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For Immediate Release

**Learning Experiences Inside Every Leaf
at Garfield Park Conservatory Exhibit**

Top 10 Reasons for Teachers to Visit “Sugar from the Sun”

CHICAGO (Jan. 29, 2008) – Teachers and their students won’t want to miss “Sugar from the Sun,” a living exhibit opening March 1 at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Ave., Chicago.

The exhibit – designed for learners of all ages - tells the story of how plants grow. Using novel and experiential techniques, the exhibit shows how plants provide everything human beings need for life. The groundbreaking exhibit:

1. **Brings a seemingly invisible process to the forefront.** Even though we can’t see it, right now, inside every green leaf around us, plants are using sunlight energy to change small parts of water and air into sugar. This process is called photosynthesis.
2. **Is especially relevant to everyday life.** Green plants use the sugar they produce to grow and live. Plants are used by people and animals as food, fuel, fiber, medicine and building material. Almost everything around us can be traced back to the sugar made by green plants.
3. **Presents a difficult science topic in an accessible way.** Photosynthesis is an extremely complex process that can be difficult to understand and difficult to teach. In “Sugar from the Sun,” there are no chemical equations or scientific language. There are distinct botanical environments that immerse students in the elements plants need to fuel life on Earth – sunlight, water, air and sugar.

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“Sugar from the Sun” for Educators//Add One

4. **Supports textbook information about photosynthesis with an active, living story.**
Research shows augmenting students’ textbook learning with meaningful, real-life experience is essential to successful education. “Sugar from the Sun” is the quintessential example of plants in action!
5. **Helps make connections between green plants and all life on Earth.** As important as plants are to life, they often get shuffled to the background or even go completely unnoticed. “Sugar from the Sun” is designed to make students look at plants in new ways and appreciate the degree to which they support life on Earth.
6. **Provides opportunities to see things students wouldn’t normally see in Chicago.** This exhibit – and the entire Garfield Park Conservatory -- is full of tropical plant wonders and beautiful structures. Encounter fresh banana bunches, a stand of sugar cane, rare orchids, submerged mangroves and much more cradled in 200 tons of hand-picked stone, 3,900 linear feet of bent steel and 300 cubic yards of freshly mixed soil.
7. **Integrates its concepts into the Conservatory’s other programs and activities.** The important concepts of this new exhibit are being integrated into all the Conservatory’s experiences, including teacher training, field trips and weekend programming. Throughout the visit, teachers and students will encounter ideas that reinforce and build on the “Sugar from the Sun” exhibit.
8. **Will have a companion Web site.** In 2008, the “Sugar from the Sun” project will launch an educational Web site, www.SugarFromTheSun.com, offering fresh, accessible approaches to the topic of photosynthesis. Lifelong learners can dig deeper into the amazing process with more detailed, scientific information and links to articles, research and information from around the world.
9. **Supports Illinois and national learning standards.** Although there is something for everyone in this exhibit, “Sugar from the Sun” was developed to support both state and national science learning standards at the 5th through 8th grade levels. Standards address (but are not limited to) structure, function and adaptation in living organisms; energy flow and transfer; and ecological interdependence.

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“Sugar from the Sun” for Educators//Add Two

10. **Offers free field trips!** Admission to Garfield Park Conservatory is always free and the new “Sugar from the Sun” exhibit is no exception. All groups must register before visiting. For information about bringing a group to the Conservatory, please contact the school program facilitator at 773-638-1766, extension 25, or visit the Web site at www.garfieldconservatory.org/field_trips.htm.

“Sugar from the Sun” is a highlight of “Chicagoasis: The Greenest Show on Earth” – a year-long celebration of the Conservatory’s 100th birthday in 2008. A series of centennial events and programs are planned to honor the world’s largest botanical collection under glass, designed on Chicago’s West Side by renowned landscape architect Jens Jensen.

“Sugar from the Sun” is made possible in part by a \$1.65 million grant from the National Science Foundation. Support also has been received from the “Public Museum Capital Grants Program” of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois State Museum.

Admission to “Sugar from the Sun” is free. Owned by the Chicago Park District and operated in partnership with the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, the Conservatory is open every day of the year, with free admission and convenient free parking. (Special exhibit and activity fees may apply.) For information about Garfield Park Conservatory’s Centennial and related programming, call 773-638-1766 extension 13, or visit www.garfieldconservatory.org.

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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.

