

Freedom Trees part of Peace Pole Landscape

The Peace Pole sculpture scheduled for installation later this year in Beech Acres Park will incorporate three Freedom Trees as part of the site's landscape design.

Greater Anderson Promotes Peaces (GAPP) is pleased to be collaborating with The Freedom Trees Project.

This reforestation project is a separate effort coordinated by Paul Hermer/Sand Run Nursery in conjunction with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

The Freedom Trees Project will provide a living monument to the more than 4 million people sold into slavery in the United States.

A portion of the proceeds from the planting of Freedom Trees will be contributed to the Freedom Center to support their projects, research and programs.

The Peace Pole Project is grassroots initiative that began in 1999 as a response to hate incidents and hate literature distribution in the Anderson area.

A seven-piece granite sculpture will be installed in Beech Acres Park on Salem Road. The sculpture site will provide established space for quiet reflection.

The site is also envisioned as a place of celebration encouraging cultural storytelling, art projects and other activities that express

residents' desire to live in unity.

"The week before Christmas, a White Supremacist group dropped leaflets in the driveways of my street. My wife picked up many of the leaflets so that children would not have to read it," said Barry Riehle, GAPP co-director.

Riehle believes that GAPP has a role in the community of speaking out against messages of hate as well as working to positively promote diversity.

"However, our community is not an island," Riehle said. "GAPP recognizes that we are connected to a larger family of organizations and citizens who promote the rights of all and fight against various forms of hatred against those who are different from themselves. In that sense, I'm very happy that the Freedom Tree Project planners have allowed us to be part of their effort to plant trees to remind people of the need for freedom for all."

The community has contributed more than \$38,000 toward the project. The final funds collected will be used toward the landscape plan designed by landscape architect David Whittaker.

Contributor forms can be found at the GAPP Web site at <http://home.fuse.net/gapppeace> or by calling GAPP voice mail at 588-8391.

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