

Anne Frank Memorial Garden Unveiled

Arboretum Park in Melville is now the home to the garden, where a moving dedication ceremony took place on Sunday, June 13th.

By **Karen Forman** 8:16am

On an overcast afternoon, a small crowd gathered in Arboretum Park in Melville to hear a number of people talk about Anne Frank and the memorial garden they created in her memory.

Town Supervisor Frank Petrone (http://huntington.patch.com/local_facts/huntington-town-supervisor-frank-petrone-5) opened the ceremony by telling everyone how lucky they were to be free because of people like Anne Frank.

Rabbi Marc Gellman of nearby [Temple Beth Torah](http://www.tbtny.org) (<http://www.tbtny.org>), said, "This public place is not just for recreation but also for remembrance. This park is a tribute to all people of good heart and good spirit. This is a place for us to remember the Holocaust, which is a record of shame and also of heroism."

The rabbi also spoke of Miep Gies, who died this year at the age of 100. He said she never thought she had done anything special and didn't understand why she had gotten so much attention. The rabbi said that this garden would help us to remember Miep, who saved Anne and seven others, as long as she could, and to also remember those who are still working to save oppressed people.

Councilwoman Susan Berland (http://huntington.patch.com/local_facts/councilwoman-susan-a-berland), a congregant of the rabbi's, had been working to bring this garden to the town since she took office in 2001. She said that Marlene Budd, when she was a councilwoman, originally came up with the idea for the garden.

Berland said that when Anne Frank was in hiding in the Secret Annex in Amsterdam for two years, all she could see outside of her one window was a chestnut tree. That tree symbolized life and freedom for Anne. Berland said that because of that, the town planted two chestnut trees, right outside the memorial garden.

Hilary Eddy Stipelman, the program director for the [Anne Frank Center in Manhattan](http://www.annefrank.com) (<http://www.annefrank.com>), who recently moved to Huntington, said, "You may wonder why we are memorializing Anne Frank in this garden. It's because hate, racism and intolerance are taught and we want to teach diversity and other positive influences. Like Anne Frank said, people really are truly good at heart."

Two Holocaust survivors, one from Belgium and one from Warsaw, spoke about their experiences during the Holocaust when they were children. Then [Steven Dubner, a landscape designer who created the garden](http://www.stevendubnerlandscaping.com/) (<http://www.stevendubnerlandscaping.com/>), said that he came up with his master plan based on drawings that students throughout the district had made.

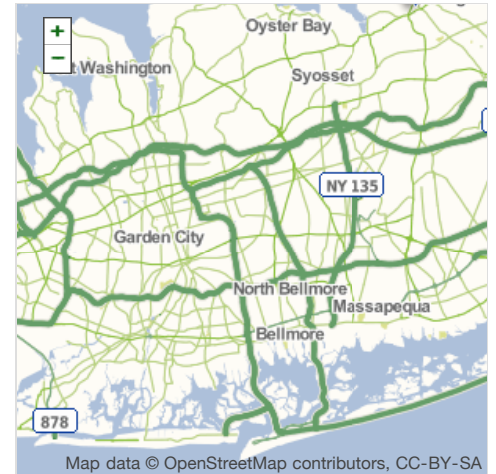
Robin Laban, the park steward, picked the quotes that are placed throughout the garden and created the idea of having pertinent sculptures displayed in the garden. The one that was unveiled at the dedication was made by Thea Lanzisero. Lanzisero said it is a contemplative sculpture—a full-scale model of a young girl's dress from that time period.

The garden also has, on top of one wall, handprints of children, to symbolize the children who died in the Holocaust and were never able to grow larger, Dubner explained. There is also a broken-down wall, and one part of the walkway has colored glass embedded in the pavers to symbolize *Kristallnacht*, the night of the broken glass. *Kristallnacht* took place on November 9–10, 1938, when the Nazis staged vicious pogroms—state sanctioned, anti-Jewish riots—against the Jewish community of Germany. *Kristallnacht* is a reference to the untold numbers of broken windows of synagogues, Jewish-owned stores, community centers, and homes plundered and destroyed during the pogroms. Encouraged by the Nazi regime, the rioters burned or destroyed 267 synagogues, vandalized or looted 7,500 Jewish businesses, and killed at least 91 Jewish people. They also damaged many Jewish cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and homes as police and fire brigades stood aside. *Kristallnacht* was a turning point in history. The pogroms marked an intensification of Nazi anti-Jewish policy that would culminate in the Holocaust.

The pavers take you through the garden in a circle, because life is a circle, Dubner said. When you leave the garden you immediately see the chestnut trees, which Dubner thinks would have made Anne Frank very pleased.

Councilwoman Berland thanked many people for helping to make the memorial garden a reality, especially Robin Laban. "Without her intensity and desire to make this happen, it wouldn't have happened so quickly," Berland said, but then added, "Quickly, that is in 'town time.' Town time," she explained, "is very different and much slower than real time."

In tears, Laban said, "Anne Frank may have been imprisoned physically, but her spirit wasn't imprisoned." She also told the story of how Otto Frank,



Anne's father, who got Anne's diary published, has the same birthday as Laban—May 12th. "He was her messenger—bringing her words to the world, and now maybe I am also a messenger, bringing Anne Frank to Huntington in this garden."

The ceremony ended with two [Half Hollow Hills High School East](http://www.halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us/) students reading poems they had written after being inspired by Anne Frank. Then, as rain drops began to fall, the sculpture was unveiled and people began to walk through the garden.

IN THIS ARTICLE



[Huntington Town Supervisor Frank Petrone](#)



SEE NEXT IN GOVERNMENT

[The Week That Was: Huntington News June 6 through 12](#)



[Councilwoman Susan A. Berland](#)

Advertise

Advertise on Patch and reach potential customers in your backyard and beyond. [Click here for more information.](#)

Volunteer

If you want to help local causes, or your cause needs local help, your next click should be right here.

Contribute

- + [Send us news tips](#)
- + [Put an event on the calendar](#)
- + [Announce something to everyone](#)