From a spring brocade
woven
of willows and cherries
colors bloom
in the voice of a warbler.

This poem by Otagaki Rengetsu (1791-1875) has been resonating with me this week as the flowering trees burst into blossoms and the warblers cheerfully call, "sweet, sweet, sweet" from the woods.

Warblers have come to symbolize various things across cultures. For some, they’re an indication that you should invest your energy wisely into improving your skills and pursuing your dreams. For others, warblers are a signal to cultivate patience and perseverance, possessing a level of resilience to endure the hardship and sadness that life inevitably brings us. Warblers have served as a sign of music and positivity, encouraging us to sing for joy even during our darkest moments. These tiny birds signify the wholeness of self, representing joy and happiness with a mischievous side as well, as if to say, “embrace all of you and become whole.”

At 577, we’ve been working toward becoming whole with our phased reopening and growth plans. In that spirit, I’m pleased to finally announce that 577’s improved Book Center will be reopening for several preview days as the Welcome Center & Curiosity Shop. The full schedule is listed on page 5, with opening day on May 7th in conjunction with the return of our Spring Plant Sale. This space will be dedicated to lingering, browsing, and learning. Watch for more regular hours in June once we’ve had a chance to “run the experiment”; we’ll continue to make improvements to the Welcome Center & Curiosity Shop through the month of May.

Patience and perseverance have also brought us to a point where it is safe to bring back in-person classes at 577 even better than ever! You can take classes in Virginia’s House, in the Pottery Studio, and outdoors, as well as some that will continue to be held online or remotely. Look forward to improving your skills and pursuing your dreams in new classes!

And, since we’re embracing the joy alongside the sadness, we’ll feel all of our emotions at the end of May with the changing of the Garden Horticulturist guard as Vicki Gallagher retires after being on the 577 team for 28 years. Join us as we celebrate Vicki at an Open House on May 22 (details were sent in this month's eNewsletter).


As spring arrives, may we all “bloom in the voice of the warbler.”

Take care,

Heather Gallant

Heather Gallant
Executive Director, The 577 Foundation
Since the beginning of this pandemic, the health and safety of 577's employees, instructors, volunteers, and visitors have been our top priorities. The last two years have been hard, and we appreciate your continued support, encouragement, and patience.

Our COVID decision-making process has been science-based, relying on our local, state, and federal health officials’ recommendations. This approach has kept people safe. Many of our indoor facilities have already opened for masked visits. We adapted our classes to be delivered outdoors and online, and we’ve made the beautiful gardens and grounds available to you every day. Throughout this time, we have continuously monitored local COVID cases, vaccination rates, and recommendations to help us determine when it would be the right time to reopen additional phases of our plan.

On Friday, February 28, 2022, the CDC provided new guidelines to help communities decide what prevention steps to take at this point in the pandemic, summarized HERE by the Wood County Health Department. These changes have guided us as we move into the next phase of our reopening plan (full details on the next few pages). Please note: 577’s COVID Advisory Team will continue monitoring public health and medical guidance, as well as the CDC’s Community Level ratings.

With these changes to 577’s policies, we encourage you, our dear community, to support each other in carefully considering what’s best for each of us and our households, and to respect each other’s choices, challenges, limitations, and the human desire for life, normalcy, and connection.
FAQ: WHAT IS OPEN AT 577?

The grounds are open for people to walk and play seven days a week between 9am to 5pm.

Features that are open and available every day to visitors include the nature play areas, Riverwalk trail, gardens, and StoryWalk®. Picnic tables are also now available. Some features are seasonal attractions including the Flutter Hut and Did's Dig - will be opening soon. *Please note that all outdoor features are weather dependent.*

Buildings that are open and available every day to visitors include the Bee Room, Log House, Geodesic Biodome, and Courtyard bathroom. The Welcome Center & Curiosity Shop *(formally the Book Center)* opens May 7 with a limited schedule- see page 4 and 5 for more details!

For more info on these attractions, click **HERE**

FAQ: WHAT IS STILL PAUSED & WHY?

The following activities and services are still paused due to renovations or policy updates in the works. Please see each item for more information.

