



For Immediate Release

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“Petal Pushers” Garden Walk offers opportunities for Pedaling, too!

Miller Beach is a bike friendly area, and the Miller Garden Club is taking advantage of that! At their 18th Annual Secret Gardens Walk, this year themed as “Petal Pushers” the club is offering a guided tour for bicycling enthusiasts, led by a bike expert, Dave Kemmerer of Ogden Dunes. The garden walk will feature six gardens, all easily reached by bike or car. Hikers and walkers will find the tour challenging, but do-able. The total mileage for the tour is 4.2 miles and includes hills, inclines, and other topography that Millerites know and love. “Our Marquette Park biking lanes are well-marked and are very accessible for all manner of two and three-wheeled forms of transportation, “ remarks Carol Smith of Friends of Marquette Park, “the summer months are the best time to see all the sights in the park, including the Japanese bridges and the Father Marquette statue.” Club president Corya Channing says, “Like using Divvy bikes in Chicago, we have rental bikes here in Miller, too available at several locations in the area.”

The tour starts at 10:30am at the Aquatorium, 6918 Oak Ave., situated at the very southernmost tip of Lake Michigan in the Miller Beach section of Gary, IN. The building is the former Gary Bathing Beach, where in the early and mid-20th century beach-goers gathered to shower and change into proper bathing attire before walking down to the shore for a dip. Nowadays, the refurbished structure houses a museum dedicated to flight: honoring the work initiated by Octave Chanute with his gliders, data he freely shared with the Wright Brothers. In addition, there’s a section of the building named for the Tuskegee Airmen, famed African-American flying aces of World War II including a replica of the aircraft used in their forays. The Miller Garden Club maintains the extensive gardens on the property; interior courtyards feature classic urns and other formal structures and the exterior showcases native plants, all marked with identifying tags for educational purposes.

The first garden on the tour is the newly created kayak launch on the lagoon, just 50 yards from the Aquatorium. This site is accessible to every person, including those with need for handicapped accessibility. The gardens and launch were designed and created by Miller resident Zully Alvarado, using universal design elements and include a special path and flowers that are easily cared for by people who are in wheelchairs. Other gardens on the walk will feature “straw bale” gardening, low-maintenance gardening and lake-view gardens to delight the eye and lift the spirits.

Other elements of the garden walk are: box lunches available on the premises which can be purchased and taken on the bikes for eating at picturesque spots along the way or enjoyed at tables situated at the upper deck of the Aquatorium, which affords a spectacular view of the city of Chicago in the distance. Vendors offering garden-related goods -- artwork, stone markers, metal signage and other objets-de-art -- will be open during the walk which runs from 10am to 3pm both days: SATURDAY JULY 21 AND SUNDAY JULY 22. Tickets for the walk and/or ride are \$10,, available on the day of the walk and also at Ayers Realty and Lake St. Gallery both located in the central business district on Lake St. in Miller, just a short two blocks from the South Shore train depot in Miller. Rental bikes are located a block away at the Farmers Market site at Hwy 12 and Lake St. There are also two other locations for bike rentals: at the concession stand in Marquette Park and also in the business district at Shelby St. and Locust. Bikes are available for all day rental; go to Zagster.com for more information.