



Press Release

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Hermann Park Japanese Garden Day Honors 40 Years of Friendship Between COH & Chiba City, Japan

20 Cherry Blossom Trees to Be Planted As Part of Centennial Celebration of Tree Gift to US from Japan

Mayor Annise Parker will recognize Mr. Kunio Minami, local community groups, & many individuals for their dedication & work to the maintenance of one of Houston's most enduring symbols of friendship, the Japanese Garden at Hermann Park. In recognition of this dedication & in honor of the friendship between the City of Houston & its sister city, Chiba City, Japan, Tuesday, June 19 will be proclaimed *Hermann Park Japanese Garden Day* in the City of Houston.

"For the past two decades, the Japanese Garden has served as a visible symbol of the friendship between Houston & Chiba City," said Houston Mayor Annise Parker. "We are truly honored to acknowledge the lasting friendship this beautiful garden personifies, with its beautiful pathways, gardens, & trees."

In 1912, the People of Japan gave to the People of the United States 3,000 flowering cherry trees as a gift of friendship. In commemoration of this centennial & in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Houston-Chiba City sister city relationship, 20 new cherry trees will be planted in the Japanese Garden in Hermann Park in October of this year.

"We are delighted that Houston has been chosen as one of the cities to receive cherry blossom trees to plant on the Japan-U.S. Cherry Blossom Centennial," said Consul-General of Japan, Jota Yamamoto. "This is also a wonderful opportunity to recognize with the city Mr. Minami & many other individuals & organizations that have contributed to the beauty & culture of Houston through their work on the Japanese Garden in Hermann Park."

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The Houston Parks & Recreation Department serves as the steward for both the Japanese Garden & the new trees to be planted in October & continues to work with the Hermann Park Conservancy's Japanese Garden Committee to improve the facility. From its beginning, the success of the Japanese Garden has depended on collaboration with the Japanese community & volunteers such as Mr. Minami represents in his work through the organization.

"The Japanese Garden holds a special place in Hermann Park & in the heart of the Houston Parks & Recreation Department," said Joe Turner, Director, Houston Parks & Recreation Department. "It is a masterpiece of timeless Japanese landscape art unique in our area & we appreciate the years of tender care & attention it has received from the Houston community."

The proclamation will be presented by Mayor Annise Parker to Mr. Kunio Minami on June 19th at 1:30 p.m. Consul-General of Japan Jota Yamamoto will then present Mayor Parker with a plaque commemorating the Cherry Blossom Centennial & officially announcing the planting of 20 cherry trees in the Japanese Garden at Hermann Park scheduled to take place in October of 2012.

The Houston Parks & Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards & manages over 38,752 acres of parkland & greenspace for the City of Houston & develops & implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks & Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.