



For Immediate Release

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The 2009 Secret Gardens Tour® Supports Brain Injury Awareness Month!

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month—According to the Center for Disease Control, 5.3 Million Americans have a long-term or lifelong need for help in daily living activities after a traumatic brain injury with direct and indirect costs totaling \$60 billion in the US

NEW ORLEANS—This month is Brain Injury Awareness Month and you can support those affected by attending **THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR®Friday and Saturday, March 20 & 21, 2009** in Uptown New Orleans. This popular garden tour, which is a locally registered non-profit, is dedicated to raising awareness and funds for brain injury survivors and their families. Eleven magnificent and private gardens will be on view to locals and visitors alike and tickets can now be purchased by going to www.secretgardentour.org.

The results of a brain injury are life-altering for those who survive. Ordinary tasks such as eating, walking and talking can be impossible or require extensive therapy. In some cases, the survivor may only regain a percentage of his/her pre-brain injury self. For adults, returning to their careers may not be an option; for children, school may mean “special education.”

The need for information is paramount. This is why a portion of **THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR®**'s proceeds will go towards the revision, printing and distribution of *The New Orleans Guide to Brain Injury Recovery*. *The Guide* outlines the different services available in the

Greater New Orleans area including locations of neurological assistance and rehabilitation centers as well as mainstream and alternative therapies, support groups, counseling, web sites and other resources for brain injury survivors. **The Guide** will be provided to brain-injury recovery locations in printed form, or on a CD. Anyone will be able to download a copy from **THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR®** website www.secretgardenstour.org. Limited copies of the guide will be available to the public at the self-guided tour on Saturday, March 21, 2009.

The 2009 TOUR, for the first time, will take place on two days but with two very different experiences. For the true gardening enthusiast, **private scheduled tours** are newly available on **Friday, March 20th at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., and 11 a.m.** Led by a guide, these lucky visitors will preview carefully chosen, envied and rarely seen gardens located between Octavia and State Streets along St. Charles Avenue and have exclusive access to the design experts to ask questions. Tickets can be purchased for \$60 each (or \$50 each for groups of 20 or more, garden clubs and organizations—take note!) at the **TOUR'S** website www.secretgardenstour.org. Since these tours must be scheduled with Marianne Mumford, email or call her at marianne@landscapeimagesltd.com or, 504.734.8380.

THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR®, opening to the public on **Saturday, March 21**, is the self-guided walking tour first introduced in the spring of 2004 and is now considered a “**must-see**” by horticultural devotees, professionals and amateurs alike. Tickets for this day can also be purchased in advance for \$20 on the web site: www.secretgardenstour.org , or on the day of the event for \$25 at 6000 State Street. Several of the 2009 gardens will feature musicians, one will have a labyrinth composed of potted flowers and plants, another will offer art and garden accessories in the “Secret Treasures” boutique as well as a mini-auction, and still another will offer boxed lunches and water for sale.

Said Marianne Mumford, 2009 Co-Chair of the Tour, “We love the idea of staging a garden tour as a fund-raiser for brain injury recovery because we now know the benefits of gardens go beyond being visually attractive. Gardens stimulate all the senses and spending time in them can be restorative. In New Orleans, we are blessed with a temperate climate allowing us to spend most of the year outdoors. Being in a garden, however, can be healing...in a garden, we can relax and recuperate from our collective and personal storms.”

The 2009 SECRET GARDENS TOUR® is open to the public and presented by New Orleans Homes and Lifestyles magazine. Natives and visitors alike are encouraged to consider taking a ride on the historic St. Charles Avenue Streetcar to and from State Street stop #32 for easy access to the **TOUR** locations.

(For tickets for both days, go online to www.secretgardenstour.org. For further information, contact Kathleen Waring, 2009 Co-Chair, The Secret Gardens Tour® at (504) 914.4865, kwaring@ocsbbs.com, or Beverly Gianna, PR Chair at (504) 621.6828, bjgianna@cox.net)