

# **Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden Concept Paper**

*Name, purpose and concept paper written by Jim Embry*

*Submitted October 9, 2006*

**An exciting collaborative community project with eyes on 2010 and the Equestrian Games!**

**Current community partners: Leadership Lexington, Arts Power! and Northeast Lexington Initiative(NELI)**

To: Leadership Lexington Class of 2006-2007

From: NELI-NorthEast Lexington Initiative, Jim Embry co-director

We propose the following project:

**Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden**, a community garden/art project that would be located in the green space at the intersection of Third St., Nelson Ave and Midland Ave. This land is presently owned by the State of Kentucky and managed by the Highway Department District 7 located on New Circle Road. This land was previously owned by Dan Brock and associates. This space and name is chosen in part because it is near the house that Isaac Murphy and his wife owned on Third St. and very near the Kentucky Association race track. An art garden is different from a park with just grass and maybe a single static art element. This space would infuse various art elements within garden elements that would include edible and non-edible plantings. Rather than being a static park, the art garden would strive to be interactive, evolving, expansive and a place to teach values of sustainability.

This area is approximately a rectangle 80ft. wide by 180ft. long with a telephone pole, various business signs and utility boxes located there. This corner is very visible to traffic along Third Street, Midland Avenue and Winchester Road and serves as a gateway into the downtown area and into the northeast Lexington neighborhood. This project would certainly enhance the Winchester Rd gateway into the city for the Alltech FEI World Equestrian games.

This would be a most ideal location for this collaborative effort between our organizations (Leadership Lexington, NELI, Arts Power) and many others. Dan Brock has already mentioned his willingness to donate funds for this project and he mentioned that Smuckers, the mulch company and other nearby businesses would also be pleased to be a part of this project. We see ourselves also working of course with various LFUCG departments, the UK Arboretum, the Highway Department agronomist, Downtown Development Authority, neighborhood associations and churches, local artists and youth.

We see this space being called the **Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden (IMMAG)**. As many of you know, Murphy is the most well known and celebrated jockey from this neighborhood whose record of winning three Kentucky Derby victories stood until the 1950's. We envision this space looking like the following:

\***Outdoor classroom:** Circular areas composed of many different varieties of flowers, native plants and small trees with identification signage as a teaching tool for students and community members. To be used like a mini-arboretum or outdoor classroom. Community garden spaces made available. This art garden would be very interactive and informative.

\***Historical markers:** Within each circular area would also be historical markers of the numerous African American jockeys, trainers and other horse industry personnel as well as info on such items as Kentucky Association track.

\***Art from used objects:** Sculpture pieces that relate to the horse industry made from such things as used bailing wire for sculpture of horses, used horseshoes welded into forms representing the horse industry, wood sculpture pieces, art pieces from found objects, and especially youth art pieces.

\*flags with stable colors

\*demonstration **rain gardens**

\* **Sidewalk story line:** the sidewalk area could be used like a story book of the neighborhood and KY horse industry with such information as derby winners, picture of old race track in the sidewalk squares

\***mosaic tiles** arranged along the curb with horse industry theme

We see this memorial garden also having other associated pieces:

- a very nice tourist-type historical pamphlet that describes the history of northeast Lexington with a strong emphasis on the history of the horse industry in this area. This pamphlet would describe the contents of IMMAG but more. It would also describe such sites as: Thoroughbred Park, the Public Library display of jockeys, Isaac Murphy's house along 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Charles Young Center, the Lyric Theatre, the site of the Lexington Association race track, the 7<sup>th</sup> St African Cemetery no.2, the new school, the Horse Park, and Keeneland to name a few.
- A short documentary film about Northeast Lexington that would expand upon the information within the brochure
- Development of community tours that would guide people from Thoroughbred Park to Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden and then throughout the community identifying such sites as the old race course, historical houses landmarks and could conclude at the downtown Public Library display of horses and jockeys
- Historical markers placed at different locations around the community telling the story of individual, an event, or an experience.
- Streets in the new Hope 6 housing development named after African American jockeys
- Interactive Connections with the new school in particular and also connections with the Charles Young Center, the Lyric, etc.

- **Plays** performed and written by youth, residents and others about historical themes or individuals

The art garden, IMMAG, or with an e it would be IMMAGe and pronounced as image, would be an Experience that would have a focus in this particular space but would also be experienced in various other parts of the eastend and greater Lexington community. All of these associated pieces would be woven together to create a very exciting and informative community collaboration around the FEI Equestrian games and as a continuing contribution to the overall vision of creating a **vibrant and sustainable community**.

We welcome your input and enthusiasm.

Submitted October 9, 2006 by Jim Embry

Community partners:

**Northeast Lexington Initiative (NELI),**  
Jim Embry, Co-director  
Bruce Mundy, Co-director

**Arts Power**  
Joan Brannon

**Leadership Lexington**  
David Cozart and others