Starting from Scratch:

A Beginner's Guide to Developing New Events for the Small Garden
Smith-Gilbert Gardens

Municipal Garden
17 acres
Opened to public since 2009

Annual Visitation 11,589 (2017)
6 FT and 1 PT Staff + CITY

More than 200 volunteers
5,000+ volunteer hours (2017)

$547,000 annual City budget
Collection Highlights
Plants & more
Crevice Garden
EGG HUNT

Member incentive - early sign up and discount

Sold out 2018

Challenges: Limited Parking
50 spaces

Online ticket sales - specific times
BIRD BANDING
WHAT?

Hummingbird Banding
Specific time of year

600+ visitors in 3-hour period

Value added for members:
VIP event for Members & special guests
Hummingbird Whisperer

Local talent - only 150 with Master Permit to band these birds

Branding:
Press loves the “hook”
SGG is Audubon Certified
Connection to Founders

Online ticket sales
Day of tickets - higher price
GARDEN GALLOP 5K
5K

Race Management
Connect to strong theme
Downtown Kennesaw
Family-oriented
Avid runners
$15,000 + net
225% growth - when other races are declining
Why it works

Sanctioned race - serves as a qualifier for Peachtree Road Race - biggest 10K

Not just a Fun Run

SHIRT - changes every year

Connection to CITY - Branding
More with less

Parking Challenge

Not possible to add more events

Needed to make transition away from one day events
We had an idea...
Planning 101

- Budget
- Site
- Sunny vs. shade
- Covering for structure
- Drainage
- Water source
- Accessibility - doors and paths
- Surface materials
- Staging areas for mulch, chrysalises
- Nursery area for growing plants
- Security
- GO Native....
Marketing on a tiny budget

• Leadership Cobb project
• Limited ad campaign
  • Social Media focus
• Created a buzz
• Limited time only!
If you build it, they will come!
Challenges: What donors saw
What we saw
Results

- **First Year:**
  250% increase in attendance in August

- **Second Year:**
  Donors Got It!
With events + summer exhibits: WINNING....

43% increase in annual visitation

30% increase in membership

120% increase in school visits

$1 million impact in local economy

Won award from Cobb Travel