



CAMDEN CITY GARDEN CLUB, INC

Operator

Camden Children's Garden



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Valerie Frick, Co-Founder of the Camden City Garden Club/Camden Children's Garden, is Awarded by *Philadelphia Business Journal* and Project Porchlight

Valerie Frick Wins 2009 Philadelphia Business Journal Woman of Distinction Award

CAMDEN, N. J. (December 1, 2009) On December 1, 2009, the Philadelphia Business Journal and the National Association of Women Business Owners will present the **Women of Distinction Awards**, which spotlight the region's most influential business women. Their search expanded to women in every industry and profession, women who've made a difference in their communities, blazed a trail for the rest of us and are leaving a mark on Philadelphia business.

The Camden City Garden Club/Camden Children's Garden is pleased to announce that Valerie Frick will be the recipient of the Women of Distinction Award and was highlighted in a November 27th article in the *Philadelphia Business Journal*:

"You see the children...with a joyful expression" Valerie R. Frick

Twenty-five years ago Valerie R. Frick founded the Camden City Garden Club and a decade ago she launched the Camden Children's Garden.

Along with her husband Mike Devlin, Frick has sowed the seeds of eco-consciousness and empowerment through an embrace of Camden's green and pleasant land.

"There is only one supermarket in the city of Camden serving 80,000 people," she said. "But with our community gardening programs, people are eating fresh produce from their own gardens."

A four-acre interactive garden for children ages 3 to 12 helps ensure that this close connection to the land takes root early on.

Ed Begley, Jr. Presents Valerie Frick and Project Porchlight Volunteers

CAMDEN, N. J. (December 1, 2009) On November 23rd, 2009, Six New Jersey residents were the stars of Project Porchlight's Volunteer Appreciation Reception held at the Newark Museum in Newark, New Jersey. An impressive assortment of local dignitaries gathered to congratulate the volunteers on their standout efforts to improve energy efficiency across the state.

Also present to celebrate our outstanding volunteers was renowned actor and environmentalist Ed Begley, Jr. "Project Porchlight would not be possible without the direct participation of real people in their own communities," Begley said in an inspiring speech. Each of the six volunteers has contributed in a significant way to Project Porchlight New Jersey's campaign to distribute energy-efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs to residents across the state. Project Porchlight is an initiative of One Change, and the campaign is made possible thanks to funding by the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and New Jersey's Clean Energy Program (NJCEP).

Now in its second year, Project Porchlight has worked with more than 2,700 volunteers and delivered more than 800,000 CFL bulbs in cities and towns throughout New Jersey. Our volunteers harness the power of person-to person communication, reaching and influencing people from all walks of life to take part in energy conservation. Project Porchlight's volunteers help us distribute energy-efficient CFL bulbs in their neighborhoods and their apartment buildings, and at their schools, clubs, and places of worship.

"Anybody could just deliver a bunch of light bulbs—the Post Office could do that," said Stuart. "We appeal to people in their own neighborhoods to be the carriers of the bulb and the message that simple actions matter. Like Ed Begley, Jr. said, we're using light bulbs to change people, not people to change light bulbs. That's really powerful."

The six volunteers honored at the Volunteer Appreciation Reception were Michelle Byrnes of River Edge, whose work with several Girl Scouts troops often connects with Project Porchlight; the tireless Dianne Clark of Voorhees; Joe DeRado, an extraordinary eight-grader from Manahawkin; Valerie Frick, co-founder of the wonderful Camden Children's Garden; Christina Notas, Campus Sustainability Coordinator of Drew University in Madison; and Joe Rosendale, a resident of Brick Township who has helped his neighbors at the adult community Greenbriar II become more energy efficient.

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BIOGRAPHY OF VALERIE R. FRICK

Valerie Frick, and her husband Mike Devlin, co-founded and co-developed the Camden Children's Garden, which opened in 1999 in Camden, NJ, one of the poorest and most dangerous communities in the country. Through the Camden City Garden Club, which they also co-founded in 1986, the couple participated in every major aspect of the \$8-million Camden Children's Garden, from concept and design to fundraising and promotion. That includes designing and creating 10 award-winning major exhibits at the prestigious Philadelphia Flower Show.

