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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Los Angeles Leads City in Renewal of Parking Strips

On September 11th WE CAN Foundation and the 60th Street Community come out to dig into parking strips for 21st Century conservation in South L. A.

Los Angeles, CA, September 8, 2009: In honor of the ‘National Day of Service’ on September 11, the WE CAN Foundation is organizing the 60th Street community in urban Los Angeles to gather in street-fair fashion to dig in and advance conservation and urban renewal with its September 11th and 12th *Planting a Little Piece of Paradise Parkway* project.

Recent achievements by L.A. City Mayor Villaraigosa and the Department of Water and Power with their water restrictions and energy usage programs demonstrate how much can be accomplished through a united city effort. Obviously, it is going to take more than local government programs and updating city water ordinances to get the job done. Everyone from entrepreneurs to students to home gardeners is taking an interest, and they’re not only envisioning a greener future for Los Angeles but figuring prominently in its creation.

Few understand the value of collective effort in building a greener urban L.A. better than Michel McLaughlin, executive director of the WE CAN Foundation, sponsor of the September 11th event. According to McLaughlin, “Turf strips are a big problem. In LA alone, tens of thousands of acres are dedicated to this most imprudent of all land uses; throughout the US, the number probably approaches the millions. Narrow strips of land protracted between sidewalks and streets, expensive and challenging to maintain and now turning brown and ugly, are often called ‘hell strips’ can be changed to multi-storied micro-climates that optimize use, enrich soils, cleans and cools the air, preserves biodiversity; quiets urban bustle, and a great deal more.” McLaughlin calls sustainability a mandatory 21st century standard and WE CAN strives to set the bar for meeting this standard starting in South Los Angeles, by transforming one parking strip at a time.

The 60th *Street Planting a Little Piece of Paradise Parkway* project is the first in the ambitious WE CAN mission to spearhead an urban renewal process toward: more sustainable land use; reduction and transformation of grassy strips and lawns; and development of urban micro-farms that will provide local supplies of low-cost healthy foods for inner-city communities.

WE CAN has been active in the South LA community since 1995, bridging both the digital and cultural divides; providing free tutoring services to students under the No Child Left Behind Program; and a roster of programs that foster literacy, critical thinking, and the Arts. The Urban Farm Network Programs, of which the *Planting a Little Piece of Paradise Parkway* project is a part, are the foundation’s most recent body of work intended to promote green education, community action, and economic well-being. For more information about this or other WE CAN programs or to volunteer, contact the Community Learning Center: 323 759 9734

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