

# GardenWorks

(Keith and Andrea Gustafson)

Welcome fellow horticultural aficionados to quite possibly my favorite place to work, the Keeling-Puri Peace Plaza!!! When we started working there it was simply the plaza; surrounded by trees, a lot of shrubs, few perennials and a parking lot. GardenWorks wanted to grab a little more attention in the plaza region as opposed to just the shrubbery surrounding it. In come the perennials and annuals to make it pop. The waves of colors, textures, and shapes represent all the cultures of the region coming together and making something beautiful.



All the

while keeping to the idea of spreading peace and tranquility, since it is The Peace Plaza. The first year in a wave of Wave petunias we found body prints, from people laying in them. That is when I first realized people must like what we were doing there. Well, that or when we see the parking lot is almost always packed with bystanders just eating lunch or taking their prom pictures there. Since then we've added enough perennials to provide color at all times of the growing season. As well as adding evergreens for winter interest and structure here and there, all around the square, saying catch me if you can. Most recently added an island garden to attract butterflies, and native inspired planting beds. Along the way some high points have been designing the flags with flowers of all Rockford's Sister Cities, arguing over

who's favorite plants work better in empty spots, and watching our little children (Plant Material) grow up into blossoming beauties. To my astonishment the only low points have involved broken lights or sprinkler heads. Each year we try to add something new to the garden while tying everything together.

We are in the process of starting an herb garden behind the sister city sign. And, GardenWorks just installed a small transplant with many butterfly attractants on the island closest to the Plaza. But in the future there will be a welcoming gazebo we have to plant around and making the view behind the sister cities garden a little more appealing. So all in all I hope you enjoy your time at my favorite place in

Rockford as much as I enjoy it every time I stop there.

