Baker Museum & Arboretum Reopens

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One of Bowling Green’s best kept secrets is now open to the public for everyone to enjoy.

Amy Bingham has more on just what the Baker Arboretum and Downing Museum has to offer.

“We work in paradise here. We get to work with red conifers, Japanese maples, we have edible gardens.”

WKU senior horticulture student Dennis Williams knows his internship at the Baker Arboretum is an unbelievable opportunity.

“I love working outside, working with plants makes me happy and you get to see the product of what you’re doing.”

The Baker Arboretum, founded in 1992 by Jerry Baker, is located on the outskirts of Bowling Green and includes the Downing Museum.

“There aren’t very many universities that have a 120 acre arboretum with a museum in the middle of it. “

This treasure trove of art work created by renowned artist Joe Downing, brother of WKU President Dero Downing, almost went up in smoke nearly 16 months ago.

“I think its miraculous that we are up and running in that amount of time.”

After fire broke out at the museum in June of 2013, it was all WKU hands on deck to salvage 1200 pieces of art.

“I went up to President and Mrs. Ransdell and I said I need trucks. They got on the phone and said we need every empty truck on Western’s campus and every free set of hands at the Arboretum now.”

Lots of photographs of Downing are now featured in the museum along with his art on loan from another gallery and some pieces that were stored in the basement of Jerry Baker’s home.

A recent celebration marking the reopening of the museum was a chance to thank the many volunteers who’ve had a hand in the restoration.

And reveal that this tragedy has set in motion plans to put this beautiful backdrop on everyone’s radar.

“It’s been a secret in Bowling Green for a long time but now we are going to open to the public and we are very excited about that.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Restoration is continuing on the art that was damaged in the fire.

The museum and arboretum are now open to the public from noon until six Tuesday through Friday and noon until four on Saturdays. It’s free of charge. If you would like to arrange an official tour, log onto wku-dot-edu slash baker arboretum.

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