



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2019

CONTACT:

Jennifer Wilson
Director of Marketing and Communications
Office: 614-715-8150
Cell: 740-398-8371
jwilson@fpconservatory.org

**FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY LOOKS BACK ON 2018,
CELEBRATES RECORD BREAKING ATTENDANCE**

Columbus, Ohio– Franklin Park Conservatory added a number of visitor experiences in 2018 and smashed attendance records from years past. A total of 353,399 guests visited Columbus' premier botanical garden in 2018 marking a 57% increase in attendance over 2017 which was previously the best year on record.

In May of 2018 the Conservatory opened The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden. Through exploration and unstructured play the Children's Garden connected its' youngest demographic with nature, art and the outdoors. Since its opening the Children's Garden has welcomed 75,362 children.

While opening a major attraction certainly increased visitation it wasn't the only reason guests were flocking to the Conservatory, its seasonal exhibitions also played a large part. Regardless of the weather, visitors to the Conservatory always had something new to experience through its seasonal exhibitions, Orchids; Columbus Blooms; Blooms & Butterflies; Topiaries; Harvest Blooms and, the hugely popular, Conservatory Aglow. On its own, Conservatory Aglow greeted 71,733 guests from November 17 through December 31.

As the visitor experiences increased, it was important to the Conservatory's board and staff to maintain accessibility to anyone who wanted to visit. For this reason, access offerings and programs were initiated.

- Community Days (free admission granted on the first Sunday of each month for residents of Franklin County and the City of Columbus) was created and welcomed 16,807 guests.
- The Conservatory Membership Pass Program was started and made Conservatory memberships available for checkout at the Martin Luther King and Shepard branches of the Columbus Metropolitan Library. To date 961 people have used these memberships.
- Access Family Memberships (\$30) offered for families in eligible programs. 780 families purchased these memberships in 2018.

Another area of growth for the Conservatory was in its membership base. In 2017 the number of member households for the Conservatory was 8,345 but that number grew to 12,200 in 2018, a 46% increase.

"We were thrilled to welcome so many guests to the Conservatory in 2018" said, Bruce Harkey, President and CEO of Franklin Park Conservatory. "The Conservatory's vision is 'a world that celebrates nature as essential to the human experience,' we strive to connect people and nature every day and will continue to provide excellent visitor experiences in the years to come."

To keep up to date on the latest news and happenings, follow the Conservatory on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) via @FPConservatory or check our website at fpconservatory.org.



###

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens offers world-class horticulture, art and nature-based exhibitions, and educational programs for all ages. Situated on 40 acres on the eastern side of Franklin Park, the Conservatory features the historic 1895 John F. Wolfe Palm House; 83,000 square feet of glasshouses; botanical gardens including the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden; and meeting and event spaces. The Conservatory owns the largest collection of glass artwork by Dale Chihuly in a botanical garden and is home to internationally recognized light artist James Turrell's Light Raiment II, which illuminates the John F. Wolfe Palm House every evening from dusk until dawn.