



BLOSSOMS of HOPE...
the Howard County Cherry Tree Project
NEWS RELEASE



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Hope to light up the night with the help of artistic teachers
**“Lanterns of Hope” To Create a Reflective,
Closing Moment at Comcast CHERRYBRATION**

HOWARD COUNTY, MD— The concluding highlight of Blossoms of Hope’s new **Comcast CHERRYBRATION** will light up the night with hope as 200 glowing, handmade “LANTERNS OF HOPE” are carried through Centennial Park’s pathways. Sparkling pink stars, blossom laden pyramids and foil, fairy-like flowers will light the way as the day’s festivities draw to a close at dusk on Saturday, April 28th. The evening’s shining display will be provided in large part by participating artists Laura Parkhurst, Jennifer Becker and the many hands now at work in Recreation and Parks’ Recreational Licensed Childcare Program.

Comcast CHERRYBRATION focuses on bringing the community together in a natural setting to celebrate the renewal of life that arrives each spring. It is designed to coincide with the blossoming of 1,000 cherry trees that have been planted throughout Howard County to raise cancer awareness and help support the Claudia Mayer Cancer Resource Center. As Blossoms of Hope’s signature event, Comcast CHERRYBRATION will create a special place in time each spring for the community to come together to honor the beauty of nature, renew the spirit and share the hope of tomorrow. As dusk approaches, the handmade lanterns will be lit and the community will symbolically carry its hopes for tomorrow forward in a beautiful, communal, “Lanterns of Hope” luminary procession.

The artists and teachers who are lending their talents to this year’s lantern project are helping create that special moment in time, according to Blossoms of Hope Executive Director, Victoria Goodman.

“The Lanterns of Hope concept for the Comcast Cherrybration is an important element in growing this event at both the grassroots level and as a regional event,” Goodman said.

(more)

“Lanterns of Hope” To Create a Reflective, Closing Moment at Comcast CHERRYBRATION (continued)

“Through the talents and skills of our lantern artists we hope to give the community a glimpse of the artistic potential for lantern sculptures and the appeal they have for attracting visitors to a regional arts event,” Goodman said.

According to Goodman, the creation of lanterns for celebratory community processions like Lanterns of Hope, also helps strengthen the fabric of society in a simple, uplifting way through interactive workshops. “Plans are already underway to expand our lantern-making workshops for next year’s festival,” she said. “By working in conjunction with Blossoms of Hope partners like the Howard County Library, the Howard County Center for the Arts and the Horizon Foundation we hope to bring even more individuals and families together to create their lanterns, share time together and participate in next year’s performance.”

Howard County’s new community celebration honors the 1,000 “Blossoms of Hope” cherry trees and the hope they are bringing in the fight against cancer. The outdoor festival will be held from 4pm to dusk on the Route 108 side of Centennial Park near the amphitheatre. The festival features music, children’s art activities and a variety of displays focusing on wellness, the outdoors and the importance of nature.

Everyone is invited to help “hope light up the night” by creating a luminary sculpture of their own for the “LANTERNS OF HOPE” parade. A good, how-to, resource book is [Magic Lanterns](#) by Mary Maguire, which is available from Amazon.com. Simple paper-bag luminary lanterns can also be made during the afternoon at Comcast CHERRYBRATION at the Howard County Office of Tourism’s red tent.

(Please see attached additional, back-up information about participating artists)

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CHERRYBRATION**

BACK-UP INFORMATION

ABOUT THIS YEAR’S ARTISTS:

Laura Parkhurst is an arts educator at the Baltimore Lab School, a division of the Lab School of Washington. She uses the visual arts and drama to teach content-based curriculum to elementary school students with learning disabilities. She also uses a variety of artistic techniques to create and explore the visual arts with middle school students. Laura leads a team of junior high students in creating an annual entry in the American Visionary Arts Museum Kinetic Sculpture Race. As an artist, she creates and sells hand-made jewelry. She earned her Bachelors in Elementary Education from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD and her Masters of Special Education from Loyola College of Maryland in Baltimore, MD.

Jennifer Becker is a sculptor who has shown and taught extensively in the Baltimore, DC area. She earned her B.F.A. in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA and her M.F.A. in sculpture from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. Jennifer Becker has taught art at a variety of venues such as the Montessori School, Northeast Montessori Institute, Norbel School as well as The Community College of Baltimore County. Most recently she teaches at The Baltimore Lab School and the CCBC Continuing Education program. She participated in both the Fish Out of Water and the Crabtown community art projects. In the fall of 2004 she was awarded a fellowship from the Fulbright Memorial Fund which allowed her the opportunity to travel and visit schools in Japan for three weeks with 200 other American teachers. Her work has been exhibited in and around the Baltimore region and can be seen now as a part of the Lotta Art Exhibition at School 33.

Howard County Recreational Licensed Childcare Classes:

The goal of the Department of Recreation and Parks’ Recreational Licensed Childcare (RLC) program is to provide a safe and structured environment for children to have fun while participating in meaningful group recreational activities. In cooperation with the Lanterns of Hope project, coordinators for all 42 centers across Howard County are working on lantern activities with their students to support the upcoming luminary parade. The overall participation effort is being coordinated by supervisors Joy Young and Stephanie Davis. For more information about the individual centers’ involvement, please contact, Ms. Barbara Moore, Childcare Manager at 410-313-4723.