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CONTACT:

Jennifer Cosenza, 202-729-4074

jen@canyonranchinstitute.org

Canyon Ranch Institute Healthy Garden Expansion at Historic Trustees' Garden Will Provide Open Spaces for the Benefit of the Entire Savannah Community

Charles H. and Rosalie Morris expand commitment to improving the health and well-being of Savannah

SAVANNAH, GA (August 23, 2014) – Today, Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) Executive Director and Board Member **Jennifer Cabe, M.A.**, joined Savannah Civic Leaders **Charles H. Morris** and **Rosalie Morris** to announce the expansion of the CRI Healthy Garden at Trustees' Garden. The Savannah CRI Healthy Garden is already a thriving cooperative, organic garden planted, maintained, and harvested by more than 60 local volunteers. This new commitment will expand the garden to include contemplative, open space that anyone can use for gardening, meditation, and relaxation derived from a beautiful natural setting.

“Our first step is to hold today’s focus groups to hear from community members themselves, so that we can understand their needs and explore what features and uses for the garden they would find most beneficial,” said Charles H. Morris. “We are already experiencing the successful harvest of vegetables and herbs from the CRI Healthy Garden at Trustees' Garden because of the tremendous volunteer support from within our community. By providing additional space and resources at Trustees' Garden, my wife Rosalie and I hope to inspire more individuals, families, and groups to make a lasting connection to improving their health and overall well-being.”

American Psychological Association research shows that 20 percent of Americans report feeling extreme stress (ranking an 8 or 9 on a 10-point scale), which can lead to physical and emotional symptoms, including fatigue, irritability, and poor eating habits.¹ To combat these negative health effects, open, outdoor spaces such as gardens can be effective aids for stress management.²

“A major focus of the CRI Healthy Garden is stress management,” said Jennifer Cabe. “There are proven benefits to bringing people together in a healthy setting such as gardens, but it takes shape differently for every community. The Morrisises realize the importance of honoring culture and community as they plan the expansion of the Savannah CRI Healthy Garden. The input from our community-focused research here in Savannah will inform our planning so that we understand community members’ priorities, and benefit from their wisdom and input as we design, build, and nurture the CRI Healthy Garden at Trustees' Garden.”

¹ American Psychological Association. Stress in America™: Missing the Health Care Connection. 7 February 2013. Available at <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2012/full-report.pdf>.

² Pleasant, Andrew, Scanlon, Molly, and Pereira-Leon, Maura. “Literature review: Environmental design and research on the human health effects of open spaces in urban areas.” *Human Ecology Review* 20.1 (2013): 36-49. Society for Human Ecology. Available at <http://www.canyonranchinstitute.org/component/content/article/40-general/693-literature-review-environmental-design-and-research-on-the-human-health-effects-of-open-spaces-in-urban-areas>.

The Savannah CRI Healthy Garden expansion announcement was made at a Canyon Ranch Institute Savannah Partnership (CRISP) event honoring volunteer community members, who over the course of four months, helped create raised garden beds, install the beds at Trustees' Garden, and filled them with soil, seeds, and seedlings that quickly grew into robust eggplant, tomato, squash, bean plants, and a variety of herbs and beautiful flowers. Guided by CRI, the volunteer gardeners include a range of ages and occupations, including physicians and their patients, master gardeners, first-time gardeners, and other local residents. The garden produce is helping feed low-income people in Savannah.

Canyon Ranch Institute's approach to the development of the CRI Healthy Garden program is based on the non-profit's mission to bring the power and possibility of a healthy world to all people. CRI views human health and a healthy environment as two central aspects of a healthy world. The goal is to make the CRI Healthy Garden model available to all communities, adapted for local climate and available space.

Learn more about the CRI Healthy Garden program at <http://bit.ly/1mvJAIP> or join us most Saturdays from 8:30-9:30 a.m. at Trustees' Garden on the southeast corner of East Bay and East Broad Streets in Savannah.

Canyon Ranch Institute Savannah Partnership (CRISP) is engaged in programs and activities throughout Savannah to help improve health literacy and overall well-being. Call CRI at 921-443-3264 to get involved and to help improve health and prevent disease in Savannah.

For more information about CRI's partnership with *Connect Savannah* and Charles H. and Rosalie Morris visit <http://bit.ly/LQrh13>. For more information about CRI's partnership with Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care, Inc., in Savannah visit <http://bit.ly/1eiOvgR>.

About Canyon Ranch Institute®

Canyon Ranch Institute catalyzes the possibility of optimal health for all people by translating the best practices of Canyon Ranch and our partners to help educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. Canyon Ranch Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit public charity. More information is available at www.canyonranchinstitute.org. On Twitter [@CRIhealthyworld](https://twitter.com/CRIhealthyworld)

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