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**MEDIA ALERT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Images**: [www.historiclondontown.org/media](http://www.historiclondontown.org/media)

**HISTORIC LONDON TOWN AND GARDENS TURNS 50!**

*Celebrating This Year & Beyond!*

**EDGEWATER, MD, March 15, 2021** – The first visitors to Historic London Town and Gardens (London Town) signed the fresh new registry book on April 15, 1971. At that time, the gardens were still being developed, and the c.1760 William Brown House had not yet finished its restoration work. However, the site still offered these visitors a treasure trove of botanical and historical wonders, alongside gorgeous views of the South River.

“I have great admiration for the visionaries who undertook the tremendous effort of transforming London Town into a park and museum 50 years ago,” says executive director Rod Cofield. “People like founding park director Gladys Nelker and original horticulturist Tony Dove played an instrumental role in making this site a place of wonder and joy for so many people. We are working hard to continue their efforts.” Since the site originally opened, it has expanded to 23 acres of history and gardens. Today, the site includes a modern Visitor’s Center with the *Discover London Town* exhibit, the c.1760 William Brown House, two colonial buildings reconstructed on their archaeological footprint, a rental pavilion, the Sound and Sensory Garden, and 10 acres of ornamental and woodland gardens, featuring an eclectic display of specimen collections, such as magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons, camellias, and peonies.

“We celebrate the founders’ legacy by continuing to enhance London Town and ensuring we are here for the community for the next 50 years and beyond,” says Cofield. London Town has made significant strides in achieving our Operations and Capital Improvement Plan, including beginning the second phase of work on preserving the William Brown House, a National Historic Landmark, expanding the parking lot, and will soon be adding the new Phillips Family Educational Pavilion.

Although the pandemic has changed how London Town will celebrate its golden anniversary, it hasn’t dampened the excitement. Instead, the staff and board are planning to offer limited activities this year and continue the effort with bigger events in 2022. London Town is kicking off a season of surprises and memories with “**London Town at 50: Spring ReOpening**” this weekend (Friday – Sunday, March 19 – 22, 10am – 4pm). Attendance will be free all weekend! This event is part of Maryland Day activities in the area. After the Spring ReOpening, London Town will begin “**50th Anniversary Lecture Series**,” starting off with executive director Rod Cofield discussing “Colonial London Town” on Tuesday, April 6 at 10:30am. More information is at [www.historiclondontown.org/events](http://www.historiclondontown.org/events).

Starting Wednesday, March 24, London Town will be open to the public from Wednesday – Sunday, 10am – 4pm. Admission is required. The gardens, *Discover London Town* exhibit, and the reconstructed buildings are available to enjoy. Because the William Brown House is undergoing preservation work, it is currently closed, but a free virtual tour is available at our website. More information about planning a visit to London Town is available at [www.historiclondontown.org/visit](http://www.historiclondontown.org/visit).

Explore more about London Town’s 50th at our new microsite: [www.historiclondontown.org/50](http://www.historiclondontown.org/50). On this page is a timeline of important events in London Town’s history, where to find monthly blog posts celebrating different aspects of the site’s recent history, and a place for former and current volunteers to share their information. We are hoping to learn more about past volunteers and to invite them to a celebratory event in 2022. Visitors can also donate to our 50th anniversary fund, ensuring the site continues thriving for the next 50 years.

**About Historic London Town and Gardens**

Historic London Town and Gardens is a twenty-three-acre park featuring history, archaeology, and horticulture on the South River in Edgewater, Maryland. The park is owned by Anne Arundel County and managed by the London Town Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (EIN: 52-1396159). Created in 1993, the Foundation manages the site under a formal operating agreement with the Anne Arundel County government. The Foundation is responsible for developing and conducting interpretive, recreational, and educational programs that allow visitors to learn about our historical, archaeological, and horticultural offerings. Our mission is "To inspire a deeper understanding of our region’s history, environment, culture, and arts through living history, historical artifacts, experiential public gardens, and collaborative cultural & arts programs."

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