

Community Forestry Assistant



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Boise to Receive “Anne Frank Tree” Sapling

“From my favorite spot on the floor I look up at the blue sky and the bare chestnut tree, on whose branches little raindrops shine, appearing like silver, and at the sea gulls and other birds as they glide on the wind,” Anne Frank wrote in her diary on February 23rd, 1944 six months before her hideout was discovered. Anne often marveled at the tree as it changed through the seasons, blooming flamboyantly, then slowly losing its leaves, outside the small office building at 263 Prinsengracht where she and her family were hidden during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. Anne Frank died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945 at the age of 15.

Through saplings descended from the majestic horse chestnut tree (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) that gave her so much pleasure in her bleak hideout, Anne Frank will soon have her story joined with that of the Little Rock Nine – the black students who integrated an Arkansas high school under the guard of 1,200 soldiers in 1957. The school, Little Rock Central High School, is one of 11 sites dedicated to fighting intolerance that have been chosen by the Anne Frank Center USA as the destination for saplings that originated from the tree in Amsterdam, now 150 years old and dying of a lethal fungus.

With the famous horse chestnut reaching the end of its life, the Anne Frank Center announced in April that it would take applications from institutions that wanted a derivative sapling. Thirty-four applied, though three – the White House, the World Trade Center site in New York, and the

Children’s Museum in Indianapolis – were chosen ahead of time. Eight other sites including the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial in Boise were also chosen to receive one of the saplings. The City of Boise and the Idaho Human Rights organization worked together to develop a compelling application for this special honor.

The sapling is not scheduled to arrive in Boise for nearly three years as it is currently being quarantined in a Maryland nursery to make sure it doesn’t carry any diseases.

Yvonne Simons, executive director of the Anne Frank Center, said the 11 sites were chosen largely because they showed “the consequences of intolerance – and that includes racism, discrimination and hatred.”

For Frank, the chestnut tree was a rare connection to nature during the two years her family hid in cramped conditions above a canalside warehouse. She wrote of the tree’s beauty several times, including in a memorable passage from Feb. 23, 1944



“The best remedy for those who are afraid, alone or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God.”

U.S. Recipients of Anne Frank Tree sapling

- The White House - Washington, D.C.
- The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis - Indiana
- Sonoma State University - California
- Southern Cayuga School District - New York
- Washington State Holocaust Resource Center - Washington
- Boston Common - Massachusetts
- Central High School - Arkansas
- Holocaust memorial Center - Michigan
- Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial - Idaho
- William J. Clinton Foundation - Arkansas
- National September 11 Memorial and Museum - New York