



## Mini Community Engagement

This program seeks to engage new applicants and organizations from a diverse array of communities in small-scale projects that enhance communities, engage residents, and, ultimately, improve natural resources. We feel that a broad range of communities can benefit from healthy natural resources even if their primary focus is on other issues. Human health, the economy, jobs, community livability, education and our children are all connected with a health environment.



**1,200** sq. ft. of bayscape installed

**230** sq. ft. rain garden installed

**262** native plants planted

**1,300** sq. ft. of impervious surface treated

**19** volunteers

## Spring for a Healthy Stream

The project involved restoration of a portion of Towson Unitarian Universalist Church's (TUUC) property to reduce run-off that impacts the Loch Raven reservoir. The restoration included installation of a Bayscape garden and Rain Garden located upland from the stream to capture run-off from adjacent impervious surfaces.

Both gardens were completed according to plan in 2015. The rain garden was completed on April 18 and the bayscape was completed on June 28 2015. The technicalities of designing and installing the rain garden bed were directed by Mr. Jack Leonard, landscape architect, in consultation with TUUC's Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) and House and Grounds Committee (HGC). The final planting of the rain garden utilized the workshop model of the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC). The workshop consisted of a presentation on the Chesapeake Bay and the reasons for and effect of controlling rainwater runoff, a question and answer period, planting the rain garden plants, and a luncheon.

TUUC led the effort in collaboration with Jack Leonard and interested members of the church to finalize the design, select plants, and publicize the event with the dual purpose of education and recruitment of volunteers. A series of steps were taken to advertise the event: A

notification flyer was prepared 4 weeks in advance, for distribution at TUUC and in the wider community. Announcements were posted to the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy website, TUUC's Facebook page, and in the TUUC weekly congregational newsletters. The TUUC Communications Council contacted local newspapers about the event, culminating in articles published about the workshop in the Towson Times and North County News.

The bayscape garden was installed according to design on the last weekend of June 2015. Detailed planning for installation of the bayscape began in May 2015 with a meeting between the GSC and HGC. The same contractor who prepared the rain garden bed committed to a June 25 date to prepare the bayscape bed. This consisted of removing the existing plants and shrubs, grading, and filling in with composted soil. A team of approximately 12 volunteers planted the bayscape garden over the 3 day period.



## Other Water Quality Issues

On Sunday of the same weekend of the rain garden workshop, the GSC led the annual Earth Day celebration service at TUUC, hosting Kolya Braun-Greiner, M.Div., of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake (IPC) as a guest speaker. Ms. Braun-Greiner spoke to the TUUC congregation about IPC's "Sacred Trees" program and TUUC's role in exploring its relationship to nature, the role that trees play in restoring the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the Unitarian Universalist spiritual aspects of our conservation efforts. TUUC had signed up with this program to plant 100 trees on one acre of its woodland property with the purpose of slowing run-off and creating a native wildlife habitat. In September, TUUC planted the 100 native trees under the technical guidance of the GVC and coordination of the GSC and HGC.

Approximately 50 volunteers assisted with the tree planting, with about one-third from the wider community and the remaining from the TUUC congregation. TUUC also applied for additional tree planting under the Baltimore County storm water remediation program. Just recently, the County planted trees on an additional two acres of TUUC's woodland that were previously cleared of *Ailanthus* trees and other invasive plants.

TUUC is continuing its working relationship with the IPC and entered a Covenantal Partners Program agreement with IPC. Under this program, congregational leaders have begun to articulate their role in caring for the environment by developing a tangible program that is consistent with the Unitarian 7th principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. This effort is ongoing. The GSC and IPC held a meeting to explore ways that TUUC may become involved in other community environmental programs and are currently working to identify and develop a program according to a timeline for initiation in spring 2016.



CBT Grant Awarded:	\$5,000
TUUC:	\$1,877
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$6,877</b>

## Project Partners:

