

Arbor Day Celebration Held at the Lighthouse of Broward County

The Ft. Lauderdale Garden Clubs have rallied the support of the community, especially youth gardeners, to enhance the Sensory Garden at the Lighthouse of Broward County.

At a special Arbor Day celebration held at the Lighthouse of Broward County on Saturday, January 17, the Ft. Lauderdale Garden Club's Spathodea Youth Group dedicated a Spathodea tree to the Lighthouse's Youth Garden Club. One of the Youth Gardeners gave a presenta-



Spathodea Youth Gardeners working to complete the mosaic wall.

tion about the Spathodea tree and its horticultural habits. Children from both Youth Garden Clubs planted the tree in the Sensory Garden.

The Spathodea Youth Group's membership includes sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from throughout Broward County who have an interest in horticulture and gardening. The Lighthouse Youth Garden Club members are children and teens who are visually impaired and participate in the KIDS Beacon of Light program. The Ft. Lauderdale Garden Clubs are sponsoring this unique group.

According to Melinda Zeman, the club was initiated to introduce the visually impaired children to horticulture and the role of plants in the environmental ecosystem. "The Garden Club activities will offer the children a new challenge. They will

become true gardeners who take a planting project from beginning to end, including entering competitions. It also will help raise the children's self-confidence and self-esteem."

At Saturday's event, the Spathodea Youth Group also showed off the newly completed mosaic wall that was started by Ruben Payne, a Lighthouse staff member, who has since passed away leaving the mosaic unfinished. The wall was completed by the youth group under the direction of Melinda Zeman and Louise Gardella. The beautiful mosaic, which is adjacent to the winding paths through the Sensory

Garden, serves as a visual stimulant to the eyes of clients who retain limited vision and as a tactile experience for those who have no vision.

This special event was supported by East Marsh Nursery who donated a new Spathodea tree, Softscapes who donated soil and labor, and the Florida Nursery Growers Association who donated 200 annuals to beautify and enhance the Sensory Garden. Roy Rogers, Rose Bechard-Butman, and Cheryl Ricker from Luke's Landscaping were instrumental in securing these con-

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Garden Club's Spathodea Youth Group planting and dedicating a Spathodea tree to the Lighthouse's

Youth Garden Club.



Tree

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contributions. The Bauhinia Garden Circle arrived extra early to plant the colorful begonias and impatiens before the festivities began.

The Lighthouse of Broward County is the county agency in Broward County that provides comprehensive rehabilitation and counseling

to the blind and visually impaired, from babies through the elderly. Since 1973, the not-for-profit organization has been the source for rehabilitation programs including classes in personal and home management, Braille, typing, computer training, orientation and mobility. It has expanded to include training in vocational rehabilitation and job readiness. The Lighthouse also offers support groups and

counseling to those who have been affected by visual impairment or blindness. Located in downtown Fort Lauderdale at 650 N. Andrews Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale, the Lighthouse of Broward County is available to all qualified county residents.

For more information about the Lighthouse programs, visit the website at www.lhob.org or call 954-463-4217.