- Guided Tours - *details on page 6*
- Field Trips - *details on page 6*
- Meeting Reservations - *details on page 7*
- Professional Photography - *details on page 7*
Effective March 14, 2022, facial masks are recommended but optional when entering any of 577’s indoor facilities for a visit or class.

This is a result of Wood and surrounding counties currently rated as Low or Medium Community Risk Level. It is recommended that those with high-risk factors continue to mask, as well as those who prefer to wear a mask as a layer of protection for themselves and others.

Masks will immediately be mandatory again if regional Community Levels rise to High under the CDC's new guidelines. If this occurs, our website and our social media pages will be updated with this information. Additionally, class participants will be notified via email.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or other contagious illness may not visit 577’s indoor facilities or an in-person class. Anyone who has COVID-19 or is knowingly exposed to COVID-19 should follow CDC guidelines for quarantine and isolation before entering any indoor space at 577. Click HERE to see the full guidelines from the Wood County Health Department.

**FAQ: DO I NEED TO WEAR A MASK IN CLASS OR DURING A VISIT?**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 577 has adjusted classes and programs with creativity and flexibility. Classes were adapted to be delivered outdoors, online, and in a hybrid combination. The community responded enthusiastically, providing great feedback on how those were working.

Though the risk of severe illness and death is now greatly reduced for most people, we want to reach everyone in the community who may or may not be ready to attend in-person classes yet. Participants who have taken a 577 class in the past two years will receive an email poll to help us determine if there is still a need to continue offering high-quality live streaming and hybrid experiences for some classes.

In the meantime, we are excited to announce the following news about classes this spring/summer:

- In April 2022, pottery class size limits will grow slightly to accommodate more participants per class but remain smaller than pre-pandemic numbers for your safety and comfort. The adult pottery intro classes will return so we can bring new potters into the craft.
- This May, Virginia’s House – the iconic large building at the north end of 577 – is opening for art, movement, gardening, and culinary classes. Class sizes will remain small for your safety and comfort, but more participants will fit into these classrooms than in our original classroom spaces.

CLICK HERE to view full class descriptions and to register.
FAQ: WHEN IS THE BOOK CENTER REOPENING?

It's finally here! The space lovingly known as the Book Center (sometimes called the Book Barn, the Library, the Book Place, the Book Shop, the Once-Read Book Shop) is reopening this month as the 577 Welcome Center & Curiosity Shop.

Our first preview days will be the weekends of the Spring Plant Sale:
- Saturdays, May 7 & 14, 9am to 5pm
- Sundays, May 8 & 15, 9am to 5pm

Browse for the perfect plant for your garden in the 577 Courtyard. 577 staff have been growing organic heirloom tomatoes, pepper plants, a variety of herbs and succulents, water plants, and pollinator-loving flowering plants and all will be available first-come, first-served. Then, complete your plant purchase in the new Welcome Center. (This is the room located next to the Book Center that was previously used as a small conference room/classroom.)

The Welcome Center is now the new entrance to the Curiosity Shop. Upon entering, you will be greeted by a friendly face who can answer your questions. You'll be able to view and sign up for upcoming classes and pay for purchases. The bookshelves in this space have been converted into a display case for the beautiful pottery that is available for purchase, donated by our ceramics students. Coming in June: A gallery wall will feature our founder, Virginia Secor Stranahan, and the history of 577 will also be installed. Rotating displays of artwork, featured books, and plants grown by 577's Horticulture team will also be a focal point in this new space.

We've made some exciting upgrades and additions to the Curiosity Shop:
1. We are no longer planning to hold classes in this space - it will be dedicated to browsing and lingering.
2. We have built new bookshelves to accommodate more of the generous donations from community members. We also reorganized the layout to make browsing and finding that perfect book easier.
3. One of the corners of the Curiosity Shop is now dedicated to like-new and gently-used art supplies. Crafters, teachers, artists, and students can browse a large selection of art supplies for use in their classrooms or at home. Items like yarn, paint, fabric, brushes, canvases, embellishments, and more are now available (items will vary based on donations). Each visit will be a quest to find that perfect yarn color or an item for a new art adventure! 4. We've expanded the children's corner to include more seating to sit and read together, or for little ones to explore books at their height (with parenting books above for their grown-ups to peruse).

The goal of these changes has been to maintain the cozy, welcoming ethos of the space that everyone has loved the last 30 years while incorporating even more of what makes it special.

The month of May will be the time we "run this experiment". We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work out the wrinkles. As the month progresses, you will notice the addition of more open days and hours, including open hours during Vicki's Retirement Open House on May 22. For the full May schedule, please see the next page (page 5).

Look for the full details on Summer Hours and our Grand Reopening planned for June 11 in the next eNewsletter to be released May 25.
FAQ: WHAT ARE THE MAY HOURS FOR THE WELCOME CENTER & CURIOUSITY SHOP?

**Hours of Operation during Plant Sale**
- Saturday, May 7: 9am to 5pm
- Sunday, May 8: 9am to 5pm
- Saturday, May 14: 9am to 5pm
- Sunday, May 15: 9am to 5pm

*Open hours are subject to change with announcements made via social media.

**Hours of Operation for May**
- Thursday, May 19: 10am to 7pm
- Friday, May 20: 10am to 4pm
- Saturday, May 21: 9am to 4pm
- Sunday, May 22: 1pm to 2pm
- Thursday, May 26: 10am to 7pm
- Friday, May 27: 10am to 4pm
- Saturday, May 28: 9am to 2pm

**Purchases may be made with cash, check, or credit card. Sales tax will be added to all purchases.**

FAQ: ARE YOU ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR THE SHOP?

We want to THANK YOU! The Curiosity Shop would not be full of books, magazines, pottery, art supplies, and other curiosities without the generous donations from you.

If you have more to give, please bring your donations beginning Thursday, May 19. We will be accepting drop-in donations of up to two boxes or bags of gently-used and like-new books and art supplies without an appointment beginning May 19.

If you have more than two boxes, please contact Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach, by email at dmarino@577foundation.org or by phone at 419-874-4174 to set up an appointment.

Donations Accepted:
- Fiction: Hardback & Paperback
- Nonfiction: Hardback & Paperback (within 10 years)
- Children & Young Adult Books: Hardback & Paperback
- Oversized Books
- Arts & Crafts Books
- Cookbooks & Gardening Books (within 10 years)
- Travel & Technology Books (within 5 years)
- Rare or Local Books
- Magazines (within 1 year)
- Gently-Used or Like New Art Supplies:
  - Based on supply levels we are accepting: Easels, Watercolor Paints (tubes or pans), Sketchbooks, Chalk or Oil Pastels, Printmaking Inks and Tools/Supplies, and Calligraphy Pens and Drawing Inks

Donations that will go back home with you:
- Damaged books that have broken bindings, missing pages, yellowed or soiled pages, or that smell of smoke, or mildew, or are excessively dirty or dusty.
- Clearly outdated materials including, but not limited to: travel, legal, tax, medical, health books
- Magazines older than 1 year and all National Geographic
- Encyclopedias, Reader's Digest or Textbooks
- DVDs, CDS, cassette tapes, records, or other media
- Computer software or equipment
- Old or damaged art supplies (please give us a call if you have specific questions)
FAQ: MAY I SCHEDULE A GUIDED TOUR?

577 has begun scheduling a limited number of guided garden tours for adult groups this summer. These horticulture-focused daytime tours are offered for a nominal fee. Call for rates.

For more information, please contact Bennett Dowling, 577 Organic Landscape Horticulturist by email at bdowling@577foundation.org or by phone at (419) 874-4174.

FAQ: MAY I SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP?

Unguided Field Trips: We are now accepting requests for unguided field trips.
- Please contact Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach by email at dmarino@577foundation.org or by phone at (419) 874-4174 to schedule your group. 
  Please note: groups are limited to 25 to 30 individuals.

Guided Field Trips: Unfortunately, guided field trips remain suspended. We are working on how to bring this program back better in the future, ideally in the fall of 2022.
- To get on a contact list for future trips, please contact Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach by email at dmarino@577foundation.org or by phone at (419) 874-4174.
FAQ: MAY I RESERVE A MEETING SPACE?

Meeting reservations remain suspended.

