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### **WASHINGTON'S YOUTH SHOWCASE KNOWLEDGE OF NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL IN YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**

**Washington, DC** [March 4, 2010] – For the third consecutive year, the National Cherry Blossom Festival presents the Youth Ambassadors program. The 2010 program is supported by Sodexo. The program debuted in 2008 in order to educate Washington's youth about the importance of cherry blossom trees in their community. Through the program, students learn more about their local history, Japanese culture, and come to understand the importance of the care and maintenance of the trees and help spread the message of goodwill and friendship.

This year, the three-part program has been expanded to include five schools within the District, reaching nearly 200 students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. The schools include charter schools Achievement Preparatory Academy, Imagine Southeast Public, and E.W. Stokes; and DC Public Schools Emery Elementary School and Strong John Thompson Elementary.

The program begins with an in-class discussion on the history of the National Cherry Blossom Festival paired with fun, educational hands-on activities. The students spend an hour with the National Park Service Junior Bloomin' Ranger program to learn about the science of the blossoms. Finally, the students become Youth Ambassadors and put their knowledge into practice by spending an afternoon at the Tidal Basin, meeting and greeting visitors, and sharing their knowledge of the cherry blossoms.

"Our students have enjoyed learning about the blossoms immensely over the past two years, and I am happy to see its expansion this year," said Bobby E. Caballero, Dean of Students at E.W. Stokes. "It is important for them to learn about such a rich history and tradition in their own backyards."

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is Washington, DC's and the nation's greatest springtime celebration. The 2010 Festival, March 27 – April 11, includes three spectacular weekends and daily events featuring diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. The 2010 Festival commemorates the 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the gift of the cherry blossom trees and the enduring friendship between United States and Japan.

**For schedules and information visit [www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org](http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org)  
or call the Festival hotline at (877) 44BLOOM.**

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