



Media Contact:

Zvezdana Kubat
Assistant Press Secretary
Chicago Park District
312-742-4791
Zvezdana.Kubat@ChicagoParkDistrict.com

For Immediate Release

Chicago Gem Marks Centennial Milestone

Garfield Park Conservatory Celebrates 100th Birthday

CHICAGO (March 1, 2008) – Garfield Park Conservatory – which first opened its doors to the public in April 1908 – celebrates 100 years of innovation and botanical contributions to the city and its visitors with year-long events, activities, shows and programs in 2008, all themed “CHICAGOASIS: The Greenest Show on Earth.”

The celebration includes the unwrapping of a permanent new exhibit called “Sugar from the Sun,” on March 1. Built in the Conservatory’s historic Sweet House and funded in part by a major grant from the National Science Foundation, visitors are plunged into the sensory life of the Conservatory’s tropical collection – from mangos and bananas to oranges and papayas. Visitors experience how the collection uses air, water and light to make sugar, the energy source not only for plants but for all life on earth.

The party continues through summer 2008 with many birthday events, flower shows and programs, as well as season-long music and arts festivals featuring ethnic folk, jazz and blues musicians, dance troupes and visual artists, as well as botanical displays celebrating the Conservatory through the decades.

A horticultural masterpiece and historic landmark located amid the beautiful boulevards of Chicago’s West Side, Garfield Park Conservatory was designed by celebrated landscape architect Jens Jensen. The largest public “glass house” in the nation, this beloved Chicago civic and cultural institution displays hundreds of exotic species of palms, ferns, cacti and tropical plants in landscaped settings under sparkling-clear ceilings, as well as a variety of flora showcased in beautiful outdoor gardens.

Garfield Park Conservatory has undergone dramatic revitalization during the past decade, including renovation of several show houses and the addition of a six-acre walking garden. The

- more -

Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance Centennial Overview//Add One

not-for-profit Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance, celebrating its 10th year of leadership, was incorporated in 1998 to support the Conservatory through the development of programming, events and visitor services. Since it was formed, the Alliance has helped contribute to attendance growth from less than 10,000 annually to nearly 200,000 in 2006.



Through its work, the Alliance provides essential cultural, environmental and educational enrichment programming for Chicago visitors and residents, especially those living in the surrounding West Side communities. Thousands of adults and children learn about plant science and gardening through school tours, teacher development workshops, educational and recreational family activities, gardening classes, workshops and more.

The Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance and the Chicago Park District partner to present the Centennial, themed “CHICAGOASIS: The Greenest Show on Earth,” through 2008. Major sponsors and donors for Garfield Park Conservatory Centennial events and activities are The Boeing Company, The Chicago Community Trust, Chicago Public Schools, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Sara Lee Corporation and the Wallace Foundation.

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.

###

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.

Editors, please note: Photo from *Inspired by Nature: The Garfield Park Conservatory and Chicago’s West Side*, by Julia S. Bachrach and Jo Ann Nathan with forward by Alex Kotlowitz. Published by the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance in partnership with the Chicago Park District. Distributed by University of Chicago Press. This historic reflective tells the story of how nature, horticulture and urban design shaped one of the nation’s most stunning and intriguing botanical havens, situated within the context of a city seminal park and boulevard system.