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For Immediate Release:

**MASSIVE 672-POUND PUMPKIN TO BE CARVED BY WORLD-RENOWNED ARTIST AT 3rd ANNUAL
CAREFREE ENCHANTED PUMPKIN GARDEN
October 20-29, 2017**

*Villafane Studios Team Prepares to Carve a Truly Great Pumpkin
As Part of Live Carving Demonstrations and Magical Halloween Festivities in Town of Carefree*

CAREFREE Ariz., (October 9, 2017) – Talk about a Great Pumpkin.

Weighing in at a whopping 672 pounds and holding a whole world of possibilities in the hands of master pumpkin sculptor Ray Villafane and the Villafane Studios team, a truly colossal fall gourd is set to arrive in the Town of Carefree from Fullerton, CA. Grown in a four-by-30-foot flower bed by John and Kristi Brinkley and pollinated on June 30 off Brinkley's seeds, this particularly proud pumpkin will soon take center stage at the third-annual Carefree Enchanted Pumpkin Garden.

It took this great pumpkin 84 days to reach 672 pounds, but under the supremely skilled hands and ever-creative minds of Arizona-based Villafane and the Villafane Studios team, it will be transformed into something spectacular (and probably also spooktacular) in a mere matter of hours. Anticipated carving date is October 27, 2017, just in time for visitors to take photos with the Carefree "colossal" pumpkin during the busiest weekend of the festival.

Dubbed "The Michelangelo of pumpkin carving" by Martha Stewart, Villafane has carved for the President at the White House and even holds two Guinness Book World Records. Villafane is well-known for his talents working with sand, snow, and yes, pumpkins. He won the *Food Network* Pumpkin Challenges in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

The carving will take place within the Carefree Enchanted Pumpkin Garden, which will be open to the public and woven throughout the four-acre, publicly registered Carefree Desert Gardens. This free-admission, one-of-a-kind fall festival celebrates incredible artistry and enchantment of the Halloween season for all ages and is open October 20-29, 2017, 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. at 101 Easy Street, Carefree, Arizona.

Voted “Best in the Valley” by Phoenix Magazine in 2015 and 2016, visitors are again invited back to stroll and experience the many new mischievous pumpkin characters, artfully imagined and frolicking in their magical Carefree garden home. In addition to the playful pumpkins, Ray and his team have carved 10 3D pumpkin faces preserved and displayed in tanks that resemble Saguaro cacti, sculpted and immersed in a pickling solution for preservation and lit by LED light. Villafane’s team of four artists will create new carvings daily throughout the garden and welcome kids to carve with them up-close and personal. The giant California-grown pumpkin will be carved by Villafane himself the weekend before Halloween and will then be on display for visitors to take family photos and selfies with.

Other special highlights of this unique, fun fall event include two special family instructional carving nights with Villafane and the YMCA on October 25 and 26 (reservations recommended). There is the anticipation of a new costume contest for families and kids along with an adult spooktacular costume contest scheduled for October 28. Other popular activities include the “Adopt a Pumpkin” patch, pumpkin pie eating competition, corn maze, face painting, arts and crafts, a new harvest market, and a local craft beer garden featuring Four Peaks – along with an array of culinary food trucks and autumnal treats. On Halloween itself, the Town will work in conjunction with local boutique Bella Donna and Cane to coordinate a “Trunk or Treat” event along Carefree’s Easy street at 5 p.m. in the downtown area. Children are invited to come trick-or-treat in a safe, colorful, and fun downtown Carefree environment.

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About Ray Villafane

Based in Arizona with a workshop and gallery, Ray Villafane is an internationally acclaimed American sculptor who has throughout the globe fashioning exceptional figures and scenes out of pumpkins, sand, and snow. Villafane has been called “The Michelangelo of pumpkin carving,” by Martha Stewart, carved for the President at the White House, and has appeared on numerous national TV programs. He is also the proud holder of two Guinness Book of World Records benchmarks and is known for his Food Network’s Pumpkin Challenges, which he won in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

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.



Frame of reference (see the tennis ball right underneath it) compared to the massive gourd.



John and Kristi Brinkley Fullerton California grow pumpkin to be carved by world- renowned pumpkin carving Ray Villafane at the Town of Carefree's Enchanted Pumpkin Garden October 20- 29, 2017.