

VISION STATEMENT FOR THE THIRD THERAPEUTIC GARDEN BY BRYCE BANDSTRA, C.H.

As I toured the third garden space at St. Michael's, it was obvious to me that it has much potential, being in such a prime location. I was also delighted to learn how much love and care and thought have gone into the preceding garden spaces, so I am happy that this area will also be loved, I am sure. So often in spaces such as these, great ideas and massive work go into preparing the projects, and then no one really tends to them afterward. I was happy to see that this won't be so at St. Michael's.

What I would like to propose would be a "**Gold and Sapphire**" garden. The gold would be provided by many yellow/golden foliated plants, and also some plants with yellow blooms. But I would like to have many blue flowers in the garden, with perhaps some accents of blue foliage there as well. I think there are enough of these types of plants in the horticulture world to satisfy one of the main requirements of low maintenance. I also think we could get a fair degree of four season interest in the garden as well, which is something I think is important, and often overlooked. I happen to love the combination of blue and yellow, and try to use it whenever I can. I also think the color of the walls of the facility will make a great background to the garden. Good choice, by the way. The pink flowering cherry and the pink of the magnolias maybe won't quite fit in, but their flowering season is brief, and will add some seasonal surprises to the area. Some of the golden leaved plants may also have blooms that do the same thing, so I don't want to lock us into some rigid design form. I also like the name "Gold and Sapphire" as it implies a richness or rarity to it, and that also could be a metaphor for the lives at St. Michael's.

A second reason for this choice of theme is a passing reference I found in my readings to a Robert Frost poem called "Nothing Gold Can Stay". The text of it is as follows:

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leafs a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

There is sadness to the poem, because it refers to how things which are beautiful slip away so quickly and are gone, much as life does; but, nature is a cycle, and

it always renews again. Eden also was lost, but there was hope there as well with the promise of hope and new life. I am not sure how you all feel about the poem, but I could envision it carved into a stone on the floor, or in the garden itself, or some such thing. This could help the garden serve as a memory or meditation garden as well. The addition of water with a sound, the inclusion of some textured plants for feeling, and it can also be a space that stimulates many of our senses. I also love the idea of the horticulture benches for therapy included in the space.

In addition to the plants, the water feature, the benches, and the poem, we could also feature a number of containers around the space, perhaps some even hanging from the eaves. Or tiles or some other feature on a wall as a focal point.