

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 3/10/09

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Local Hotel to Support Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team at 2009 Wistaria Festival

Doubletree Hotel Monrovia has been named the official Host Hotel of this year's Wistaria Festival, and in return, the hotel plans to offer special rates for Festival goers, shuttles to and from the event, and in addition, they will exercise their philanthropic muscle by showing their support for a long-time Sierra Madre tradition, the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue team.

Doubletree Hotels have built a reputation over the years with the legendary chocolate chip cookie they present to each guest at check-in. Synonymous with the hotel's hospitality, the sweet morsels have set the Doubletree apart from their competition. Each day across North America, Doubletree gives out in the range of 29,000 cookies, which translates to more than 10 million cookies per year. The Hotel first began giving out the cookies in the 1980s. The cookies are baked fresh daily at each hotel.

Sunday, at the Sierra Madre Wistaria Festival, Doubletree will have a booth on hand to sell their famous cookies. But instead of using the money to offset the discounts being offered to folks who call the hotel and reserve a room at the special Wistaria Festival group rate, Doubletree has generously decided to donate the proceeds from their booth to the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team.

"We were finalizing the arrangements to make the Doubletree Monrovia the official host hotel for the festival," said Chamber president Bill Coburn, "when General Manager Luis Plascencia asked if I could help identify a deserving organization to which the hotel might make a financial contribution. I had attended a meeting of the Sierra Madre Rotary Club the week before in which the guest speaker was Search and Rescue Team member Bruce LaMarche, who was presented a check from Rotary to help with buying rescue supplies. Mr. LaMarche had pointed out that contributions from organizations like Rotary were more important than ever, because like many non-profits that rely heavily on donations, Sierra Madre Search and Rescue has seen

contributions drop dramatically in the current economy. When Luis asked about a deserving organization, Search and Rescue immediately popped into my mind.”

The first Mountain Rescue Team formed in California, Sierra Madre Search and Rescue began in 1951. The Team has been on search and rescue operations throughout the western United States and in Mexico. Team members have also been pioneers in developing new rescue equipment and techniques that are now being used world-wide. Over the years the size of the team has varied, from the original sixteen members to as many as several dozen members, from all walks of life. You can learn more about the team by visiting their website at www.SMSR.org.

To reserve your room at the special reduced rate, visit WistariaFestival.com and click on the Doubletree logo. You'll be taken to a dedicated Wistaria Festival group rate reservation page. Or call (626) 357-1970 and ask for the Wistaria Festival group rate.

Sierra Madre's famous Wistaria Vine is 115-years old this year, and is designated by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest blossoming vine. Each year, the Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce puts on a festival to celebrate this horticultural wonder, and this year ten thousand people are expected to show up in Sierra Madre on Sunday, to view the vine, shop in the downtown stores and from more than 150 juried artisans and vendors in the closed off downtown area, enjoy entertainment by two dozen musical acts performing at six outdoor stages, and dine al fresco at the local Sierra Madre restaurants. Festival hours are from 9am to 5pm, with shuttles available to take festival goers up to the private property on which the vine sits, for a fee of just \$9 round trip (pre-sale, tickets are \$10 the day of the event.) For more information on the Festival, or to reserve your shuttle tickets, visit WistariaFestival.com.