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Press Release

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Chicago Park District Releases New Book on History of Garfield Park Conservatory & Chicago's West Side

Chicago, IL – As a tribute to the Garfield Park Conservatory's centennial birthday celebration, **Inspired by Nature: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago's West Side** tells the story of how nature, horticulture, and urban design shaped one of the nation's most stunning and intriguing botanical havens within the context of seminal park and boulevard system.

"We are excited to celebrate 100th year anniversary of our West Side gem, the Garfield Park Conservatory with the world," said Tim Mitchell, Chicago Park District General Superintendent & CEO. "I can't think of a better way to kick-off this monumental year than with the launch of this masterfully created book that details the Conservatory and West Side neighborhood's history. "

Written by **Julia S. Bachrach** and **Jo Ann Nathan** with a foreword by acclaimed author Alex Kotlowitz this new book will be available in bookstores in **November**. Published by the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance in partnership with the Chicago Park District and distributed by the University of Chicago Press Inspired by Nature was funded by Chicago Park District, Lead Corporate Sponsor Sara Lee Foundation, Chicago Public Schools, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and Parkways Foundation.

The Garfield Park Conservatory was considered revolutionary when it opened in 1908. Its renowned Prairie style designer, Jens Jensen, created compositions of tropical plantings, water features, and stonework that were in shocking contrast to the typical Victorian greenhouses. Even earlier, the surrounding landscape had compelling beginnings set forth by architect, planner, and landscape designer William Le Baron Jenney. For more than a century, nature has influenced Garfield Park, its magnificent conservatory and surrounding West Side community.

Inspired by Nature tells a fascinating story through historical essays and the reflections of both young and old residents, past and present. This volume is richly illustrated with historic images and current photography by Brook Collins, and is essential for anyone interested in Chicago history, urban parks and communities, and the botanic splendor of the Garfield Park Conservatory.

Julia S. Bachrach is the historian of the Chicago Park District. She is the author of the critically acclaimed *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks* and contributor to *The Oxford Companion to the Garden and Midwestern Landscape Architecture*.

Jo Ann Nathan is a consulting landscape historian and director of the Jens Jensen Legacy Project. She serves on the boards of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, the Parkways Foundation, and Mayor Daley's Landscape Task Force.

Together, the authors were curators of the exhibition *A Force of Nature: The Life and Work of Jens Jensen* at the Chicago Cultural Center and collaborated on *Columbus Park: A Prairie Idealized*, a web-based documentary produced by the Cultural Landscape Foundation.

Alex Kotlowitz is the author of "There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America" (1992), "The Other Side of the River: A Story of Two Towns, a Death and America's Dilemma" (1998), and "Never a City So Real" (2004). He is the recipient of the Helen B. Bernstein Award for Excellence in Journalism, the Carl Sandburg Award, and a Christopher Award. The New York Public Library selected "There Are No Children Here" as one of the 150 most important books of the century.

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Garfield Park Conservatory turns 100 years old in 2008, celebrating its heritage as one of the world's largest botanical gardens under glass. Owned by the Chicago Park District and operated in partnership with the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, the innovative horticultural masterpiece was designed by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen. Many activities and programs are planned to commemorate this Centennial. For the latest information, call the Alliance at 773-638-1766 ext. 13 or visit www.garfieldconservatory.org.