



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Placement of a bench with a plaque, and planting of a tree at Brand Park in memory of Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan.

1. Motion authorizing placement of a bench with a plaque, and planting of a tree, at Brand Park in memory of Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Consent Calendar

Approved for November 17, 2020 **calendar**

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

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Reviewed by:

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Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., Interim City Manager

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is seeking direction from Council on the placement of a bench with a plaque at Brand Park and planting of a tree, in memory of Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On September 22, 2020, City Council requested for the Community Services & Parks Department (CSP) to submit a report regarding the placement of a bench with a plaque and planting of a tree, at Brand Park in memory of former resident of the City of Glendale, Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan. Lauren was born on September 27, 1988. Her first home was in south Glendale. Before she turned two, she moved to northwest Glendale. As a little girl Lauren attended Grandview Presbyterian Church and the Brethren Coop Nursery School. Her favorite place to go was Brand Park where she enjoyed playing on the equipment, hide and seek among the trees and tag, having picnics, and in the summer enjoying the wading pool. She also began her AYSO soccer interest at age four, practicing at Brand Park. Lauren went to Mark Keppel Elementary School from kindergarten through 5th grade. At Keppel, she joined the drill team, and performed in the first Stepping Stone Player's production of the Wizard of Oz. During this time, she continued playing AYSO soccer in the Glendale league, was part of the Falcon swim classes at Crescenta Valley High School, and part of a Glendale girl scout troop. She was baptized at the First United Methodist Church of Glendale and was part of the children's choir as well as helping with vacation bible school. In sixth grade, she transferred to Immaculate Heart Middle School and then to Immaculate Heart High School where she pursued her interest in drama.

During these years, Brand Park continued to be an important part of Lauren's life as she enjoyed playing with her sisters at the park, taking family hikes, and several classes including dance, art and chess. Lauren's family has expressed how the safe, supportive and diverse environment in the City helped their daughter develop into the remarkable person that she became.

In 2006, following her graduation from Immaculate Heart, Lauren volunteered in the local office of Congressman Adam B. Schiff before she attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. She continued her internship with the office of Congressman Schiff, but this time on Capitol Hill. At Georgetown, she majored in government and minored in Arabic and Spanish. During her junior year, she spent a semester in Madrid to become fluent in Spanish and then spent a summer in Beirut to study Arabic. In first year of college, while interning with Congressman Schiff's Office she traveled throughout Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. After earning her college degree, Lauren worked in Georgetown's Office of Undergraduate Admissions for seven years. According to colleagues, she was committed to providing an equal opportunity for higher education to all students and sought to make Georgetown's student body more diverse.

In early 2016, Lauren and her partner, Jay Austin, decided to quit their office jobs to plan a bike trip around the world. Both cycling enthusiasts, they sought adventure, but also the chance to experience life on simpler, more meaningful terms, together. Throughout their travels, the couple wrote a blog together and shared Instagram posts about the openheartedness they wanted to embody and the acts of kindness reciprocated by strangers. The pair started their trip in South Africa on July 6, 2017. They cycled through 26 countries in Africa, Europe, Turkey, and Central Asia. They biked in all weather and terrain. At times they faced daunting conditions as they battled frost and snow and even illness. Yet they persevered – and managed to live on \$15 a day each for more than a year.

On July 29, 2018, the couple and several European cyclists touring with them made their way down a scenic stretch of highway in southwestern Tajikistan. It was on this road near Dushanbe, the country's capital, that a car driven by ISIS militants deliberately struck the cyclists. Both Lauren and Austin died, as did two cyclists from Switzerland and the Netherlands. Since their tragic deaths, Lauren and Austin have been the focus of national and international news coverage, including a recent segment on the television documentary series "The Weekly" from *The New York Times*. The story of their journey has prompted an outpouring of sympathy and support from around the globe, from people who never knew the two Americans but admired their calling. Lauren sought to live deliberately and meaningfully through choices that enhanced her life and the lives of countless others she touched. As Honorable Adam B. Schiff said in his speech for Lauren, "Her example impels us to step out of our routine, to place our hope and trust in others even when tragedy might chasten us otherwise, to see the beauty around us and in others, to live lives of constant amazement."

Please refer to the following links for the full story published in the New York Times and the award winning documentary "Collision."

Full story published in New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/07/world/asia/islamic-state-tajikistan-bike-attack.html>

Video of the documentary "Collision"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/21/the-weekly/isis-bike-attack-tajikistan.html>

Interview with the "Collision" Team that won an Edward R Murrow Award for 2020

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-b9g7s3hSkpAFjh1JI13cUJ8u2WVhv0X>

To honor Lauren's memory, the Geoghegan family has requested to plant a tree and install a bench with a memorial plaque at Brand Park. Staff met with the Geoghegan family at Brand Park and identified an area near the children's playground for this installation. Based on consultation with Public Works Forestry staff, an Eastern Redbud tree was selected as the ideal specimen for this memorial installation. Please see Exhibit 1 for the location of the tree and bench.

Following Council approval, it will take approximately 6 to 8 weeks to manufacture and install the bench with the memorial plaque and to plant the tree.

FISCAL IMPACT

Expenses for the memorial bench, plaque and tree will be paid by the Geoghegan family.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: City Council may choose to approve the Motion authorizing the placement of a bench and a plaque, and planting of a tree, in memory of Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan.

Alternative 2: City Council may choose not to approve the Motion authorizing the placement of a bench and a plaque, and planting of a tree in memory of Lauren Anne Muñoz Geoghegan.

Alternative 3: City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

None

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Location of the tree and bench.

Exhibit 2. Congressman Adam B. Schiff's speech for Lauren

Exhibit 3: Immaculate Heart High School in Memory of Lauren

Exhibit 4: Georgetown Biography of Lauren

Exhibit 5: Biography of Lauren's Childhood at Brand Park

Exhibit 6: Friends and Family Remember Lauren

Exhibit 7: Simply Cycling Blog

Exhibit 8: Pictures