17,000 health professionals across the country. Learn more at parkprescriptions.ca.

About Whistling Gardens

Located in Wilsonville, Ontario, Whistling Gardens is home to over 1,300+ peony varieties, a world-class musical fountain garden, and peaceful trails designed to soothe the senses. Open seasonally. Learn more at whistlinggardens.ca.

