

****MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY****



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MEDIA CONTACTS: Kati Spencer, B.J. Communications
602-277-9530 x228; kati@bjc.com

Linda Harvey, Desert Botanical Garden
480-481-8168; lharvey@dbg.org

BENCHMARK CHARTER PLANTS THE FIRST SEEDS FOR NEW SCHOOLYARD GARDEN

Teacher inspired by Desert Botanical Garden seminar, uses grant money to build garden and aviary

WHAT: Just two months after participating in a free seminar at the Desert Botanical Garden, Glenda Kochen's school is already sowing and reaping the benefits. Kochen, the outdoor education coordinator at Benchmark Charter School, is using the knowledge, inspiration and seeds she gained through the "Planting a Schoolyard Garden" program to lead a volunteer team in installing a garden and aviary at her school.

Activities and installations will include:

- Building an aviary
- Building a compost set-up
- Creating a planting and gardening plot with trellises
- Creating a raised organic planting bed to feed upcoming living science center animals
- Installing student handprint paving stones in the walkway
- Installing shade sails over the amphitheater

Parents, teachers and school administrators hope the new garden gives students a chance to connect with and better understand their outdoor environment. The school partnered with Home Depot for a grant to cover most of the materials for the project.

WHEN: 7 a.m. - 3 p.m., Thursday, May 31, 2007

WHERE: Benchmark Charter School
4120 E. Acoma Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85032

SEMINAR: "Planting a Schoolyard Garden" was made possible with funding from the Smithsonian Community Grant program, which is supported by the MetLife Foundation. Participants received information on designing schoolyard gardens that can thrive in the Valley's desert climate, along with starter packets of vegetable, herb and flower seeds. The goal of the program is to help teachers reach their students with the important message of environmental stewardship and appreciation for nature.

For more information about the Desert Botanical Garden, its mission and current initiatives, please visit www.dbg.org or call 480-941-1225.

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