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VENICE GARDEN TOUR OFFERS FUN, FANTASY and FUNDRAISING

(Venice, CA) – On Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 10am to 5pm, the **Venice Garden & Home Tour** will feature that glittering gem in the dazzling Los Angeles landscape, the Venice Canals. At the beginning of the 20th century, when anything seemed possible, Abbot Kinney's vision and entrepreneurial enthusiasm captured the public's imagination. Opened on July 4, 1905, Kinney's Venice of America included an amusement pier, Italianate colonnades and canals with costumed gondoliers. What remains today of the original canal development is a uniquely inviting residential area, sheltered from car traffic, where old Venice beach cottages survive next to sleek contemporary cubes overlooking gleaming ribbons of water. Homes designed by Glen Irani Architects, Steven Shortridge/Callas Shortridge, Steven Erlich, Antoine Predock, and Frank Gehry (Lifeguard House) will be on view as well as restored older cottages with secluded indoor-outdoor living spaces and pocket gardens. This is a neighborhood where homeowners take pride in their small pieces of paradise, the ducks have right-of-way, and the ocean breezes waft softly over the sunny, tranquil landscape.

Tour-goers will also visit the Venice beach "Walk Streets", a short distance from the canals, and will see the Venice Beach House, now a nostalgic bed and breakfast, a photographer's studio, a stunning ocean front home by Lenny Steinberg Design Associates and gardens filled with art and a profusion of plants all within sight of the ocean. The tour will continue into the adjacent Windward Circle neighborhood of broad, open streets (formerly canals) with craftsman homes and newer designs by Callas

Shortridge Architects and landscape designer Bent Grass. There will be approximately 25-30 gardens and homes on the Garden Tour - some with lush landscaping, others with spare, drought tolerant plantings and all reflective of the creative talents of Venice's homeowners and local designers, including Jay Griffith, to create an indoor-outdoor lifestyle.

The **Venice Garden & Home Tour** is the annual fund raising event for the Neighborhood Youth Association's Las Doradas Children's Center. Now in its 16thth year, this is the well-established, not to be missed garden and home tour that entices visitors from all over California, the tour that lets visitors see current landscaping trends, appreciate the history of this legendary part of Los Angeles, and glimpse the stunning homes of trend setting local architects and designers.

Founded by local landscape designer Jay Griffith, Linda Lucks and Jan Brilliot, the **Venice Garden & Home Tour** provides financial support for the Neighborhood Youth Association's Las Doradas Children's Center, a licensed child care facility in Venice that provides full-time, education-based child care to low-income working families. In operation since 1991, the center offers "at-risk" children an opportunity for the care and additional guidance that prepares them to be effective learners, ready and eager to enter and excel in kindergarten, and soon become productive and fulfilled members of our community.

The 2009 self-guided, walking **Venice Garden & Home Tour** starts at the Las Doradas Children's Center, 804 Broadway, at the corner of Broadway and Pleasant View, in Venice, at 10:00am and continues until 5:00pm. Neighborhood parking is available, as are shuttle buses, and biking is a suggested option. Tax-deductible rain-or-shine tickets are \$60 if purchased in advance, \$70 if purchased the day of the Garden Tour, children under 12 years of age admitted free. For tickets and information, please call 310-821-1857 or email us at venicegardentour@ca.rr.com, and visit our website at www.venicegardentour.org.

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Digital photos are available for the press upon request.