

## Garden Beautiful Charity Project: *Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center, Therapeutic Garden.*

By: Garden Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc.

As part of the Garden Beautiful Charity, Garden Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc. is working with the Friends of Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center' organization to revitalize the gardens and contemplative area at The Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center in Monmouth County, NJ.

The Garden Beautiful program was initiated by the firm in 2007 to bring beautiful gardens to communities throughout New Jersey. As part of the program the Child Advocacy Center was selected in late fall of 2009.

Garden Associates Landscape Architecture is committed to the continued success of this program and has donated a detailed site design at the start of 2010 and will be providing coordination and project management for the Child Advocacy Center until the project is completed. Installation of the landscape design will begin this spring by utilizing donations of material and labor from local nurseries, landscape contractors, and volunteer groups. The project is expected to be completed by early summer of 2010.



Robert Howe, Jr. LLA, PP, from Garden Associates' Red Bank location is heading the project. The goal for the exterior is to transform the yard of the Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center into a peaceful getaway. The design features a therapeutic garden and contemplative area for the children to use along with the center's staff. Therapeutic gardens are excellent in the reduction of stress and anxiety. They are proven to lower blood pressure, foster positive feelings, reduce negative emotions, and reduce stressful thoughts. In addition to the therapeutic garden, the new design also incorporates a planted memorial garden to introduce color, smell and textural plantings of interest to further initiate a soothing response for the children.

Regular communications through newspaper articles and newsletters will be made to update the public on the progress of the program and continually acknowledge everyone who will ultimately ensure its success.

To donate planting materials and/or labor please call Robert Howe Jr. at (732) 933-2675. For more information on the Garden Beautiful Charity or Firm, visit [www.gardenassoc.com](http://www.gardenassoc.com).

**Friends of the Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center, Inc.,** is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization established in 2003 to raise the funds to build a child advocacy center in Monmouth County. The child advocacy center will serve as a safe, child-friendly facility for the victims of child abuse, neglect, and assault and their caregivers.

This one centralized facility co-locates the professionals who provide the law enforcement, mental health, medical, victim advocacy, and prosecutorial services, resulting in a more coordinated response and investigation into reports of child abuse. The children need only travel to one location to tell their story, greatly reducing their trauma and stress. Without a centralized facility, the children of our county must travel to various locations to access these services.

With the creation of the MCCAC, the child and their families will find a private and compassionate location and will be less overwhelmed by the investigative and criminal processes. The result will be fewer recantations in their testimony and the beginning of their healing. <http://www.friendsofmccac.org>