577’s need to use the House and Cottage as larger classroom spaces has necessitated a change in how we format meetings. Ideally, the new guidelines for meeting reservations at 577 will be ready in the fall of 2022, with groups who were cancelled in 2020 receiving priority scheduling. Once that has occurred, we’ll announce open scheduling to a waitlist, on social media, and in our eNewsletter.

Contact Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach by email at dmarino@577foundation.org or by phone at (419) 874-4174 to be added to the waitlist.

Want a sneak peek of what we are working on? Groups will be able to request on our website either the House or Cottage for their educational workshop or meeting. They will also be able to view details like available dates, times, fees, restrictions, and amenities.

Please note: Social gatherings that do not benefit the community at large will still not be permitted, as they don’t align with 577’s mission.

FAQ: MAY I SCHEDULE A PORTRAIT PHOTO SESSION?

The 577 Foundation is a place of joy, wonder, art, and community. It is also a beautiful backdrop for memories. Our mission will always be to prioritize visitors coming for nature time, exploration, and relaxation. However, some folks want to use 577 as the setting for photos of special moments in their life. We are working on the best way to accommodate professional portrait photographers on the grounds without disrupting our primary mission.

This is where things stand as of May 2022:

- **Professional Photographers**: Professional portrait photography sessions remain suspended. We intend to open up some sessions this fall with reservations accepted for a nominal fee. To get on a contact list, please email Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach at dmarino@577foundation.org.

- **Amateur Photographers & Visitors**: You are welcome to take photos of nature or to capture your fun visit, but please be mindful of other visitors. If you post them on social media, tag us (@577foundation) so we can share your joy!
FAQ: IS THE PLANT SALE HAPPENING?

YES!

ALL PLANTS GROWN IN THE GREENHOUSES AT 577!

577 Plant Sale

Saturdays, May 7 & 14, 9am to 5pm
Sundays, May 8 & 15, 9am to 5pm

Heirloom Organic Tomato Plants
Variety of Herbs & Succulents
Organic Pepper Plants
Water Plants
Plus! Pollinator-Loving Flowering Plants

The 577 Plant Sale will take place in the 577 Courtyard and sold on a first come, first-served basis. Prices vary: $2 to $10.

All proceeds from our plant sale fundraiser will be invested back into 577’s programs, services, buildings, and gardens.
FAQ: WHAT SPECIAL EVENTS WILL BE HAPPENING AT 577 IN 2022?

Save the Date! Mark your calendars for these fun events happening this spring and summer!

MUSIC IN THE GARDENS

Music returns to the 577 gardens beginning in May for our Music in the Gardens program on our beautiful outdoor stage! Newly constructed in 2021 and nestled into the gardens near the Dome, this outdoor space offers the perfect spot with built-in seating (or bring your own chair) to enjoy a variety of musical groups throughout the summer (see schedule below).

Bring your lunch and a blanket for a fun afternoon, or plan to listen to the sweet sounds drifting as you stroll through the gardens. Bonus! Several of the performances are scheduled during special events like MetroBeet (June 11, July 9, August 26) and Vicki’s Retirement Open House (May 22).

Music in the Gardens ~ 2022 Summer Schedule

- Sunday, May 22, 3:30 to 5pm: Bluesman Master
- Saturday, June 4, 12pm to 2pm: Frenchtown Playboys
- Saturday, June 11, 10am to 1pm: TSA String Quartet
- Sunday, June 26, 11am to 12:30pm: Bluesman Master
- Saturday, July 9, 10am to 1pm: TSA Jazz Band
- Saturday, July 23, 11:30am to 2:30pm: Chloe & the Steel Strings
- Sunday, July 31, 11am to 12:30pm: Bluesman Master
- Saturday, August 6, 10am to 1pm: TSA Steel Drum Band
- Saturday, August 27, 12pm to 2pm: Bridge County Bluegrass Trio
- Sunday, August 28, 11am to 12:30pm: Bluesman Master

Music in the Gardens is a free music event made possible thanks to 577’s donor friends who gave to the music fund in the annual fundraising appeal.
FAQ: WHAT SPECIAL EVENTS WILL BE HAPPENING AT 577 IN 2022?

