

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Palmetto Bay Celebrates Arbor Day with Tree Planting at New Butterfly Garden *Village also joins with Xavier Cortada's "Reclamation Project" at Ludovici Park to Signify Commitment to the Environment*

PALMETTO BAY, Fla., (Jan. 13, 2010) – Pre-school students equipped with watering cans and kiddy-sized garden tools will help Palmetto Bay celebrate Arbor Day, Friday, Jan. 15, by planting several trees in and nearby the Village's new butterfly garden at Ludovici Park. The annual event, which Palmetto Bay recognizes as part of its membership as a Tree City USA community, kicks off at noon.

"Arbor Day is an important day for the Village of Palmetto Bay that serves many important purposes, not the least of which is to bring us back to nature," said Mayor Flinn. "It provides an opportunity in our green-conscious Village to remember that now is time to make outdoor lifestyle changes that have positive and direct impact on our environment."

The State of Florida designates the 3rd Friday of each year as Arbor Day. In recognition, and as part of Palmetto Bay's responsibility as a designated Tree City USA community, the Village is celebrating its Third Annual Arbor Day in typical grand fashion.

To commemorate the day, residents are invited to join Mayor Flinn and members of the Palmetto Bay Village Council and staff as community Butterfly Garden is dedicated on the grounds of the Palmetto Bay Branch Library and Community Room at Ludovici Park. This new garden was just recently installed by the Palmetto Bay Garden Club, members of which will attend the event. Special thanks to Cindy David of Living Designs for donation of her time, materials, and expertise in the garden's development.

In addition, Bill O'Leary, the landscape architect member of Palmetto Bay's recently appointed Tree Board, will present to the group regarding the benefits of trees and plants to our environment. O'Leary is a Palmetto Bay resident and a principal with O'Leary Richards Design Associates.

THREE TREES

The ceremony will feature the planting of three trees, including two Golden Cassius, a variety of tree that butterflies find particularly irresistible. These two trees are being donated by Valley Crest Landscape Companies of Miami. The third tree is specie native to Florida – a Gumbo Limbo – which is being introduced into the park as part of local-artist Xavier Cortada's "Reclamation Project." He will be in attendance at the event."

"We are so proud to be partnering with Xavier Cortada, a renowned Cuban-America painter who has created art for the White House, the World Bank, and the Florida Supreme Court," noted Flinn. In Miami, Cortada's commissioned-work hangs in City Hall, County Hall, the Miami Children's Museum, and the facade of the Juvenile Courthouse.

Cortado also develops participatory eco-art projects aimed at restoring native habitats for plants and animals in coastal communities – hence, his interest in joining with the Village of Palmetto Bay in this special event. The Gumbo Limbo tree will be planted alongside a signature green "Reclamation Project" flag that signifies that this small piece of land is being reclaimed for nature. The project encourages residents to plant a native tree and green flag in their own front yard, and then encourage their neighbors to do the same.

The trees will be planted with the able assistance of 20 pre-school students from Alexander Montessori School, which is located directly across Old Cutler Road from the library park. The students will be equipped with shovels and rakes and watering cans.

“Because Arbor Day is an annual event that is increasing in educational importance, it is appropriate the students of Alexander Montessori School participate by helping us plant these new saplings,” Mayor Flinn said. The students will be able to monitor the growth of their trees by visiting the new butterfly garden from their campus located directly across Old Cutler Road from Ludovici Park.

TREE CITY USA

The Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree City USA program encourages, supports and strengthens effective urban and community forestry programs in diverse communities nationwide through recognition, education, and publicity. From the humble beginning of the program 33 years ago, it has grown to be the leading community forestry recognition program in the country, with nearly 3,300 designated Tree City USA across America.

Tree City USA is thriving in Florida because of the strong partnership between the Arbor Day Foundation and communities like Palmetto Bay which first achieved its designation in 2008. Florida boasts 135 certified Tree City USA communities. Last year, Florida’s Tree City USA spent a combined total of \$60,293,544 on their urban forestry budgets benefiting more than six million Florida residents who live in those communities. The dedication of the people of Florida to planting and caring for trees in their cities and towns helps increase energy savings, clean the air and water, and beautify the entire state.

XAVIER CORTADA

Born in 1964 in Albany, N.Y., Xavier Cortada is a Cuban-American painter residing in Miami. His work has been exhibited in museums, galleries and cultural venues across the Americas, Europe, and Africa. He holds three degrees from the University of Miami: a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Public Administration, and Juris Doctor. The artist’s work and writings are preserved in the Xavier Cortada Collection of the University of Miami Libraries Cuban Heritage Collection.

Cortada has received multiple awards for his volunteer work. In February 2000, Cortada was invited to participate in the Vatican’s “Jubilee Day for Artists” and met Pope John Paul II. In 2006, he received the “National Champion for Children Award” from the Child Welfare League of America. He has also worked with groups across the world to produce numerous large-scale murals and community art projects, including eco-art installations on Miami Beach, International AIDS Conference murals in Switzerland and South Africa, peace murals in Northern Ireland and Cyprus, and child welfare murals in Panama and Bolivia. In 2007, as a recipient of the National Science Foundation Antarctic Artists and Writers Program, he created site-specific installations at the South Pole.

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*Incorporated in 2002, **The Village of Palmetto Bay** is a vibrant community of 25,000 residents nestled between Biscayne Bay and So. Dixie Highway, about 15 miles south of downtown Miami. The Village is governed by a five-member Council and operates under a Council-Manager form of government. Dubbed “The Village of Parks,” Palmetto Bay offers an extensive system of attractive parks, unique recreational opportunities, and bay access. It also is home to several excellent public schools, and a robust commercial corridor along Dixie Highway offering a diverse range of restaurants, markets, and lodging. Specifically, the Village extends from the centerline of SW 136 St., south to the centerline of SW 184 St., expanding west to the centerline of South Dixie Highway (including the center island), and east to Biscayne Bay.*