

# GARDEN NEWS

Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society Newsletter

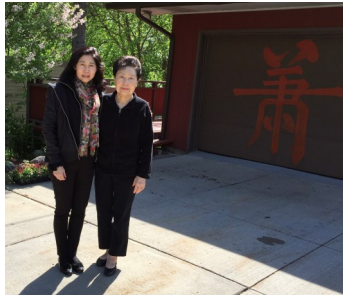


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## From Peacock to Pavilion by Joyce Hsiao, Co-Founder of MCFGs

My first steps into a garden took place in 1930 in the parks of the Imperial City. I was struck by a majestic peacock strutting about the garden. Growing up without wild birds in Beijing, I have never forgotten the beauty of that peacock. A quarter-century later when C.C. and I moved to Minnesota, I was overjoyed to see trees and sky adorned with bright-colored birds – cardinals, blue jays, finches, all flying freely. Every day for the past sixty-five years, the effortless connection with nature in Minnesota feels precious to me. It makes living in the Twin Cities invigorating, thanks to our abundant public parks and natural scenery.



Co-founders Joyce Hsiao and her daughter Caroline Van

The happiest surprise thus far during the arduous development of Liu Ming Yuan is the generous gift of a pavilion from China, impeccably made in Changsha and collaboratively reconstructed in St. Paul. I hope many people feel inspiration within the picturesque China garden on the shores of Lake Phalen. The beauty of Xiang Jiang Pavilion conjures up my memories of the splendor of the peacock.

## Update on the “St. Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden”

by Bill Zajicek, President  
of the Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society.



There were two large volunteer projects at the garden this summer/fall. As a result, the rock garden was completely weeded and mulched; the donor stanchion received a new coat of paint, the Hmong Heritage Wall was painted, and as a gift from the Minnesota Peony Society, nine peonies were planted: three each of the “Krinkled White”, the “America Red” and tree peonies (Fuji-Zome-Goromo, Renkaku, Tai Hai)!!!

More planting was planned, but the Landscape Nurseries had run out of good stock. It's been a COVID kind of year. One of our honorary advisors, Bill Pesek, is finalizing the planting plan for next spring. Those interested in participating in a spring planting, please email me ([mcfgs@mnchinagarden.org](mailto:mcfgs@mnchinagarden.org)). If you want to know who participated so far, they are listed ~ with photos! ~ on our website, [mnchinagarden.org](http://mnchinagarden.org)

Fundraising for Phase II of the China Garden took a big step forward with the approval of the Minnesota State Bonding Bill. It included \$500,000 for the Hmong Cultural Plaza, which brings us up to nearly \$1,000,000 for the next phase. Many thanks to supporters who emailed their legislators as well the MAPC legislators, especially Rep. Tim Mahoney and Sen. Foung Hawj who have supported the garden project since 2015.

Previous funding will allow for the planning, design and preparing a construction estimating for Phase II. All remaining funding will be used for construction. The major elements of Phase II include: the Hmong Cultural Plaza, a Chinese Moon Bridge, extension of the Xiang Jiang Pavilion Rock Garden to the water's edge, and an east entrance moon gate/donor wall.

Before we can begin Phase II, we must first raise \$105,000 to cover the remainder of a loan from the City of St. Paul for the completion of Phase I. The Phase I expenses were higher than estimated due to the complexity of the project and transportation delays. We need your help in covering these expenses before we can proceed further.

During this giving season, please consider supporting one of only two China gardens in Minnesota: a truly unique sister-city project in the Changsha style. You can donate using this link at [The Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society](http://The Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society).





## 柳明園 LIU MING YUAN 2019 GRAND OPENING

THE ST. PAUL-CHANGSHA CHINA FRIENDSHIP GARDEN OF WHISPERING WILLOWS AND FLOWING WATERS AT PHALEN REGIONAL PARK is also known as Liu Ming Yuan 柳明園 (in Chinese) and LUB VAJ PHOOJ YWG (in Hmong).

In our September issue, we reminisced about the creation of the St. Paul-Changsha sister-city relationship in 1988, and in the October issue, the 2016 Site Dedication and 2018 Groundbreaking Event. Now let's highlight our 2019 Grand Opening Events.

On July 12, 2019, MCFGS held an elegant **Grand Opening Banquet** at the St. Paul Hotel to celebrate with its key donors, supporters, and Chinese dignitaries their great accomplishments – raising more than \$1 million in donations and the completion of the **Xiang Jiang Pavilion, Hmong Heritage Wall, and West Entrance Archway**.



