

Stoneleigh  Natural
a natural garden Lands

Hello. I'm Ethan Kauffman, the director of Stoneleigh: *a natural garden* and a resident of the Lower Merion School District. I have the unique honor to be the steward of a truly remarkable and historic garden.

Stoneleigh bears the imprint of three important landscape architects, not the least of which is the Olmsted Brothers—sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, famed designer of New York's Central Park and the US Capitol grounds. The Olmsted Brothers firm had a 50-year involvement at Stoneleigh, making it the longest and most-documented tenure with a property in their storied history.

The results of the Olmsted's involvement—and decades of thoughtful care by the Haas family—include the sweeping Great Lawn and the Meadow Vista, a six-acre lawn and meadow that provides the setting for a meandering path and is habitat for birds and pollinators.

The 6.9-acre area that the School District has focused on includes a portion of the Meadow Vista, a state champion ironwood tree that John Haas climbed as a young man, and an extraordinary fern garden with some of the largest ostrich ferns I've ever seen. I want to assure you, as the director of Stoneleigh and a garden professional with two decades of experience, that this area is an integral part of Stoneleigh and its loss would be devastating to rest of the property.

We have had an incredible response from the community since we opened to the public on Sunday, May 13th. Even with several days of rain, Lower Merion residents have been visiting Stoneleigh in droves to enjoy its tranquility, delight in its history, and learn about the benefits of gardening in concert with nature. I've been told by many how much they appreciated the opportunity to experience Stoneleigh. I've been told by many how important Stoneleigh is to Lower Merion.

And I've been told by many that we can't lose Stoneleigh. Thank you.