FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbus to Participate in the Centennial Celebration of the Gift of Trees

Only Ohio city to receive cherry blossom trees as part of this project

Columbus- The Cherry Blossom Tree Project is pleased to announce that Columbus will receive 20 cherry trees as part of a project with Japanese Embassy and Consulates in the United States to plant cherry trees in various locations in the Midwest, East Coast, South and West Coast, during the centennial celebration of the gift of trees as a symbol of friendship between the U.S. and Japan for over 100 years. Columbus is the only city within the state of Ohio selected to receive this important gift of young trees and comes during Columbus’ Bicentennial.

In 1912, Japan gifted more than 3000 cherry trees to the United States in recognition of their growing friendship. The trees were planted in New York City and in Washington D.C. This year, over 30 cities across the nation, including Columbus, will receive cherry trees that originated from the trees planted 100 years ago in Washington D.C. The trees are provided by America Forest, a NPO which is helping with the project as a part of the 100 year anniversary of the first planting, which has been made possible through the help of various organizations and sources of funding.

The Cherry Blossom Tree Project will officially kick off the Columbus celebration at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 2012, at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens with the painting of the first eye of the project’s Daruma doll. A Daruma doll is a hollow, round, Japanese traditional doll whose eyes are blank when sold. The recipient of the doll fills in one eye upon setting the goal, then the other upon fulfilling it. The one-eyed Daruma, serves as a reminder about the goal.

The Cherry Trees will be planted on Friday, April 27, 2012 at the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. The trees will be planted to observe Arbor Day. The ceremony will also include a remembrance of the Great Tōhoku Earthquake and Tsunami, which occurred in 2011. In addition, the second eye of the Daruma doll will be painted at the ceremony.

“The Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens is excited to oversee the planting and care of the cherry trees,” said Bruce A. Harkey, Executive Director. “The trees will serve as important symbols of the U.S.-Japan friendship, for years to come.”

The Cherry Blossom Tree Project is a partnership between the Institute for Japanese Studies at The Ohio State University, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens, Japan-America Society of Central Ohio, 200Columbus: The Bicentennial, and Columbus 2020.

To learn more about the partnership and upcoming Cherry Blossom Tree Project events visit: http://japan.osu.edu/cherrytrees

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