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Santa Fe Ten Memorial Selected as a 9/11 Survivor Tree Seedling Recipient

Santa Fe, Texas (Sept. 13, 2021) – The Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to remember the students and teachers lost in a mass shooting three years ago at Santa Fe High School, is receiving a seed of hope as a recipient of a "9/11 Survivor Tree Seedling."

Each year on Sept. 12, the National 9/11 Memorial & Museum selects communities impacted by violence and disaster to receive a seedling of a Callery pear tree, the last natural element rescued from Ground Zero 20 years ago. The limbs were broken and burnt, and the remnants were placed in the care of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Tree experts from a Bronx nursery nurtured the tree back to health, and it was aptly named the Survivor Tree. It is now a permanent fixture in the 9/11 Memorial Plaza in New York City and is viewed by millions each year.

To date, only 24 communities across the world have been selected to receive a coveted seedling. The Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation is one of three recipients chosen in 2021 for demonstrating resiliency in the face of adversity.

The tight-knit community of Santa Fe experienced its version of 9/11 three years ago when a mass shooter opened fire, killing 10 students and teachers and physically injuring 13 others. In a matter of minutes, Santa Fe experienced a tremendous loss. And to this day, citizens carry an immeasurable amount of trauma and grief – similar to those who survived the horrific attacks on Sept. 11.

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Santa Fe Ten Memorial Selected as a 9/11 Survivor Tree Seedling Recipient – Page 2

"This gift of nature will stand as a living monument in the Santa Fe Ten Memorial. It will serve as a national landmark of hope and resilience in our community that recognizes the strength of those that lost loved ones, the courage of those who survived, and salutes those who risked their lives to help others," said Megan Grove, Chair of the Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation.

In a letter received from Alice M. Greenwald, President and CEO of the National 9/11 Memorial & Museum, the hope is that Santa Fe would "find comfort in this expression of compassion and solidarity from across the country and the world."

Santa Fe High School students will be responsible for caring for the Survivor Tree seedling with mentorship provided by students at John Bowne High School in Flushing, New York, where the seedlings are currently nurtured before being sent to the honorees.

"Santa Fe ISD will continue to support the Santa Fe Ten Memorial by bringing our community together to remember and honor all individuals impacted on May 18, 2018," said Kevin Bott, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools. "We would like to express our thanks to the National September 11 Memorial & Museum for partnering with us to support the Santa Fe students and community."

Some surviving students had the opportunity to visit the Survivor Tree in New York City. For the Rosenboom family, whose son, Colby, sustained gunshot wounds and escaped the art room, the gift of the seedling holds a special meaning.

"The whole 9/11 Memorial has a feeling of reverence and solemnity. The magnitude of what happened there can be felt. We hope and pray that the Santa Fe Ten Memorial will have that kind of impact on the survivors, community, as well as visitors," said Dawn Rosenboom, Colby's mother.

Brent Cooley, a first responder on the scene at Santa Fe High School says that those who were there on that day felt and still feel a sense of commitment to future efforts to do more.

"Any distinction of 'heroics' on that day does not apply to us as the loss of life, even one life, was far too great," he said.

There is no date set for planting the 9/11 Survivor Tree seedling. The Foundation is currently raising funds to build the Santa Fe Ten Memorial, where the seedling will eventually be planted.

"The two tragedies – 9/11 and the Santa Fe shooting – share the common bond of not only loss, but the desire to heal and promote unity," said Cooley.

-MORE-

Santa Fe Ten Memorial Selected as a 9/11 Survivor Tree Seedling Recipient – Page 3

For more information about the Santa Fe Ten Memorial or to donate, visit www.sftenmemorial.org.

About the Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation

The Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to design and build a memorial that remembers and honors those who died and all individuals impact on May 18, 2018, in the Santa Fe High School shooting. The intention of the Santa Fe Ten Memorial Foundation is to honor the ten collectively and as individuals and strive to do so within the boundaries of each families' comfort. The Foundation seeks to ensure each of the ten are remembered, honored, and celebrated. For more information, visit www.sftenmemorial.org.

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