



PHOENIX GARDEN PROJECT

AT HER MAJESTY'S PENITENTIARY (HMP)

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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We're building a greenhouse at HMP for a brand-new horticulture therapy project. In partnership with [Sun Valley Greenhouses](#), the [John Howard Society-NL](#), prison officials at HMP, and the Research Exchange Group on Horticultural Therapy at the [Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research](#), the [Phoenix Garden Project at HMP](#) is erecting a 20-foot cedar greenhouse and also building raised garden beds for use by HMP participants. As all gardeners know, time spent nurturing a garden creates not only a beautiful outer world, but a brighter inner world, too.

THE NEW GREENHOUSE

[Sun Valley Greenhouses](#) – owned locally in NL by Kim and Scott Wilson – has provided a generous price on a new cedar greenhouse (*moveable in case we have a new prison in coming years*) and are overseeing its construction. We already have a location selected in the prison yard and everyone is excited about the installation of the greenhouse and some raised garden beds. Additionally, an eight-module teaching and learning document is being created that will lead to a certificate in gardening for participating inmates. We're all putting down new roots through the Phoenix Garden Project, and the ribbon cutting for all of this will take place on June 30th, 2021 at HMP.

HORTICULTURE THERAPY

The Phoenix Garden Project at HMP will offer people in the prison an innovative arts-based curriculum that combines mindfulness and creativity with hands-on gardening and landscaping training. The Phoenix Gardeners at HMP will connect to the natural world while strengthening other bonds, too—to the self, to each other, and to the community. Participants will also receive a certificate of completion acknowledging their training as gardeners. Gardening and nature-based therapies have the potential to transform lives. The Phoenix Garden Project at HMP, like prison gardening programs around the world, has a proven potential to end ongoing cycles of incarceration, and to create a safer and healthier community for all.

HOW DID THIS PHOENIX ARISE?

In 2020, the Research Exchange Group on Horticultural Therapy at the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research hosted a presentation by the Insight Garden Program at San Quentin Prison in California. Luckily, a member of the local Horticultural Therapy group also happened to work at HMP. She asked if some interested inmates might watch the presentation by videoconference. Inspired by the program in California, and by similar programs in Nova Scotia and in British Columbia, the Research Exchange Group assembled a project team that includes a botanist from Memorial's Botanical Gardens, horticultural therapists, educators, artists and musicians who have been meeting weekly with a group of inmates and support staff at HMP to get the project underway. The project also relies on leadership from the inmates themselves. The inmates have named the program, are designing its logo, and will help build the greenhouse and gardens. They will take responsibility for cultivation, weeding, watering, and feeding. They will harvest from their gardens and the food they have grown will be shared with their fellow inmates and with the wider community. In this way, the inmates will learn a lot, and will make a meaningful contribution to each other and to their community. The group will work in partnership with the John Howard Society and with prison officials at HMP, all of whom are committed to making this dream garden into a reality.

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DIGGING DEEP: HOW YOU CAN HELP?

We need help to support the transformation from prison yard to beautiful garden, whether through one-time donations, or monthly recurring donations. Every gift will have an exciting two-fold result: donations will help build the greenhouse as well as support the ongoing work of the Phoenix Garden Project, and gifts will also celebrate the work of the John Howard Society-NL. Donations can be made through the [John Howard Society-NL](#) via *Canada Helps*, and will be honoured with a receipt for income purposes.

We are eager to include everyone in the excitement of digging deep and need help from all hands. We have a target of \$20,000 that we know can be realised by midnight of May 31, 2021 with your generosity. Go to our [Phoenix Garden Project](#) webpage and imagine what your donations can purchase! **Our fundraising campaign opens on May 1** – please help the digging begin!

DONATIONS: [John Howard Society-NL](#) via *Canada Helps*
HMP Phoenix Garden Project Website: www.hmppgp.ca

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140 Characters:

Help the HMP Phoenix Garden Project build a greenhouse! Be part of the fun by donating before midnight, May 31. That's our goal deadline for \$20,000. Donate now @ [JHS-NL](#)

Aidez le HMP Phoenix Garden Project à construire une serre! Faites partie du plaisir en faisant un don avant le 31 mai. Notre objectif : 20 000 \$. Faites un don @ [JHS-NL](#)



Sun Valley Greenhouse – heading to HMP