METRO BEET RETURNS THIS SUMMER!

Metro Beet returns this summer with free self-guided tours of urban farms and community gardens in the Toledo Metro region, including at 577.

Metro Beet’s goal is to inspire everyone to try their hand at urban gardening, whether it be in their own backyard, in containers, or helping at one of these local urban farms. Each garden on the tour is unique. They could include hoop houses, pollinator gardens, chickens, honeybees, artwork, rain barrels, and a variety of other features. Some farms and gardens will welcome visitors to wander through on their own, and others will offer a guided tour of the site.

577 will offer self-guided tours, opportunities to ask gardening questions, plus live music. This is year two for the Metro Beet, and we are excited to see how it will 'grow' in 2022. The planning committee includes members from Central State University Extension, The 577 Foundation, Moe Urban Farm, Toledo GROWs, and OSU Extension in Lucas County.

- Saturday, June 11, 10am to 2pm
- Saturday, July 9, 10am to 2pm
- Saturday, August 6, 10am to 2pm

More details on locations will be available on the Facebook event for each date - coming soon!
FAQ: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE MASTER PLAN?

You may recall that in 2012, 577 purchased land and two buildings adjacent to our property. In 2015, we invited an architectural design firm to conduct focus groups with community members. They used this insight to design a master architectural plan for 577. This plan was intended to inform 577’s future directions and building uses. Specifically, they recommended:

- Increase classroom space
- Increase staff work spaces, including offices and maintenance shop
- Improve the utilization of the lawn and orchard overlooking the River
- More parking *(tastefully designed)*
- Improve the Courtyard for safety and aesthetics
- Improve connectivity with the new property next door

When that plan was finished in 2016, the design firm was clear that they were providing the scaffolding, the 30,000 foot view of what 577 needed to do, but that we’d need to address how to get there. That would require changes to how 577 does things operationally and strategically.

Since 2016, we’ve been adjusting 577 to achieve the master plan, all with the intention of serving everyone in the community better. You may have noticed updates to our technology, policies, staffing, and leadership. We’ve made operational improvements internally that may not be as apparent, and even on several of the master plan recommendations:

- Increased classroom space and expanded class delivery to online, outdoor, and take-home models, all necessary to accommodate different types of learners and more people
- Increased usage of the river lawn, orchard, and Riverwalk trail by installing the StoryWalk®
- Worked with a landscape architecture firm to design a new Courtyard plan and have begun seeking funding for this renovation.
- More than doubled the square footage for staff offices and maintenance work, all necessary to keep 577 humming

In addition, we’ve enhanced other spaces at 577 since 2016 thanks to generous donations from you and grants from community partners:

- Constructed the Children's Garden stage and outdoor classroom
- Replaced the outdoor pond with a fresh new one, plus the interactive solar display next to it
- Cleared and installed a new trail for the StoryWalk®, removing invasive species and replacing them with native and heirloom varieties
- Built new raised garden beds for community gardeners
- Built and launched the Flutter Hut Monarch Metamorphosis station
- Added the Garden Kaleidoscope and *Hierarchy* sculpture

As the pandemic eases, we are working on plans to come back even better than ever! 577 will look a little different in the future as we grow to be an even more fun, welcoming, and wonderful place to learn, connect, create, and enjoy.
FAQ: HOW CAN I STAY UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST INFO?

There are so many exciting changes and events coming up at The 577 Foundation. Here are the best ways to stay up-to-date on all the latest news:

- Subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter. Landing in your email inbox on the last Wednesday of the month, each newsletter previews the upcoming events, classes, and news from 577. To read the latest edition and to subscribe, CLICK HERE

- Check out our social media channels:
  - Connect with us Facebook
  - Connect with us Instagram
  - Follow us on Twitter
  - Watch us on YouTube
  - Follow us on LinkedIn

- Coming soon: 577 will debut an all-new website later this spring! The new site will feature the latest news, events, and classes, plus a complete guide to the 577 grounds and a beautiful section on the history of 577 and its founder, Virginia Secor Stranahan. Visit our website at WWW.577FOUNDATION.ORG.

