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USC'S TEACHING GARDEN TAKES URBAN FARMING TO NEW HEIGHTS

LOS ANGELES, California, USA (April 8, 2016) – With both the ongoing drought and loss of farmable land, the rapid depletion of natural resources is a relevant concern in today's times. To fight these issues, USC Hospitality has taken action to assert its responsibility for the earth in developing the USC Teaching Garden, a self-sustaining garden to harvest a variety of vegetables, fruits, herbs and edible flowers for its dining venues. The garden's farming techniques support USC Hospitality's commitment to the environment and to the health of our dining guests by growing our own food locally without the use of any harmful chemicals.

With the support of LA Urban Farms, the USC Hospitality Group successfully opened the USC Teaching Garden and is the first university in the nation to have a farming effort of this scale using vertical Tower Garden® aeroponics technology. Aeroponics is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil. Fruits, vegetables, herbs and edible flowers can all be grown in this garden without the use of any soil or harmful chemicals. The seeds used in the garden are 100% organic and the plants are fed all natural water based ionic minerals and plant nutrients. The plastic is FDA food grade approved plastic & UV stabilized for outdoor protection. Leafy greens & herbs can be harvested in just 21 - 28 days. The towers are remarkable in the way they sustain plant growth while using 90% less water and 90% less land than traditional gardens. The USC farm is growing 2,640 nutrient dense plants in just a 60' x 20' square foot space. In addition, USC culinarians are given access to the garden to grasp the significance of environmental impact we have on the earth in farming our own produce. Through the process, USC Chefs have strengthened the pride they have in serving guests using farm-to-table methods.

What was once an empty, colorless patio has now transformed into a tranquil, vibrant haven of growth, health and life. It is a cornerstone to empowering chefs, students and guests of USC to consider the food which they eat and how this food is grown. Executive Chef Eric Ernest, CEC, CCA adds "I am extremely proud to work for an organization that focuses so much on culinary excellence and the guest experience." As such, the urban garden supports many of the experience principles of the department's food philosophy and will be fully integrated into menu development for the restaurants of USC and Residential Dining.

For more information on USC Hospitality, please visit hospitality.usc.edu or contact the Marketing Department at 213.821.5707.

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About LA Urban Farms

Located in Los Angeles, California, LA Urban Farms is a full service urban produce grower utilizing Tower Garden® aeroponic technology developed by the world leader in vertical aeroponics. This state-of-the-art vertical patented technology is the perfect solution for farming in an urban setting. This technology is approved by the US Green Building Council for LEED points on certified Green buildings. These gardens can be seen growing at the Giants Stadium, indoors with grow lights at The Chicago O'Hare Airport, The Kennedy Space Center, The Google Cafeteria and many other businesses, schools, restaurants, resorts, hotels, country clubs, rooftops and backyards in Los Angeles and around the country as well as the Getty House - home of our Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. For more information, visit LAUrbanFarms.com.

About the USC Hospitality Group

USC Hospitality is a division of USC Auxiliary Services at the University of Southern California, one of the nation's premier research universities. USC Hospitality operates over 30 food and beverage venues on the University Park Campus, Health Sciences Campus as well as two off campus venues and offers full-service catering and the Radisson Hotel at USC. A unique mix of nationally recognized, locally acclaimed as well as innovative self-branded concepts consist of full-service restaurants, residential dining restaurants, cafes, retail dining concepts, vending and full-service catering supports the food and beverage needs of the university community. For more information, please visit hospitality.usc.edu.

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