

Laura – please send this release on or before July 15 to the Holland MI press list.

For immediate release.

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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Holland, MI

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Holland, MI on August 1 and 2. This is Holland's third entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. This formidable competitor has won the population category in both past years and has earned two outstanding achievement awards - for tidiness and environmental efforts. The town is one of 28 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Holland is competing against Huntington, WV; Winter Garden, FL; and DeKalb, IL in the 30,001 to 50,000 population category.

Judges are Bruce Riggs and Barbara Vincentsen.



Bruce Riggs



Barbara Vincentsen

Bruce Riggs currently free-lances in horticulture and is involved in several not for profit institutions. He is also very involved in the family landscape design business with his wife Melanie Menachem Riggs who is also an AIB judge. They reside in New Rochelle, New York. He recently held the position of Curator of Science at the Bruce Museum (no relation!) of Arts & Science in Greenwich, CT.

During his 18 years at the New York Botanical Garden, Bruce was very involved with the Horticulture and Education Divisions. He administered the creation and implementation of the internationally recognized interpretation program for the NYBG. He has recently been very involved in elementary school science and horticulture programs. He has worked on projects for the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum Studies. He has been very involved with Mountain Top Arboretum in Tannersville, NY, serving as President since 1998. Bruce is an avid traveler having visited numerous gardens and natural areas.

Barbara Vincentsen is owner of Vincentsen Associates, a medium-sized award-winning architectural firm in Westfield, New Jersey. She grew up in a gardening family and has continued her family tradition in her own gardens, which have plantings shared from three generations of close family and friends. Her Westfield garden was featured in the 2010 America in Bloom program in Westfield.

Barbara is a licensed architect in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, and is a licensed professional planner and certified interior designer in New Jersey. She is actively involved in her community, serving on the boards of the Friends of Mindowaskin Park Committee and Fairview Cemetery Committee. She is

a member of the Westfield Service League and Downtown Westfield Corporation Design Committee, and a past president of Central Section of New Jersey Chapter of the AIA.

The judges commented, " We look forward to our visit to Holland after hearing so much about the city and all the programs they have in place. "

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria.
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.

To date, more than 200 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 21, 2013 at AIB’s National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Orlando, FL.

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America in Bloom is a non-profit 501c3 corporation whose mission is to promote nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.