



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHEEKWOOD OPENS NEW BRACKEN FOUNDATION CHILDREN'S GARDEN AS A
PERMANENT FAMILY DESTINATION**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – On March 7, 2020, Cheekwood will open a new permanent destination for its youngest visitors, offering inspiring discovery, exploration, and play with the realization of the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden. Since the groundbreaking in 2018, construction of the new two-acre garden, designed for the young and young at heart, is near completion. A team comprised of garden planner and designer Tres Fromme of 3.Fromme Design and the Nashville-based landscape architecture firm of HDLA and general contractor The Carter Group have led the project.

Nestled between the Howe Garden and the Frist Learning Center – Cheekwood's education hub - the garden's special interactive features will be a welcoming and accessible reflection of Cheekwood's year-round beauty, encompassing gardens, art, and history. The garden will be complemented by the recently renovated education center which now features a family friendly café and offers picnic amenities as well. Highlights as follows:

- The **Serpentine Stroll** serves as the connector of the garden, leading visitors in discovering each area of this special new family destination. The design meets Outdoor Accessibility guidelines created by the Federal Access Board while preserving the site's majestic trees.
- Springing from a **Lily Pool** at the garden's central **Plaza**, a **Creek** flows through a **Willow Thicket** in the heart of the Children's Garden, winding down a gentle hillside where children can view sunning turtles in a **Turtle Pond**, designed in partnership with the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency to be managed as a rehabilitation center and sanctuary for turtles confiscated from the illegal pet trade. The Creek area also features custom designed turtle sculptures by award-winning fine artists Ring Studio.
- Inspired by the historic architecture of the Frist Learning Center, a **Studio Pavilion** will serve as a centerpiece of the garden, featuring a balcony, secret passageway, and pairs

of “water paintings” for creative exploration and artistic discovery. The architectural gem will also be a focus for programs and activities.

- Inspired by a historic well behind the Frist Learning Center, an interactive **Wishing Well** will surprise and delight visitors with whimsical water effects.
- A shaded **Labyrinth Glade**, highlighting the history and mystery of another era, will capture the imaginations of children and adults alike, and a **Woodland Ramble** will feature a plank passage, a stump meander, and a rope bridge.
- An enclosed area called the **Little Woods**, designed with Cheekwood’s youngest visitors in mind, will feature a series of special features, from a **Tea House** and **Fairy Garden**, to a **Story Tree** and **Little Adventure Path**, to a **Digging Quarry** and splashing “**Duck**” **Puddle**, featuring additional **custom duck sculptures by artists Ring Studio**.
- At the base of the garden, a **Stage** will highlight children’s performances, both featured and impromptu, and a **Rolling Lawn** will invite both concerts and cartwheels.
- Special horticultural areas include a native **Tennessee Woodland Walk**, edible landscape plants in the **Hungry Hedgerow**, and an immersion in the **Sensory Walk**.
- The **PNC Living Library**, dedicated to literacy programming and a place where the arts and science will be brought alive in an outdoor classroom

“We are thrilled to bring a permanent family feature to Cheekwood for the enjoyment of thousands of children and families who visit each year,” said Jane MacLeod, president and CEO of Cheekwood. “As an extension of our mission to stimulate the mind and nurture the spirit, the garden will provide children a joyful and immersive experience with nature, increasingly absent but vitally important for today’s youth.”

Richard Bracken, Foundation family representative, said: “We were inspired by the idea of a Children’s Garden for Cheekwood, particularly as we heard how children’s gardens have positively impacted other leading botanical gardens throughout the country. We are delighted and honored to be part of this important project for the Cheekwood campus.”

Following the generous \$4 million lead gift from the Bracken Foundation made in 2016, Cheekwood established a task force – comprised of leading experts and community stakeholders - dedicated to the research and development of the garden. Focus groups were held for creative brainstorming and discussion, including parents, educators, and members of the Cheekwood staff, to inform goals and objectives for the garden. Members of the task force traveled to leading Children’s Gardens throughout the country, including the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, The Morton Arboretum, Frederick Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, and The Huntington Library, Art Collection & Botanical Gardens.

