

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2021

Humboldt Urban Garden Sanctuary breaks ground today!

The first step in the construction of the Humboldt Urban Garden Sanctuary (HUGS) was taken. Over three years ago the community of Humboldt was forever changed by the tragedy involving the Broncos hockey team.

Landscape Saskatchewan, Landscape Alberta, and Communities in Bloom with support from Scotts Canada approached the City of Humboldt about building a garden to honour the victims and families. After setting the site as the Humboldt District Health Complex and creating a design brief, the steering group worked with Olds College students to hold a design event. The concept of Joy Newsham was selected and featured a variety of spaces and uses that would provide a garden that was equal part memorial and healing space.

The design was updated and turned into complete working drawings by Christyn Palazzo of Palazzo Designs in Regina. With an original build date of summer 2020 delayed due to the pandemic, the team is excited to get started on this impressive project. The garden will include accessible pathways throughout to enjoy the variety of trees, shrubs and flowers planted across the garden space. Several seating areas will allow for either gathering of friends and family or quiet reflection, the feature area will also include a custom art sculpture by local artist Murray Cook.

Construction is set to be complete by September 2021 culminating in an official opening to be determined based on weather and public health guidance.

Leslie Cornell, Past-President of Landscape Saskatchewan and Owner of Cornell Design & Landscaping in Moose Jaw says “we are extremely proud to be able to give back with this project, the tragedy in Humboldt impacted so many and we are thankful to help by creating a space of remembrance and healing for everyone touched by the tragedy”.

Yvonne Berscheid, Site Leader of Humboldt District Hospital “On behalf of Saskatchewan Health Authority, the patients, families and staff of Humboldt District Hospital, thank you to all those who had a hand in planning this garden, and all those who will help see it come to life. It is our hope that in some small way, this garden will help those who visit it find peace and healing. A place of reflection for many in our tight knit Humboldt community.”

John Zaplatynsky, Chair of the Green Cities Foundation says “We hope that by building projects like this across Canada, we will help educate the public and our politicians on the value of green spaces and the impacts to the community that they can provide – improving the mental health of the residents, helping to mitigate climate change by cooling our cities, and providing a safe and calming space to visit.”

“We hope that this garden will be a place for the community to gather, rest, rejuvenate, remember and enjoy, and that this space will inspire others to create and experience the restorative powers of green spaces.” Paul Brydges, Chair, Communities in Bloom.

“Barkman Concrete is honoured to support the Humbolt Broncos Healing Garden Project. May this garden help commemorate the lives lost. And may it truly be a place for all those affected, to continue their healing.” Alan Barkman, Chief Executive Officer.

“The Healing Urban Garden Sanctuary reflects the value that Scotts Canada places on supporting our communities. We offer this garden to the Humboldt community as a means of healing their sorrows,” says Karen Stephenson, Director, Regulatory Affairs and Stakeholder Relations.

Project partners include Landscape Saskatchewan, Landscape Alberta, Communities in Bloom, Green Cities Foundation and Scotts Canada.

Garden donors include Burnco Landscape Centre, Expocrete an Oldcastle company, the City of Humboldt, Brandt, Barkman concrete, Palazzo Landscape Design, Manderley, Lakeshore Tree Farms, Snap Edge, Techniseal, Techo-Bloc, Cornell Design & Landscaping, Great North Hardscapes, Dutch Growers, in-lite Design Corporation, Red Deer Soils Ltd., and the Grazing Design for the logo creation.

The Green Cities Foundation will be collecting public donations towards the project – donations can be made online via www.gcfoundation.ca.

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Included: Ground-breaking / tree planting images from event.

HUGS GB event 1 (Carol Brons, mother of Dayna Brons)

HUGS GB event 2 (Foreground: Leslie and Ron Cornell planting first tree, Background: Michael Behiel, Mayor of Humboldt, Shelia and Roger Nordick, Committee members, volunteers with Communities in Bloom, and Murray Cook, artist.)

HUGS GB event 3 (L to R: Yvonne Berscheid, Humboldt District Hospital, Carol Brons, mother of Dayna Brons, Leslie Cornell, Landscape Saskatchewan and Cornell Design & Landscaping, Michael Behiel, Mayor of Humboldt, Shelia Nordick, Communities in Bloom volunteer, Roger Nordick, Town councillor and Communities in Bloom volunteer, Murray Cook, artist).

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