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## **Media Alert** **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Area Non-Profits Partner, At-Risk Youth Help Clean-Up Only Botanic Garden in the U.S. on Reclaimed Land, Groundbreaking Ceremony July 25**

**Pittsburgh, PA** – Auberle youth will be recognized and included in a groundbreaking ceremony for The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden's new welcome center on July 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 A.M. for their role in helping remediate The Woodland Gardens, which when finished, will be part of the only botanic garden in the U.S. built on reclaimed land.

"We are delighted that the Auberle youth have been part of the beginnings of the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden. We value their contribution to the Woodland Gardens and we hope to inspire all of them to return! Return quickly, to keep building the Garden, and, in the long term, return to enjoy the Garden with their own children!" - from Kitty

In May 2011, Auberle, The Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania and The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden began collaborating. With the help of grant funding from the National Audubon Society, at-risk youth from Auberle spent the summer working along environmental professionals to help remediate portions of The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden's 460-acre property near Settlers Cabin Park. Auberle youth learned to identify and remove invasive plant species, plant native species, helped with irrigation system development, recycle debris and understand and identify the damaging effects of acid mine drainage occurring on the property.

"At-risk youth traditionally struggle in science and math applications," said Auberle CEO John Lydon. "We [Auberle] work to create meaningful educational opportunities for our youth that allow them to learn-by-doing. Our youth gained hands-on work experience, applicable education and an idea about the kinds of careers available to them in the environmental field."

The groundbreaking ceremony is the culmination of a year-long partnership geared toward woodland and habitat restoration that engaged the community. Auberle youth received over a dozen lessons from the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania on various environmental topics, taking frequent fieldtrips to The Woodland Gardens. Lessons turned into hands-on application as 13 Auberle youth completed 400 hours of service alongside Pittsburgh Botanic Garden horticulturists, botanists and ethno-botanists to remediate the site and learn about employment opportunities in the environmental field.

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Since 1952, Auberle has been dedicated to community, strong families and successful youth throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania. Auberle serves over 2,300 children and families annually in eight counties. Today, we offer 16 programs including preventative and community-based services, with 60% of our clients served in their home, school or in their community. Auberle is a recipient of the Alfred W. Wishart, Jr. Award for Excellence and has been recognized by the National Alliance of Children and Families as a Top Ten Performer in the Nation.

