



News Release

Rick Dunlap, Public Relations Director

Hershey Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau
3211 North Front Street, Suite 301-A, Harrisburg, PA 17110
Web: www.VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org
Facebook: [HersheyHarrisburg](https://www.facebook.com/HersheyHarrisburg)
Twitter: [@HHRVB4Media](https://twitter.com/HHRVB4Media) - and - [@HHRVB](https://twitter.com/HHRVB)
Email: Rick@HersheyHarrisburg.org
Cell: 717-884-3328

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Hershey Gardens hires Smithsonian butterfly & insect expert as new Associate Director & new Director of Hershey Gardens is named



MEDIA: For more information on this announcement or to request images/logos please contact Anthony Haubert at The M.S. Hershey Foundation by emailing athaubert@mshersheyfoundation.org or by calling 717-298-2214 or cell 717-230-9160. Bookmark www.HersheyPA.com.

HERSHEY, PA (July 23, 2015) – Hershey Gardens today announced Daniel K. Babbitt has been named associate director of Hershey Gardens and Mariella Trosko has been promoted to director of Hershey Gardens.

Daniel K. Babbitt

Dan Babbitt was most recently manager of the Insect Zoo and Butterfly Pavilion at the Smithsonian Institution. As associate director at [Hershey Gardens](#), Babbitt will manage the Butterfly Atrium in the new [Milton & Catherine Hershey Conservatory](#), presently under construction. He is also charged with expanding educational content and programming, and leading the conservatory's team of horticulturalists, educators, special event coordinators and volunteers.

Educational programming and content under Babbitt's direction will focus on North American and tropical butterflies. Additionally, he is tasked with expanding exhibits and programming to include a wider variety of arthropods. Babbitt will also lead the design, installation, maintenance and care of conservatory plant displays, including the conservatory's collection of woody, tropical, herbaceous and annual plants.

"We are carefully planning every aspect of the conservatory, from horticulture and butterflies to school programs and environmental systems," said Don Papson, executive director of The M.S. Hershey Foundation. "Equally important is to have the right staff in place to ensure the conservatory—and the entire Gardens—reaches its fullest potential. Dan's expertise complements the goals we've set out to accomplish with the new conservatory."

As manager at the Smithsonian, Babbitt supervised 150 volunteers and a staff of eight. He also enhanced the visitor experience by updating aging exhibits and expanding educational programs related to live arthropods. During his 17-year tenure at the Smithsonian, Babbitt increased the Institution's live arthropod collection by 50 percent and oversaw record years in income and attendance. He has served on the White House Pollinator Education Committee and co-authored a lecture for the Entomological Society of America on the role of insects for science outreach.

Babbitt earned a bachelor's degree in biology with a concentration in environmental studies from Kalamazoo College. He also completed post graduate work at Universidad de San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador. He has 20 years of experience in the field of entomology and environmental studies.

Mariella Trosko

Mariella Trosko has been promoted to director of Hershey Gardens, responsible for strategic planning, budget oversight and managing all educational, horticultural, botanical and operational functions at Hershey Gardens. She will also lead the Gardens' guest experience and visitor interaction efforts.

Since 2007, Trosko served as director of education for The M.S. Hershey Foundation. As director of education, she oversaw all educational initiatives and programming for Hershey Gardens, The Hershey Story and Hershey Theatre, including the Hershey Theatre Apollo Awards. Trosko's prior roles at the Foundation have also included her serving as assistant director of visitor services and a master's intern with the senior curator at the former Hershey Museum. She has been with The M.S. Hershey Foundation since 2003.

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The M.S. Hershey Foundation exists to preserve and enhance Milton Hershey's legacy and community vision and to provide educational and cultural enrichment to residents of Hershey. Hershey Community Archives, Hershey Gardens, Hershey Theatre and The Hershey Story, The Museum on Chocolate Avenue are operating divisions of the Foundation. www.mshersheyfoundation.org