FAQ: IS THE 577 FOUNDATION LOOKING FOR NEW INSTRUCTORS?

577 is always looking for creative, passionate folks who want to share their knowledge and skills with others.

If you desire to share your skills and are patient, creative, and community-minded, please send a class proposal to our Program Coordinator Connie Stose at cstose@577foundation.org.

We are currently looking for experienced hobbyists to enthusiastic professionals to teach classes in the following areas:

- Culinary Arts: Cooking, Baking, Candy Making, etc., especially cuisine from your cultural tradition or from around the world
- Fiber Arts: Crocheting, Embroidery, Upcycling thrift store finds, etc.
- Movement: Tai Chi
FAQ: HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER WITH 577?

When Virginia started The 577 Foundation in 1988, she employed a couple of people and accepted many volunteers to help her get things off the ground. As time passed, she and the Board of Trustees saw the value of having both staff and volunteers co-creating 577 together, making a difference in the positive experiences individuals and groups could enjoy while they're here.

We LOVE our volunteers. The time, energy, and talent they contribute are essential for the preservation of 577’s historic property, the enjoyment of visitors, and the outreach to community members in need.

All you need to become a volunteer is enthusiasm for our mission, a willingness to learn, and a desire to share with others. Volunteer schedules are flexible and depend on your interest. No previous training or experience is needed. At this time, volunteers must be at least 18 years old if volunteering on their own. Group volunteers may be a variety of ages. Details are below.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **577 Green Thumbs**: Love plants? These volunteers assist the 577 horticulturists maintain flower beds and the beautiful grounds or help lead garden tours.

- **577 Ambassador**: If you love talking to new people, you’d be great at welcoming visitors, providing information and maps, starting visitors on their self-guided tours, or leading portions of a guided tour.

- **577 Docent**: Share the history and beauty of Virginia’s House at 577. Docent volunteers direct people to their classes or meetings in Virginia’s House.

- **Book Center Volunteer Groups**: Book Center Volunteers come as a group from a 501c3 organization. They provide sweat equity, sorting and shelving books in the Book Center, for three months, rotating to a different 501c3 every quarter of the year. Their efforts pay off in the form of a percentage of sales donated to their cause.

- **Group Volunteer Days**: Service organizations, corporate teams, garden clubs, religious congregations, or organized groups of 2 to 25 participants can provide invaluable assistance during single-day volunteer events. These can be scheduled between March to November.

For more information about any of these volunteer opportunities, contact Danielle Marino, 577 Assistant Director of Education and Outreach by email at dmarino@577foundation.org or by phone at (419) 874-4174.
To answer that question, allow us ask: When you hear “577,” do you think of “love”?

Not goopy love. Not puppy love. Not passionate love. Not mere affection or friendliness. Not the “I love chocolate” kind of love. Rather, it’s what the ancient Greeks called “agape”: a love for everyone. A selfless, empathic love, extended to all people from family members to distant strangers. Later, agape was translated into “caritas,” a word that we now know as “charity.”

You might have heard it called unconditional love, brotherly love, selflessness, or universal lovingkindness. Your support of 577 demonstrates that you understand this kind of love.

Our founder, Virginia Secor Stranahan, understood it too. Through her gift of 577, we all practice lovingkindness in the world around us. At 577, we come together, extending the hand of unconditional love to each other, with curiosity and compassion for the betterment of ourselves and the community.

As a supporter and friend of 577, you are a co-creator of this love. You make 577 magical and special for thousands of curious explorers each year. Your donations keep the gates open and the place humming so everyone can experience this love. You stand by 577 through innovation and growth, through joyful moments and challenging times.

Virginia organized 577’s community-building activities around an admiration for the environment and a passion for learning together. Groups of people who feel comfortable together are more willing to learn, ask questions, take leaps of faith, experiment, try new things, and to have fun along the way.

577 is an awe-inspiring, selflessly-shared place to do all of that. 577 is a place of love.

Please continue to spread the love with a generous charitable donation to The 577 Foundation.

We can only do this with you. Thank you for your agape and your caritas.

CLICK HERE to make a donation online for any of our planned building projects, room renovations, organizational enhancements, and gratifying programs.