

Southeastern Horticultural Society Appoints Kate Chura as Executive Director
Innovative, Nationally-Known Leader Recruited From Horticultural Society of New York

Atlanta, Georgia, October 15, 2008 -- The Southeastern Horticultural Society (SHS) has appointed Kate Chura as Executive Director.

"This is a remarkable leader with the ability to literally unify and transform communities." said Southeastern Horticultural Society Board of Directors President Robert Balentine. "Our community will be grateful that she has chosen to put her unique talents to work here."

Ms. Chura brings to Atlanta an exceptionally distinguished twenty-year record of accomplishments with cultural and environmental institutions in New York City. She has applied her belief that people and communities can unify through horticulture to the benefit of numerous foundations, societies, museums and other organizations including RUSH Philanthropic, New York Restoration Project, New York City Parks Foundation, Horticultural Society of New York, Audubon Society, Guggenheim Museum, New Museum, Bronx Museum and the Design Museum.

Throughout New York City, cultural centers, libraries, schools, parks, community gardens, senior centers and museums have benefited from her forward and creative thinking about public outdoor spaces. Examples of her accomplishments follow:

- In the summer of 2008, Ms. Chura led her organization to support the first urban farm open to the public in the outdoor space of the Museum of Modern Art's PS 1 in New York City. This innovative project attracted and educated tens of thousands of visitors and featured a riveting presentation by Michael Pollan.
- Ms. Chura incorporated horticulture into social context with a model horticulture therapy program at the Rikers Island Prison, as well as by growing an earned income entrepreneurial initiative that educates and prepares formerly incarcerated women, youth and men for careers in the field of horticulture.
- Her commitment to providing the best horticultural practices to every community led her to revive a 17 acre wetland park and provide the local neighborhood with an outdoor classroom nestled in a natural setting within the dense urban neighborhood.
- Ms. Chura worked with the New York City Department of Education to create water harvesting systems to teach conservation and horticulture to elementary school children in Harlem, and worked with librarians throughout New York to teach community members about their natural environments and other important topics like eating healthy foods through involvement in local organic gardening.

The key to achieving these kinds of successes, Ms. Chura says, is building working partnerships with individuals from communities, governments, schools and non-profit organizations. Education, outreach and expanding the role of nature in people's lives are at the top of her list for the Southeastern Horticultural Society.

Ms. Chura will assume her new responsibilities on November 3, 2008 at the headquarters of the Southeastern Horticultural Society in Atlanta. Prior to her appointment by the SHS, Ms. Chura has served as acting President and Vice President/Chief Operating Officer of the Horticultural Society of New York. Previously, she served The Parks Council, now known as New Yorkers 4 Parks, as Director of Operations, responsible for city-wide programs to create, restore, secure and provide access to public open spaces; and for procuring and managing funds to remediate wetlands and to design and develop community-managed public parks. Earlier in her career Ms. Chura served the Rotunda Gallery as Environmental Art Educator, as Artist-in-Residence at

Brooklyn Public Schools, where she designed and implemented art and science curriculum for elementary, middle and high schools, with a focus on horticulture, open space, architecture and environmental conservation. Her active memberships include Manhattan Land Trust member of the board, Rush Philanthropic member of the steering committee, American Community Garden Association member of the executive board, New York Botanical Garden instructor. Ms. Chura holds a Certificate from New York Botanical Garden Horticultural Therapy Program, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Missouri University.

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The Southeastern Horticultural Society (SHS) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to promoting the knowledge, art and enjoyment of horticulture throughout the Southeastern United States.

Its preeminent program is The Southeastern Flower Show, a premier Atlanta cultural event and the top juried horticultural competition in the region. The 2009 Flower Show will be held January 28 – February 1 at Cobb Galleria Centre. The show theme, *Passion*, will come to life through dramatic full-scale gardens, stunning and diverse floral displays, compelling demonstrations of floral technique and organic cooking, distinguished speakers and authors, relevant environmental exhibits, live music performance, and is an event not to be missed!

Visit www.FlowerShow.org for tickets and information, and www.sehort.org for more information about the Southeastern Horticultural Society.

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