

TREE RE-PLANTING OF HURRICANE DEVASTATED VERDE TRAIL SOUTH WILL RETURN TRANQUILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

July 10, 2007 (Boca Raton, FL) – On Tuesday, July 17th at 3:00 PM the residents of Town Place Village Homes, representatives from The City of Boca Raton, the State of Florida and Kids Ecology Corps will gather to welcome in their newest additions – twenty-nine (29) Florida #1 grade trees along South Verde Trail.

With a generous grant from the Florida Division of Forestry, Urban and Community Forestry Hurricane Supplement Program awarded to the Homeowners' Association of Town Place Village Homes and through the collaborative efforts of the State of Florida, the City of Boca Raton, its community residents, The Kids Ecology Corps and local vendors, this tree planting has finally become a reality.

The two year odyssey began in 2005, when Town Place was awarded their request for a \$10,000 grant from the Florida Division of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Program to begin restoring the formerly beautiful tree canopied street destroyed by the disastrous effects of Hurricane Frances.

Prior to Hurricane Frances in 2004, Verde Trail South was a corridor of dense shade created by large ficus trees along this winding street. Hurricane Frances severely damaged almost all the ficus trees. Within moments, what was once a beautiful and shady street lost all its' tree canopy -- and its charm. To restore the street to its previous condition has required the removal of most of the irreparably damaged ficus trees and their replacement with trees more able to withstand the severe weather caused by hurricanes in South Florida.

Local residents gathered their resources to develop an intensive restoration project. Village Homes resident Joan Starr, a member of the Board of Directors of The Kids Ecology Corps, called upon this local eco-action group and their Executive Director Emily Lagerquist to help the homeowners' association write a \$10,000 matching grant proposal to the Florida Division of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Hurricane Supplement. This grant was designed to aid Florida communities, municipalities and cities needing and requesting financial and technical assistance with the re-planting and restoring of areas devastated by the disastrous effects of Hurricane Frances.

The \$10,000 grant request was awarded to Village Homes in 2005. On July 17th the Village Homes community will implement the grant and begin the restoration of a beautiful Boca Raton street. Live oaks, magnolias and sabal palms, all beautiful native trees will be replacing the lost ficus trees.

This project's success is due to the two years of planning and collaborative efforts of the residents and Board of Directors of Village Homes, The Kids Ecology Corps, Trident Management Company, the City of Boca Raton, and the state of Florida. Notably from Village Homes the former president Pat Beirbrier, Brenda Abrams, and resident activist Joan Starr; from The Kids Ecology Corps, Executive

Director Emily Nell Lagerquist; from The City of Boca Raton - Brian Kane and Nora Fossman; and from the Florida Division of Forestry Forester Micah Pace; as well as Michael Broderick of Trident Management Company and Mark Merrit of Turtle Pond Tree Service.

The Village Homes Town Place Condominium Association Board is committed to using this experience to educate the community about the benefits of native trees from an environmental, aesthetic and economic perspective. The Kids Ecology Corps Executive Director Emily Lagerquist stated, “This is the most important lesson that could come from this disaster. Understanding which trees are most wind-resistant and how to plant and prune them so that they can successfully act as a buffer and withstand future storms are the best lessons we can learn from this experience.” Lagerquist continued, “That’s one of the goals of The Kids Ecology Corps – to teach our children about the benefits of trees in our communities and how to plant and maintain them.”

The Kids Ecology Corps is using Tuesday’s tree planting ceremony to kick off its fundraiser *Kids Ecology Corps in Action* in support of the creation of a PBS television pilot aimed at showcasing how young environmentalists are taking the initiative to involve their communities in projects to care for the Earth. In recognition of her efforts and the work of The Kids Ecology Corps, Lagerquist was one of 35 women from 11 countries worldwide recently honored by Yves Rocher Foundation – Institute de France with a “Terre de Femme” (Women of the Earth) award. The Foundation also granted The Kids Ecology Corps a \$3,000 honorarium which Lagerquist plans to put towards funding the group’s proposed television pilot.

The Kids Ecology Corps is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization whose mission is to inspire young people to make environmental action part of their everyday lives and in the lives of those around them. KEC has reached over 55,000 young people from pre-k through high school, offering unique hands-on presentations and eco-action programs that educate children and youth about: keeping our oceans clean; the importance of trees; the role re-planting our coastal wetlands play in beach conservation; water conservation; pollution prevention; global climate change and energy conservation; and, protecting local natural habitats for native wildlife.

Visit them at www.kidsecologycorps.org or contact The Kids Ecology Corps at kec@kidsecologycorps.org . Emily Nell Lagerquist, Executive Director and her team can be reached at Tel.: 954-524-0366 to volunteer or to schedule an education presentation or eco-action project at your school.

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