



Land trust hosts gala evening

| Friday, June 20, 2008

Friends and Supporters of Shirley Heinze Land Trust will gather from all corners of Northwest Indiana at 6 p.m. Saturday for the organization's fifth annual summer gala, "Summer Solstice - The Magic of Nature." Guests at this special evening under the stars will dine formally amidst the beauty of the International Friendship Gardens in Michigan City.

Since 1981, Shirley Heinze Land Trust has protected, preserved and restored ecologically significant and sensitive natural lands in Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties. Its annual summer gala offers friends and supporters a special and festive celebration of the organization's accomplishments over the past year. It also offers the opportunity to learn more about the organization and its work, and it is an essential source of financial support for land acquisition and natural area restoration programs.

The evening will begin with a champagne and hors d'oeuvres reception, followed by a gourmet dinner featuring locally raised roasted duck breast, paired with locally grown asparagus and Great Lakes wild rice. Complimentary wine selections will be furnished by North Coast Distributing.

Guests will be entertained throughout the evening by local jazz singer Bunny Fisher and her trio of musicians.

Guests are encouraged to dress for the event in colors which are light, ethereal and earthy or to dress to reflect their spiritual environment.

At the silent and live auctions, guests will choose among nature-related objets d'art, paintings, and unique tour and eco-adventure outings and expeditions. A Trail Creek Kayaking Expedition with a Bridges Inn and Grille overnight stay, a power boat tour on Lake Michigan, bird hike, an orchid tour and a Lake Michigan Sunset Sailboat cruise are a few of featured eco-adventures this year.

Honorary Co-Chairpersons are Chuck Oberlie, mayor of Michigan City; Geof Benson, President of Beverly Shores Town Council; Brian Snedecor, mayor of Hobart; Debra Shore, commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago; and Lee Botts, environmental activist.

Corporate sponsors include ArcelorMittal, First State Bank of Porter, JF New & Associates, NiSource Environmental Health and Safety General Insurance Services of Michigan City, Lakeside Wealth Management, Michigan City Wal-Mart, MonoSol LLC, Aide Rentals and Sales II, Horizon Bank, and J&D Realty Holdings LLC and Taltree Arboretum.

Under the direction of local artist Michelle Weiser, Michigan City Boys and Girls Club members decorated birdhouses for table centerpieces.

Tickets, at \$85 each (\$50 tax deductible) are still available for the benefit. Individual and corporate sponsors can reserve a table for \$1,000. Call (219) 879-4725 for reservations and additional information.

The setting for the evening is the 106-acre International Friendship Gardens, located in Michigan City and traversed by Trail Creek. Founded in 1936, it was inspired by a garden at the Chicago World's Fair and its theme of "Peace and Friendship to All Nations." It features 14 ethnic gardens and hosts a variety of cultural and special events.

To learn more about the land trust, visit www.heinzetrust.org or contact the organization at (219) 879-4725 or land@heinzetrust.org

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