



2025 Charles J. Tornetta Planning Advocate Award Winner

Foulkeways at Gwynedd

Lower Gwynedd Township





Foulkeways at Gwynedd, an exceptional nonprofit continuing care retirement community in Lower Gwynedd Township, received the 2025 Charles J. Tornetta Planning Advocate Award for sustainability planning, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. This outstanding initiative demonstrates a commitment to environmental preservation, responsible land use, and a shared value of sustainability, which is integrated into the daily lives and management of this appealing community.

Sustainability Planning

Established in 1967 by the Gwynedd Friends Meeting, Foulkeways pioneered the life care model on the East Coast and continues to lead through its innovative and inclusive approach to thoughtful planning and sustainability.

Foulkeways, comprised of 130 acres, has proactively embedded comprehensive sustainability into its strategic planning—encompassing land use, energy, habitat restoration, and education. Initiatives include:

- Forest restoration projects that remove invasive species, reintroduce native plants, and protect young growth from deer damage to encourage the



long-term restoration of forest habitats within the campus.

- “Our Model Woodland,” which serves as an educational model for healthy ecosystems.
- “No Mow” zones planted with native wildflowers to support pollinators and reduce fuel and labor costs associated with traditional lawn maintenance.
- Naturalized stormwater management focused on infiltration of stormwater runoff and preservation of natural drainage patterns across the campus.
- Trail systems within the campus that connect to the township trail network, facilitating and promoting recreation and wellness for residents.

These efforts reflect a sophisticated understanding of ecological planning and a commitment to long-term environmental and physical health.

Environmental Stewardship

The Environmental Stewardship Committee, formed in 2017, operates through two working groups: Campus Ecology and Personal Practices. The committee, with support from the administration, has catalyzed numerous resident-led



initiatives, including:

- A campus-wide composting program, which has reduced landfill waste by over a ton each month while creating compost for the many gardens on the campus.
- Plastic waste reduction, achieved through transitioning to reusable plastic and compostable containers for dining services and eliminating the use of Styrofoam.
- Native plant propagation and public plant sales that enhance regional biodiversity and provide educational opportunities for residents.
- Workshops, garden tours, and bird walks that engage residents and promote environmental education.
- Fossil fuel reductions through the use of geothermal heating and cooling systems, electric vehicle charging stations, and solar panel installations that help Foulkeways work toward the goal of generating over half of its energy from solar within the next decade. These projects are not only ecologi-

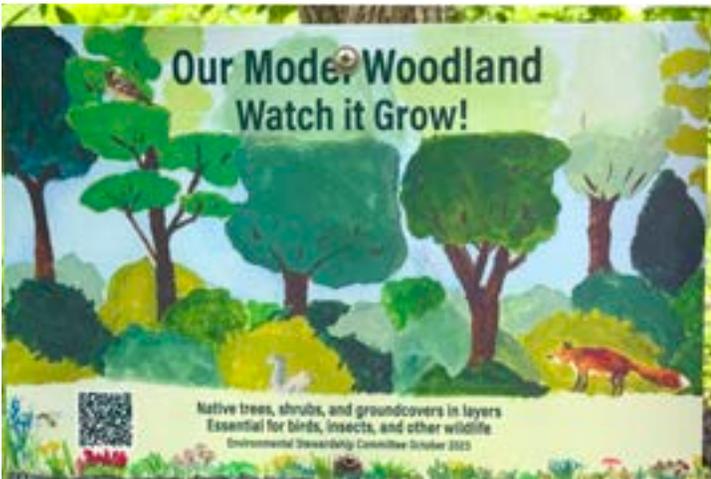
cally beneficial but also foster a culture of wellness and engagement. Residents report improved health and well-being, directly tied to their active participation in environmental efforts, because they feel empowered to take direct action and be involved in identifying future initiatives.

Community Engagement and Leadership

The current collaboration between the Foulkeways board, administration, residents, and staff is deeply rooted in shared values of sustainability and community engagement. Residents actively lead initiatives, such as composting, native plant propagation, and educational programs, supported by the administration and the Environmental Stewardship Committee. Staff and leadership integrate ecological planning into campus operations, including stormwater management, energy use, and habitat restoration. This collective effort fosters wellness, empowerment, and regional leadership in sustainable practices.

The sustainability programs at Foulkeways have yielded measurable and meaningful results and demonstrate visionary leadership in all aspects of environmental planning. Its desire to build upon this success by extending





outreach and advocacy on environmental issues beyond its borders is admirable. Foulkeways has initiated dialogue with other senior communities to share best practices and is planning a regional conference to promote environmental stewardship. Its Earth Week programming, featuring internal and external speakers, educates and inspires both residents and the broader Montgomery County community. Lower Gwynedd Township has also recognized Foulkeways as a mentor site for other large landowners, underscoring its influence and effectiveness in promoting sustainable land management practices.




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The Charles J. Tornetta Planning Advocate Award recognizes significant and sustained contributions to advancing or promoting planning in Montgomery County. The award honors Charlie Tornetta's dedication to planning and the betterment of the county by serving on the Montgomery County Planning Commission Board for over 50 years. Foulkeways at Gwynedd embodies the spirit of sustainable planning and advocacy and demonstrates excellence in planning through strategic land use and energy initiatives, meaningful community-wide engagement, and regional influence. Foulkeways is not just a retirement community—it is a living example of what planning advocacy can achieve when rooted in shared values, strategic vision, and collective action and serves as a model for how communities can thrive through thoughtful planning, environmental stewardship, and community collaboration.

Excellence in Planning and Design

The annual Montgomery Awards recognize the best in planning, design, and advocacy in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations and professionals.