



Horticulturalist on home turf at Lewis and Clark

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GODFREY – Lewis and Clark Community College’s new Horticulture Manager Ethan Braasch is no stranger to campus.

Besides attending pre-k and kindergarten at Montessori on the college’s Godfrey campus, he also served as an intern during the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center’s 2013 Summer Internship program.

“L&C has always been a part of my life, since I was a child,” Braasch said. “The institution is important to my family. I never thought I would work here, but when I saw this position open, I had no doubt this is where I wanted to build my career.”

Lewis and Clark’s Monticello Sculpture Gardens, for which Braasch is responsible, have been designated by the Missouri Botanical Garden as a Signature Garden site in Illinois, and have recently become a botanic garden in their own right. In the gardens, the traditional edges between art and landscape blend to create a seamless partnership between sculptor and landscape architect.

“I love being outdoors, so, to me, the best part of my job is being able to enjoy the fresh air,” Braasch said. “I have always enjoyed gardening, so having it as an integral part of my career makes me feel very fortunate.”

Currently, Braasch is preparing for L&C’s 2016 summer garden show, “Gardens Through the Looking Glass.” The show celebrates the 150-year anniversary of Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” books, and connects people to plants through garden design, which will pair modern gardens with a collection of historical Victorian gardens.

“The main project I am working on currently is the garden show,” Braasch said. “All of the major projects on my plate coalesce into the show itself. Just about everything will come together in June, so we’re looking forward to that, as well as the intermittent garden tours coming up in spring.”

Braasch also serves on L&C’s green oversight committee. He is working with Biology Instructor Scott Moss, Director of Sustainability Nate Keener and others to implement more comprehensive sustainability practices on all L&C campuses. The group is also interested in engaging the community on matters of resource conservation.

“Of course, I enjoy working in and around nature,” Braasch said. “But beyond that, I love that my field allows me to reach out to other members of the community and promote an appreciation for the natural world. If I can inspire just one young person to care about the environment around them, then all the work is worth it to me.”

Braasch graduated from the University of Illinois with his bachelor's degree in liberal arts and sciences, with a concentration in global studies. Beside serving as an NGRRECsm intern, he was also a Utah Conservation Corps crew member, a position that helped him earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

Braasch is happy to be a part of the L&C family, and he is looking forward to all he can accomplish. He has even set some personal and professional goals for himself.

“Of course my primary goal here at Lewis and Clark is to keep the campuses looking beautiful,” Braasch said. “Beyond that, however, I have set some personal goals for myself. I would really like to encourage more engagement in the gardens, from both the student body as well as community members outside the school. The more people we can get involved, the more pride we can all take in the college's accomplishments. As for my own career, I just want to do the best job I can and see where it takes me. Eyes forward.”

To learn more about Lewis and Clark's Monticello Sculpture Gardens, visit www.lc.edu/gardens today.