



INFORMATION/PHOTOS:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**FIFTH ANNUAL ENCHANTED PUMPKIN GARDEN
RETURNS TO THE CAREFREE DESERT GARDENS
OCTOBER 18–27, 2019**

*Town of Carefree Hosts Master Sculptor Ray Villafane,
Live Carving Demonstrations and Magical Halloween Festivities*

CAREFREE Ariz. – Halloween once again invades the Town of Carefree in the form of whimsical pumpkin carvings from master sculptor Ray Villafane and the Villafane Studios team for a fifth incredible year. The Enchanted Pumpkin Garden, a one-of-a-kind fall festival celebrating the magic of the season, takes place October 18–27, with the amazing artistry of Villafane Studios on display throughout the four-acre Carefree Desert Gardens in downtown Carefree.

Admission to the Gardens will be \$15 per person Friday–Sunday, and \$10 Monday–Thursday. Children two and under are free. Weekdays will feature the exceptionally talented Villafane Studios carving team creating new and exciting pumpkin artworks, a variety of unique fall-themed edible creations and merchandise, and special Halloween-themed performances throughout the gardens. Weekend entry includes full access to the Gardens, a Harvest Market, live musical performances on two stages, novelty concessions and local food trucks, as well as admission to the Haunted Happenings zone, including a haunted house attraction, giant slide, obstacle course, carnival games, petting zoo, pony rides and more!

New in 2019 is a partnership with the Arizona Giant Pumpkin Growers Association to host an official Great Pumpkin Commonwealth (GPC) Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off on Saturday, Oct. 19 at 11 a.m. The best giant gourd growers in the Southwest will be bringing their obscenely large, fascinating, ginormous orange orbs to town, in hopes of squashing the giant pumpkin world record! All of the pumpkins entered in the contest will remain on-site, with Villafane’s team of

carvers working their artistry on the gourds live throughout the garden during the remaining days of the event. The Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off is free to attend, and will be held on the Community Stage, just outside of Historic Spanish Village in downtown Carefree.

Friday and Saturday nights will feature live headline entertainment each evening from 7–9:30 p.m. on the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion stage. Valley favorites The Walkens Band brings their unique blend of country and Southern rock favorites on Friday, Oct. 18. Phoenix native and American Idol season 17 favorite Wade Cota performs with his band on Saturday, Oct. 19. The second weekend kicks off on Friday, Oct. 25 with Rock Lobster playing the biggest music hits of the '80s and '90s. The ultimate Steve Miller tribute band, Pompatus of Love rocks the stage on Saturday, Oct. 26, featuring Steve Miller Band and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame guitarist Greg Douglass.

Additional weekend event highlights include: Basha's "Adopt a Pumpkin" patch, with proceeds benefiting Desert Foothills YMCA; a Harvest Market, featuring a variety of fall-themed vendor goods and autumnal treats; the Jack O'Lantern beer garden with seasonal craft beers provided by Four Peaks Brewery, operated by the Sonoran Arts League; and the Haunted Happenings area, with family-friendly attractions for kids of all ages. Popular holiday-themed activities include pie-eating contests both weekends, sponsored by Venues Café; and costume contests for kids, adults and pets on Sunday, Oct. 27. Other special events will round out the week.

For hours of operation, event schedules and more information about this annual Halloween attraction, visit EnchantedPumpkinGarden.com or call 480-488-3686.

For information about Ray Villafane and Villafane Studios, visit VillafaneStudios.com.

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About the Town of Carefree

Carefree is a scenic community of over 3,700 residents nestled in the Sonoran Desert Foothills. Incorporated in 1984, Carefree is regarded as one of the most inspiring and livable places in Arizona and centers its culture on desert lifestyle, architecture, culinary arts, health, wellness and community involvement. For more information VisitCarefree.com or call 480-488-3686.

About Ray Villafane

Based in Carefree, Ariz., Ray Villafane is an internationally acclaimed sculptor who has travelled throughout the globe fashioning exceptional figures and scenes out of pumpkins, sand and snow. He has been called "the Michelangelo of pumpkin carving" by Martha Stewart, has created carvings displayed at the White House, and has appeared on numerous national TV programs. Villafane holds two entries in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, and is a well-known participant on Food Network's *Outrageous Pumpkins* competitions, which he won in 2008, 2009 and 2010. For more information, visit VillafaneStudios.com.

Photo Caption: Gourdy Gooligan and his Carefree Hooligans weave their special brand of Halloween magic during the Town of Carefree's Fifth Annual Enchanted Pumpkin Garden, Oct. 18-27, 2019. Photo credit: Desert Hearts Photography/Tiffany Copeland.