



## ***News Release***

Contact: Ken Phillips  
Marketing & Promotions Network  
805-915-7644  
[ken@marketingpromotionsnetwork.com](mailto:ken@marketingpromotionsnetwork.com)

**For Immediate Release (March 30, 2010)**

### **GARDENS OF THE WORLD THANKS VOLUNTEERS; SEEKS DOCENTS**

(Thousand Oaks, CA) April is National Volunteer Month and the 45 docents at the Gardens of the World are among over 100 million volunteers throughout the country being recognized for their outstanding service to their communities. The Gardens of the World already hosts over 20,000 guests annually and is seeking additional docents to help meet an ever increasing demand from the public.

Marianne Coulson, resident manager of the Gardens of the World, says, "April is when we officially recognize the efforts of our terrific volunteer docents, but we are thankful every day of the year for their commitment to the thousands of people they help. Their efforts bring the Gardens to life for local residents and visitors from around the world."

Coulson adds, "We are very proud of our docent program. However, we need more help. We anticipate that greater numbers of clubs, seniors groups, schools, and other organizations will visit this year, requiring additional volunteers to ensure that the guest experience is always of the highest caliber."

Of the 45 current docents, Lea Gleason, at 18 years old, is the newest and youngest member of the volunteer team. She attends both Pierce and Moorpark colleges and is a sociology and astrophysics major. A resident of Simi Valley, Gleason enjoys the variety of people she guides around the Gardens. She says, "It's a nice, relaxing place, where you can find people of all walks of life taking in the beauty of the gardens on a daily stroll or having a picnic lunch."

Margaret Isachsen, who has been a docent for seven years, is from Calabasas and was a junior high school teacher. She is an avid traveler and brings her knowledge of many world cultures and her own love of gardening to her presentations. She feels, "Being here at the Gardens is very therapeutic. It's beautiful and I am able to do something for the community, work with children, and leave every day feeling like I accomplished something that has added value to my life. I will continue on as a docent for as long as they will have me."

Ann Toon from Thousand Oaks, with nine years of service, was one of the first docents. A homemaker, she began her training a year before the Gardens actually opened. She and a number of others defined much of the original docent training program. In addition to the variety of people she meets, Toon likes how the Gardens are constantly changing with the seasons. She says one of the things she most enjoys is when fourth grade children visit with their schools for California history lessons. The Gardens hosts a special program that features actor Bruce Buonauro, portraying Father Junipero Serra, who is credited with helping settle the state and building nine missions along the Camino Real in the late 1700s.

The Gardens of the World, located across from the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza and operated by the Hogan Family Foundation in Newbury Park, is celebrating its tenth year of operation and features gardens representative of French, Japanese, English, and Italian cultures. Early California history is also

highlighted at the Mission Courtyard and an American bandstand and grassy amphitheater is center stage for concerts conducted throughout the year.

Docents receive six to eight weeks of training, including “shadowing” experienced docents and conducting “mock” tours with staff members. Follow-up refresher sessions are also held periodically. In addition to the training, docents are provided with Gardens of the World polo shirts and name tags.

Docents are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. Individuals interested in applying should contact Linda Seaman, Gardens of the World volunteer coordinator, at 805-557-1135, extension five or e-mail at [linda@hoganfoundation.org](mailto:linda@hoganfoundation.org).

Among other programs, the Hogan Family Foundation also operates its Rancho St. Francis program with 50 to 60 volunteers at two facilities near its headquarters in Newbury Park. The ranches are used for the rehabilitation of neglected horses and dogs and to provide specialized support for disadvantaged children and abused women.

For more information on current programs operated by the Hogan Family Foundation, go online at [www.hoganfoundation.org](http://www.hoganfoundation.org). For other volunteer opportunities in your community, visit [www.volunteermatch.com](http://www.volunteermatch.com).

**# # #**