



MEDIA RELEASE

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'The Secret Path' to Canada Blooms

*Genoscape Inc. to design feature garden inspired
by the heartbreaking story of Chanie Wenjack*

TORONTO, Ont. — Chanie Wenjack just wanted to go home.

It was October 16, 1966, and Chanie, all of 12 years old and, for lack of a better word, stranded some 650 kilometres away from his family at the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, did what so many Aboriginal children in residential schools did — he ran away. For six days, he and some friends made their way north. Then he went out on his own, determined, but ill-equipped for the unforgiving terrain of Northern Ontario and the freezing temperatures, rain and snow. Chanie's lifeless body was found by some railroad tracks, some 50 kilometres from the school he fled, on October 22, 1966.

The heartbreaking story was first chronicled in Maclean's Magazine in 1967, and was the inspiration behind *The Secret Path*, an album and graphic novel project of Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie that was released last year. The story will also be interpreted as a feature garden at Canada Blooms 2017.

"The Secret Path chronicles a dark chapter in Canadian history, but it is a chapter we should all know," says Terry Caddo, General Manager of Canada Blooms. "We are proud to be able to bring part of this tragic story to life at Canada Blooms and help spread awareness about the mistreatment of Aboriginal children in the residential school system."

The Secret Path garden will be designed by Joe Genovese of Genoscape Inc. Landscape and Design Services, winner of the Canada Blooms 2016 Tony DiGiovanni Garden of the Year, with the support of the Downie Wenjack Fund. The garden's design will be an illustration of the rugged Canadian Shield terrain where Chanie Wenjack lived.

"We are very excited about our garden this year," explains Genovese. "Although we are very enthusiastic to bring this story to life via our art form, we are also very humbled to be the purveyor of this issue that has been very important to the Aboriginal community for a very long time. We recognize that Indigenous people have known about these issues for a very long time, have been calling for change for a very long time, and that we still have a long way to go."

Co-located with the National Home Show, Canada Blooms takes place March 10th to 19th, 2017, at the Enercare Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto. For more information or for tickets, please visit canadablooms.com. Follow Canada Blooms on Twitter [@CanadaBlooms](https://twitter.com/CanadaBlooms) and Like it on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CanadaBlooms).

About Canada Blooms

Canada Blooms is an annual world-class festival that connects people to the joys and benefits of nature through experiences with gardens and flowers by promoting, educating, inspiring and celebrating all aspects of horticulture. A not-for-profit organization that gives back to the community throughout the year by funding community garden projects around Ontario, Canada Blooms is also dedicated to providing the community with horticulture expertise, education and resources on an ongoing basis.

Now in its 21st year, Canada Blooms was founded by Landscape Ontario and The Garden Club of Toronto. Each year it is supported by a committed group of partners, sponsors and volunteers. Canada Blooms has been named One of Ontario's Top 100 Events by Festivals and Events Ontario and One of North America's Top 100 Events by the American Bus Association.

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