A cornerstone of *The Cheekwood Campaign*, the lead gift from the Bracken Foundation was structured as a challenge to raise an additional \$2 million in endowment funds for the garden’s long-term care and maintenance. The challenge was met and exceeded with generosity from over 100 ‘Founding Families’ (donors of \$5,000 and above), with major support provided by an Anonymous donor, HCA Healthcare, proud education sponsor of Cheekwood, Sally & Jim Hunt,

PNC, the Scarlett Family, the Sandra Schatten Foundation, Sherri & Barry Stowe, Becky & Jimmy Webb, Katie & Kevin Crumbo, Barbara & Rick Turner, Janet & Jim Ayers, Anne & Joe Russell, and First Horizon. Cheekwood continues to seek support for the endowment of the garden to secure its care and maintenance and invites interested parties to participate at any level.

The new Children's Garden will be open during Cheekwood's operating hours and will be a primary site for the expanded Tots! program, offering unique art and garden activities for toddlers on Tuesdays – Saturdays from 10am – 2pm. Tots! is including with general admission or Cheekwood membership.

For more information about the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, visit www.cheekwood.org.

About our Project Partners

Tres Fromme of 3.Fromme Design collaborates with public gardens throughout the United States and is known for facilitating team-based creative group process to create engaging, compelling, memorable, and multi-functional places that invest participants in the outcomes. Experience includes a full range of project scales, budgets, and scopes – master planning, site design, planting design, gardens for children and learning, seasonal displays/special exhibits, and holiday light shows. Among the children's gardens that he has designed are the Atlanta Botanical Garden Children's Garden, Longwood Gardens Indoor Children's Garden, and Tulsa Botanic Garden Children's Discovery Garden. Tres also designed Cheekwood's inaugural Holiday LIGHTS display in 2015.

HDLA is a Nashville based, award-winning landscape architecture firm that is committed to design excellence and the creation of timeless spaces of simple elegance that seek authenticity by honoring local history and natural context, while pursuing imaginative and innovative design solutions in an ever-changing landscape. HDLA views each project as an opportunity to create sustainable and memorable places of intrinsic beauty that foster activity, creativity, community, and engagement. HDLA's projects range from large-scale master planning to site specific implementation, and have included projects such as Centennial Park, Tennessee State Museum, Clarksville Downtown Commons, Montgomery Bell Academy, Vanderbilt Peabody Campus Master Plan, Warner Park Master Plan, Burch Reserve, Aaitafama' Archaeological Park, Stones River Park, Mill Ridge Park, and Jefferson Street Pocket Park.

The Carter Group, the award-winning, design-build general contracting & construction management firm based in Nashville, has been responsible for the past renovations of the Howe Garden and the Sigourney Cheek Literary Garden, the recently completed Frist Learning Center, as well as the current renovation of the Carell Woodland Sculpture Trail. Other major projects they have undertaken in our area include Fat Bottom Brewery, Hastings Architecture Office, Western Express Recruitment Center and Harrys Fresh Foods Production Facility.

About *The Cheekwood Campaign*

With a goal of \$30 million, over \$28 million has been pledged to date in support of *The Cheekwood Campaign*. The Campaign seeks to build endowment, establish capital reserve funds, and address deferred restoration, combined with forward-looking initiatives and enhancements to the Frist Learning Center, the Ann & Monroe Carell Jr. Family Sculpture Trail, and the Blevins Japanese Garden, as well as the new Bracken Foundation Children's Garden. Lead donors to the Campaign to date include the Ann & Monroe Carell Foundation, the Bracken Foundation, and the Frist Foundation, joined by the Blevins family, Mrs. James C. "Tooty" Bradford, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. William H. Freeman, and an Anonymous donor.

About Cheekwood

Cheekwood is considered one of the finest American Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the extraordinary 1930s estate, with its Georgian mansion and 55 acres of cultivated gardens and expansive vistas, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and museum with historic rooms and art galleries, showcasing works from its 7,000 permanent collection as well as traveling exhibitions. The property includes 12 distinct gardens and a mile-long woodland trail featuring modern and contemporary outdoor sculpture. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and is a *USA Today* Top 10 Botanical Garden. Cheekwood is located just 8 miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. Daily hours of operation: Tuesday through Sunday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. For further information, call 615-356-8000 or visit cheekwood.org.

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