

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE!

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US HERE AS WE UNVEIL THE BRAND NEW "BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION GARDEN" AT A.D. "DOUG" BARNES PARK.

EARLIER THIS MORNING I WAS AT THE REDEDICATION OF THE BEAR CUT BRIDGE LINKING VIRGINIA KEY TO KEY BISCAIYNE...

WE WERE SURROUNDED BY THE WATER AND THE BEAUTIFUL SCENIC RIDE ON THE RICKENBACKER CAUSEWAY...

I MENTIONED HOW MIAMI-DADE COUNTY IS A COMMUNITY BLESSED WITH ABUNDANT NATURAL BEAUTY...

AND IT'S NOT JUST OUR WORLD FAMOUS BEACHES AND WATERWAYS...

WE LIVE IN A UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT THAT INCLUDES OUR EVERGLADES, AND WE ARE HOME TO A WIDE ARRAY OF FLOWERS AND FAUNA.

IT'S UP TO ALL OF US TO BE STEWARDS OF THIS BEAUTY AND PRESERVE IT FOR FUTURE MIAMIANS.

AND THIS INCLUDES OUR BUTTERFLIES.

BUTTERFLIES ARE HIGHLY BENEFICIAL TO OUR ECOSYSTEM BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP THEY MAINTAIN WITH PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

AS THE BUTTERFLIES TRAVEL FROM ONE FLOWER TO ANOTHER, THEY POLLINATE THE PLANTS, ALLOWING FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PLANT SPECIES.

THEY'VE ALSO BEEN SHOWN TO BE THERAPEUTIC AND ARE A GREAT WAY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION.

HERE IN SOUTH FLORIDA, WE HAVE CLOSE TO 119 SPECIES OF NATIVE BUTTERFLIES.

AND TODAY WE UNVEIL OUR FIRST BRANDED "BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION GARDEN"

THANKS TO THE LEADERSHIP OF CHAIRWOMAN REBECA SOSA WHO CHAMPIONED THIS PROJECT, THE CONSERVATION GARDEN'S PURPOSE IS TO PRESERVE AND RECOVERING IMPERILED BUTTERFLY SPECIES IN SOUTH FLORIDA.

THE GARDEN IS DESIGNED FOR LOW MAINTENANCE, WITH DROUGHT TOLERANT NATIVE PLANTS AND MULCHING THROUGHOUT, AND MAKES USE OF AN EXISTING CANOPY OF LIVE OAK TREES TO COVER PLANTS THAT GROW BEST UNDER SHADE.

THE GARDEN WILL ALSO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH ON-SITE EDUCATION.

ALONG THE GARDEN PATHS VISITORS CAN VIEW THE RESIDENT BUTTERFLIES, POLLINATORS AND PLANTS AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM THROUGH THE INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE.

THIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S SHARED VISION FOR CONSERVATION...

THROUGH RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP...

WE PRESERVE OUR NATURAL BEAUTY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

LET ME THANK THE PARKS DEPARTMENT'S ZOO MIAMI AND NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT STAFF...

ERIC STEPHENS, DIRECTOR OF ZOO MIAMI, WHO WAS THE LEAD ON THIS PROJECT.

AND BIG THANKS TO CHAIRWOMAN SOSA FOR SPEARHEADING THIS EFFORT.

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE INVOLVED AND LET'S ALL ENJOY THIS WONDERFUL NEW BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION GARDEN!

