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Media Contact:
Sheila Hanrick
Director of Marketing and Communication
Cape Fear Botanical Garden
910-486-0221
www.capefearbg.org

Campaign Contact:
Shannon Bell
Director of Philanthropy
Cape Fear Botanical Garden
910-527-9200
www.capefearbg.org

Cape Fear Botanical Garden Launches Public Phase of $4.75 Million "Always Growing" Capital Campaign

With 85% of its goal already secured, the campaign prioritizes a new Environmental Education Pavilion while investing in the Garden's visitor experience and long-term future.

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. — November 4, 2026 — Cape Fear Botanical Garden is celebrating an exciting milestone with the public launch of **Always Growing**, a $4.75 million capital campaign that will transform opportunities for environmental education, enhance the visitor experience, preserve iconic Garden features, and strengthen the organization's future.

At the heart of the campaign is a new **Environmental Education Pavilion**, which will replace the Garden's original 1970s-era picnic shelter in Pope Park. The modern, purpose-built facility will provide a welcoming and accessible setting where thousands of children, families, and visitors can discover the natural world through hands-on learning and exploration.

The pavilion is one of several investments designed to meet the needs of a growing Garden and the community it serves. Additional projects include improvements to the Ralph and Linda Huff Orangery, renovations to Garden features, landscape enhancements, and increased support for the Garden's endowment.

Thanks to the generosity of early campaign supporters, the Garden has already secured 85% of its fundraising goal, representing approximately $4 million in commitments. The public phase invites the greater community to help bring this vision to completion and ensure the Garden continues to thrive for generations to come.

Adding to the excitement of the public launch, three generous donors have pledged to match every dollar contributed to the Always Growing campaign between November 4 and December 31, 2026, up to a combined total of $500,000. Every eligible gift made during this period will be

matched dollar for dollar, doubling its impact and helping bring the Garden's vision closer to completion.

"Always Growing represents more than improvements to our facilities and landscapes. It is an investment in the future of Cape Fear Botanical Garden and the thousands of people who come here each year to learn, explore, celebrate, and connect with nature," said Chris Hoffman, CEO of Cape Fear Botanical Garden. "The tremendous support we have already received demonstrates how deeply our community values the Garden. Now, we invite everyone to be part of this next chapter."

Growing Opportunities for Education and Discovery

One of the campaign's most important projects is the replacement of the original 1970s-era picnic shelter in Pope Park with a modern Environmental Education Pavilion and accessible restrooms.

The new pavilion will provide an improved setting for school field trips, hands-on environmental education, family programming, and other activities that encourage people of all ages to explore nature.

Replacing the aging picnic shelter was envisioned in the Garden's original master plan. Through the Always Growing campaign, this long-standing priority is moving closer to becoming a reality.

Enhancing the Garden Experience

The campaign also includes important acoustical improvements to the Ralph and Linda Huff Orangery, one of the Garden's signature spaces for celebrations, meetings, and community gatherings.

A sound study conducted in 2015 identified challenges associated with echo and reverberation within the space. Planned improvements will help create a more comfortable environment, allowing guests to better enjoy conversations, presentations, and special occasions.

Additional campaign investments will support enhancements to the Garden's landscapes and renovations to two of its iconic features, the Wellons Arbor and Butler Gazebo. These improvements will help preserve the character and beauty of the Garden while enhancing the experience for future visitors.

Building on a Strong Foundation for the Future

Beyond physical improvements, Always Growing recognizes that the Garden's long-term success depends on the people and resources that sustain its mission.

The campaign includes support for growing the Garden's endowment held at Cumberland Community Foundation Inc. which will strengthen the organization's financial foundation.The fund supports the skilled, year-round work of horticulture, engaging educational programming, and provides meaningful visitor experiences.

Together, these investments reflect a thoughtful approach to the Garden's future, balancing improvements to its facilities with the ongoing stewardship necessary to maintain an 80-acre botanical garden.

An Invitation to Grow Together

For decades, Cape Fear Botanical Garden has served as a place where nature, education, and community come together. Each year, thousands of visitors experience the Garden through educational programs, special events, family activities, and opportunities to enjoy the beauty of the natural world.

The Always Growing campaign builds upon that legacy, ensuring the Garden remains a vibrant and welcoming destination for future generations.

"Years ago, the founders had a big vision for the Garden and trusted that it would continue for generations to come to love and enjoy. As stewards of this Garden, we must continue to enhance the existing spaces so we can educate even more children, ensure its financial stability by building our endowment, and create new garden visions that we can all look forward to bringing to life in the years to come," said Lynne Nimocks, Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chair

"Your Garden is in sound financial condition. Over the last 8 years we have (1) paid off all debts, (2) built up $1.7 million in cash reserves, and (3) been profitable each year. We are well positioned to take the Garden to the next level, and we intend to keep growing steadily for years to come," said Karl Legatski, Campaign Steering Committee Co-Chair

With 85% of the campaign goal already secured, every contribution brings the Garden closer to realizing its vision. Gifts made during the November 4 through December 31 matching opportunity will have twice the impact, providing an especially meaningful way for the community to participate.

"I am incredibly proud of and grateful for our donors. Their generosity has enriched our Garden and community, once again, so we can live, work, and grow together." said Shannon Bell, Cape Fear Botanical Garden Director of Philanthropy.

To learn more about Always Growing or make a contribution, visit www.capefearbg.org or contact Shannon Bell, Director of Philanthropy at 910-527-9200.

About Cape Fear Botanical Garden

Cape Fear Botanical Garden is an 80-acre nonprofit botanical garden located in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Through horticulture, environmental education, conservation, and community programming, the Garden connects people with nature and provides opportunities for discovery, learning, and enjoyment throughout the year.