Valerie Frick is Director of Education at the Camden Children's Garden, has a BA degree in Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University and an M.A. in Vocational Education of Special Populations from Rowan University. She is a certified teacher of the Handicapped and Vocational Evaluator. She provides the overall plan for the program and develops the educational components including field trips and vocational testing and advising. She has served as a Vocational Evaluator at the Camden County Technical School from 1978 to the present and has worked at the Camden City Summer Youth Employment Program and teacher of the handicapped at St. John of God School. She also serves as Treasurer of the Camden City Garden Club. Ms. Frick is a lifetime Camden resident and enjoys assisting her neighbors and community.

Longtime gardeners in Camden, Val and Mike were named co-winners in 1985 of the Silver Trowel Award, given by the Victory Garden show on PBS for the "Best Home Garden in America." They subsequently attended the first national symposium on children's gardening, and were inspired by Jane L. Taylor's account of her garden for children at Michigan State University to envision a garden in Camden where children could learn about plants in a safe environment. In 2007, Val and Mike received the Hometown Hero Award from Campbell Soup Foundation. In 2008, Valerie and Mike were selected by the American Horticultural Society's Great American Gardeners Awards Committee to receive the Jane L. Talyor Award, given to an inspirational individual/organization that has nurtured future horticulturalists through efforts in children's and youth gardening. In addition, the Camden Children's Garden participated in hosting the 2008 American Horticultural Society's Annual National Children and Youth Gardening Symposium; moreover, Mike and Val were honored as expert speakers at the Symposium. In 2008, Valerie and Mike were awarded Americorps NCCC's Hero Award and the Sponsor of the Year Award. Valerie was awarded the Philadelphia Business Journal's 2009 Woman of Distinction Award. The list of awards and accomplishments keeps growing as Valerie and her husband continue to cultivate and grow the amazing programs that they founded many years ago to nurture a community in need.

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The Camden City Garden Club, Inc. is an organization that has been greening, beautifying and helping to feed the people of Camden, NJ for 25 years. The Club is a non-profit (501)(c)(3) environmental and educational organization. Originally formed for the purpose of assisting Camden City residents with community gardening and beautification, the Club has expanded to serve 85 families, 34 community gardens, and 24 church gardens today! Through the **Community Gardening and Greening Program**, Club is responsible for the creation and cultivation of scores of community gardens around the City of Camden. In addition to helping to green Camden's abandoned lots and streets, the organization soon expanded to include a variety of community-enhancing programs, such as **GrowLab** and the **Youth Employment and Training Program**, which has just completed its 15th successful year. The Youth Program gives local teens job experience working with the community through the Club's various programs. The Club also operates a South Jersey favorite oasis for families, the **Camden Children's Garden**.

The Camden Children's Garden, now in its 10th year, is designed for children and families. Operated by the Camden City Garden Club, Inc., this is a special place to explore and discover the natural world. This 4.5-acre garden features a variety of themed educational exhibits for children for creative and imaginative play, such as the Dinosaur Garden, a Giant Picnic Garden, Storybook Gardens, Red Oak Run and Tree House, Cityscapes Garden and more! Enjoy great indoor attractions including the Philadelphia Eagles Four Seasons Butterfly House, Plaza de Aibonito, our Puerto Rican tropical greenhouse exhibit, and Benjamin Franklin's Secret Garden and Workshop. Enjoy the carousel, Arrow River Express Train Ride, and Spring Butterfly Ride for a modest fee. Hours are 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Wednesday - Friday and 10:00am - 5:00 pm, Saturday and Sunday. Admission is \$6 for adults and \$5 for children (age 3 -11). Children ages 2 and under enjoy the Garden free of charge. The Garden is closed in January and February. Family Festivals are family-oriented special events held at the Garden on the second and fourth weekends of the month, from April through November. We also hold the Annual Holiday Festival of Lights in December.

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