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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Petit Family Foundation Awards Connecticut Science Center $50,000 Grant

Michaela's Garden Outreach Project Promotes Girls in Science

Hartford, CT (November 17, 2011) -- *Michaela's Garden*, a non-profit educational outreach project sponsored by the Petit Family Foundation, has teamed up with the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford. The Petit Foundation has awarded the Connecticut Science Center grant of $50,000 to execute this beautiful tribute program that will not only populate gardens around the world but also inspire young girls and children to consider science and horticulture.

The project is named for Michaela Rose Petit who died in 2007 at the age of 11. Sadly, Michaela, her sister Hayley, and her mother Jennifer all lost their lives in a violent home invasion. *Michaela's Garden*, like The Foundation's other projects, focuses on celebrating their interests and good works.

"The Connecticut Science Center is honored to have an educational program such as this garden." Said Matt Fleury, President and CEO of the Connecticut Science Center, "This is a very special partnership by which we will work together to advance our shared priorities of promoting healing from the family's tragedy, memorializing the Petit women, spreading far and wide the beautiful flowers nurtured in Michaela's backyard garden and promoting science learning among girls and families."

The *Michaela's Garden* project is designed to encourage families and youth to become more involved in science and community service. Michaela loved the flowers and foliage plants that she and her father planted and maintained over the years at their Cheshire, CT home. One bed of flowers in particular was dear to Michaela: her Four O'Clocks. To honor her memory, "Michaela's Four O'Clocks" have been re-planted with seeds harvested from the previous year. As a result there are now hundreds of Four O'Clock Gardens in the world — all the progeny of Michaela's Garden.

The Petit Family Foundation sponsors programs to help educate young people -- especially girls -- in the sciences. Single packets of seeds are being sold for $10 at the Science Center Gift Shop— more than enough to create a beautiful garden for you, a friend or a community.

Michaela's Garden is located on the rooftop of the Connecticut Science Center and open seasonally to the public**.** This past summer and fall, hundreds of thousands of seeds were harvested at the Science Center and gardens across the country. In the spring of 2012, a new crop of direct descendants from Michaela's original plants will be planted in the garden atop the Science Center. This is a unique opportunity for anyone from the public to become engaged to learn and harvest seeds. A complete educational outreach program in plant science has been developed for schools and youth organizations. Call the Connecticut Science Center at 860.724.3623, or The Foundation office at 860.749.1436 for details on how your school or club can learn more about horticulture and the beauty of gardening.

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About the Connecticut Science Center The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Visitors experience over 150 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events and lectures for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration.
More information: www.CTScienceCenter.org or 860.SCIENCE.