Left: Mayor Melvin Carter congratulates MCFGS on its accomplishment



Right: Mayor Melvin Carter greets Co-Founder Joyce Hsiao with Co-Founder Linda Mealey-Lohmann

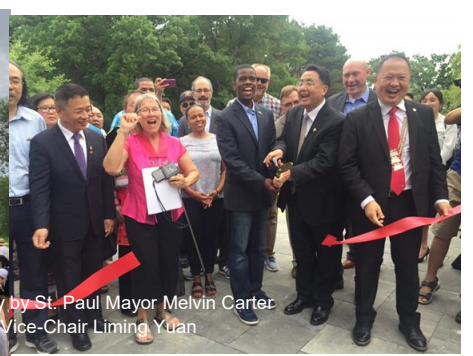
The **Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting Event** was held the next day on July 13, 2019, at the China Friendship Garden. MCFGS celebrated the grand opening of Liu Ming Yuan along with hundreds of community members and dignitaries from Minnesota and China. The dignitaries from China included Ms. Min Zhang and others from the Chicago Consul General office, 5 Changsha City officials including Mr. Liming Yuan; Mr. Wei Jian Xin from Yanghu Wetlands Park (sister park to Phalen Park); Internationally-famous Changsha sculptor Master Lei Yixing, and Dr. Chen Qiong Lin from Hunan Jianke Landscaping, our Chinese architect partners on this project.



Chinese Dignitaries at Phalen Park's Meditation Sculpture, created by Master Lei Yixin (third from right)



Ribbon-cutting ceremony by St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and Changsha Vice-Chair Liming Yuan



Left: MCFGS Board Members and Advisors with St. Paul and Changsha City Officials



Center & Right: A group of Hmong Qeej players led the procession to the Archway, followed by the Chinese Lion Dancers



## MCFGs Editorial Message

Dear friends, donors, and supporters of MCFGs:

2020 was a year of many challenges for all of us! Covid-19 arrives at a critical time of our lives when our country is very much divided politically and socially. However, we did not forget about you. You've been a valued part of our journey from the beginning, and we know you're dedicated to investing in our garden.

As the year draws to a close, we sincerely thank you for your generosity and unconditional support since the birth of this project. We look forward to catching up in 2021. In the meantime, we wish you and your family joy, health, wealth, and good cheer during the holidays.

Warmly,

Wang-Yu Vu

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## Symbolism of the Hmong Heritage Wall

The design for this sculpture was created through a collaboration with the MCFGs Hmong Advisory Group and the Changsha architects to feature cultural symbols of both the Minnesota Hmong and the Hmong in the Changsha area (Hunan Province) of China, and to educate visitors about the historical and cultural connection of the Minnesota Hmong with their ancestral homeland in China.



**Qeej ("Kheng")** is a free-reed musical instrument with a hollow body and six bamboo pipes. Sounds are produced by inhaling or exhaling with various finger placements. Used for funeral rituals, wedding ceremonies, and for all other musical entertainment purposes. Symbol of Cultural Identity.



## Garden Updates or Opportunities:

### WE NEED YOUR HELP — YOU CAN CHOOSE TO:

1. Contribute to paying off remaining expenses for PHASE I ... \$105,000.
2. Then PHASE II can begin: the Hmong Plaza, Garden, Donor Wall, Bridge, contribute to this.
3. Leave a Legacy: volunteer, become a member.

Be part of the garden. We have volunteer opportunities, please contact us.

### Make a donation:

<http://mnchinagarden.org/donation-options/>

**Individuals who make donations of \$1,000 or more will have their name on the website and Garden Donor Wall.**



This couple took advantage of the beauty of the site, captured by one of our volunteers weeding and mulching there on September 26, 2020.

Photo credit: Romi Slowiak

## Garden Stories: The Long Journey of Nkauj Hmong Lucy



February 10, 2018 - The Unveiling of Nkauj Hmong Lucy, one of the five peanuts character as part of the sister city gifts exchange from St. Paul, Minnesota to Changsha, Hunan with the Hmong Advisory Committee at the Community School of Excellence, Saint Paul, MN.



October 09, 2019 - Nkauj Hmong Lucy's final placement at the Yanghu Wetland Park in the City of Changsha, Hunan, China, pictured with Hmong Saint Paul delegation and Changsha officials.

## The Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society—2020 Board of Directors

Bill Zajicek (President), Chen Zhou (Vice-President), Linda Mealey-Lohmann (Secretary), Ken Lau (Treasurer), N. Walter Graff, Barbara Harrison, Snowdon Herr, Joyce C.Y. Yuan Hsiao, Romi Slowiak, Mary Warpeha, Joanie Xuejiao Zhang, Wang-Yu Vu (Editor)

### Please reach out to us:

Email: [mcfgs@mnchinagarden.org](mailto:mcfgs@mnchinagarden.org)

Website: <http://mnchinagarden.org>

Facebook Pages: Minnesota China Friendship Garden | Friends of St. Paul-Changsha Friendship Garden at Phalen Park

Instagram: [mnchinafriendshipgarden](https://www.instagram.com/mnchinafriendshipgarden)