



Heroes to Hives Beekeeping Conference: 1st Annual Gathering for Military Service Members

Hosted at The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Presenter Biographies (in order by last name)

Valerie Carter, MS, CTRS/L VA Recreation Therapist

Valerie Carter joined the VA Medical Center in Manchester, NH in 2017 as a Recreation Therapist . In this role, she worked to develop an outpatient RT program. She is responsible for establishing the HIVES program (Honeybee Initiative for Veterans Empowerment and Support). She is a certified yoga teacher (CYT-200), and has been keeping bees in New Hampshire and Massachusetts since 2014.

Derek Carwood

Adult Education Manager, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Derek Carwood is the Manager of Adult Education at the Arboretum and has been involved in horticulture for over 30 years. He has a masters degree in Sustainability Education and experience working in the United States and abroad, including North, Central, and South America, Europe, and Asia. In his free time, Derek enjoys spending time outdoors or traveling with his family.



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**Clara Costello,
Beekeeper, Equipment Manager and Creative Consultant, UMN
Bee Squad**

Clara Costello started beekeeping as a student in the Bee Squad's Mentoring Apiary Program. She discovered she had a talent, and joined the Bee Squad team in 2014. Clara holds a B.A. in German and Theatre Arts, with a minor in Biology, from the University of Minnesota, Morris. Besides beekeeping, she remains an active part of the Twin Cities' theater community.

**Ping Honzay
Beekeeper Educator at the UMN Landscape Arboretum**

Ping joined the UMN Landscape Arboretum in 2016 as an educator and beekeeper at the newly opened Tashjian Bee and Pollinator Discovery Center. She loves exploring the amazing world of bees and pollinators with students and visitors. She has an MS in Natural Resources with a focus in Environmental Education, a BS in Zoology with minors in Botany and Spanish, and has had the joy of getting to work with honey bees since 2014.



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Adam Ingrao, PhD

National Director & Co Founder of Heroes to Hives

Dr. Adam Ingrao holds a BS in Agriculture and Plant Science from California Polytechnic State University and a PhD in Entomology from Michigan State University. He is the Co-Founder and National Director for the Heroes to Hives program and an Outreach Specialist at Michigan Food and Farming Systems. Dr. Ingrao has been working in sustainable agriculture for 30 years and with honey bees professionally for 17 years, teaching beekeeping to audiences around the world.

Beth Fisher

Culinary Coordinator

Chef Beth brings an extensive culinary background including Chef de Cuisine at Lucia's Restaurant, opening chef at Wise Acre Eatery and Kruse Markit, as a private chef, and as an instructor at various culinary schools in the metro area.



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Katie Lee, PhD
Apiculture Extension Educator & Minnesota NCR-SARE
Co-Coordinator

Katie Lee is the University of Minnesota Apiculture Extension Educator and MN Co-coordinator for the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant program. Katie received a MS and PhD specializing in honey bees. She traveled the U.S. assessing beekeeper colonies, and kept >200 colonies for a project on the benefits of pollinator plantings. Katie currently works with the UMN Bee Lab on developing beekeeper education and does a bit of practical research.

Monica Schmitt
Director of Mission Beelieve, 501c3

At Mission Beelieve, a Veterans and First Responder Educational beekeeping program, Monica educates on the importance of becoming a sustainable beekeeper and having the right support system to reach that goal. Monica gained that dedication and passion derived from her honeybees, she won best in show for Extracted Honey at EAS 2019, President of CCBA, and one the creators of Mission Beelieve. Seizing every opportunity that she can, to get the word out about the benefits of beekeeping and how to support all pollinators; her love for education and outreach are infectious.



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Jenny Warner

Beekeeper and Team Leader, UMN Bee Squad

Jenny Warner has been a valued member of the UMN Bee Lab since 1997 and is a founding member of the UMN Bee Squad. She graduated with a B.S. in Horticultural Food Production and a minor in Soil Science from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Nelson Williams

Apiary Manager, UMN Bee Lab

Nelson Williams serves as the Apiary Manager and Primary Building Contact supporting the work and research of the UMN Bee Lab. His professional career in honey bee management and research began in 2017 at Purina Farms Animal Nutrition Center in Gray Summit, Missouri developing a protein supplement for honey bees. In 2019, he joined the Bee Informed Partnership as a Honey Bee Health Field Specialist supporting the health of commercial beekeeping operations based in MN, ND, and WI. In 2022, his role within the Bee Lab expanded to spearheading the management of the queen breeding program, research colonies, and beekeeping equipment. Outside of work, he enjoys playing hockey and exploring national and state parks.



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