

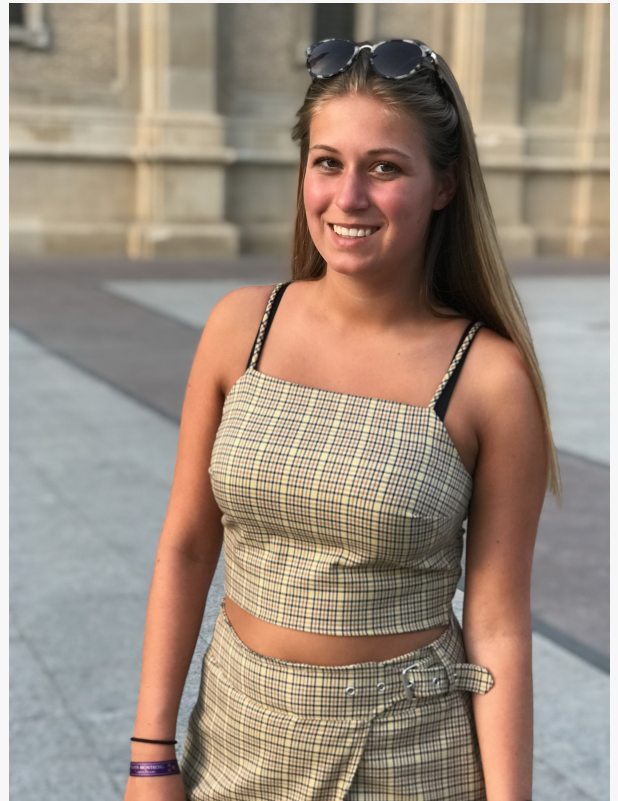
# A Rainbow forest in honor of Charlotte Gysel and the yearly 1,35 million victims worldwide of traffic crimes

*Yves Miroir, Guido Vandenbroucke, Elke Doornaert, Benny Verhiest, Griet Depreitere, Johan Gysel, Joke Coopman, Alexander Proot, Andy Vermaut create a people's forest.*

OSTEND, WEST-FLANDERS, BELGIUM , November 25, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Charlotte Gysel, 18, from the Belgian-European municipality of Koekelare (Bovekerke), died on Sept. 27, 2019 in Edewalle in Kortemark (Belgian-European province of West Flanders) was killed on a Friday night by a drunk driver who crashed head-on into her. She drove away from her student job and went to go see her boyfriend. However, she never returned, and while she was talking on the phone hands-free to her mother, her mother was an ear witness to the accident."

Johan Gysel says: "My daughter Charlotte didn't stand a chance and died right there. The driver who hit her had drunk far too much, drove recklessly and very fast. It is a pity that there are no stiffer penalties so that this can be avoided. Everyone should be afraid to get on the road if they have been drinking. If you have had too much, call a cab or friends who

can come and get you... Alcohol/drugs and driving do not mix. There are too many victims already! These accidents can be avoided unlike an illness that just happens to you. We certainly want to convey that message and make people aware of it, " says Johan Gysel, still visibly affected. Griet Depreitere: "It is very difficult to have lost our daughter "Charlotje" and feel the pain that she is no longer with us. We had a very beautiful life with her... a family to be proud of. But now it is a very different life, but we still try to get all the positive things out of it. We remain a loving family with our son Arthur and our daughter "Charlotte" always in our hearts and this is the most important thing! We are very grateful to all the people who are so kind to us, who will visit "Lotje" and who will continue to remember her! Andy Vermaut called us shortly afterwards



Charlotte Gysel lost her life due to a drunken ghost driver. She was only 18 and was on the phone with her mom when the terrible accident happened.

to ask if we would like to plant a forest for Charlotte. Of course, we thought that was very nice. Charlotte was climate conscious and would be delighted if we did this for her," says Griet Depreitere passionately.

Charlotte was also a climate warrior Johan Gysel continues: "Charlotte was a very loved girl and she was loved by us too! I was and still am very proud of her. Every day her name is mentioned and we talk about her. She will continue to live on, because she will always be part of our family! We will forever have 2 children. She belongs to us," says the father of Charlotte Gysel. Griet Depreitere continues: "At school, Lotje was in the climate group and in

the garden group. Once she came home because she saw that they were cutting down trees in our neighbourhood. We then explained that this is necessary for the health of the forest and she was reassured. This forest here in Ostend is not only a forest for Charlotte but also for all traffic

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*Johan Gysel - Grietje Depreitere*

victims. It is not only Lotje who died but also many more people. All fellow sufferers also have the opportunity to plant a tree for their beloved deceased. Therefore we have also addressed the Flemish-Belgian association OVK (parents of children who died in a crash). If they want, they can certainly come here to plant a tree as well." Globally,

1.35 million people lose their lives each year in traffic. Together with Yves Miroir father of the city edge forest of Ostend and chairman of Buitengoed who already realized more than 105 ha of forest in Ostend, the fundamental rights advocate Andy Vermaut joined forces through the

then Guido Vandenbroucke of Buitengoed, friends from the Rainbow association Benny Verhiest, heartfelt friend Elke Doornaert now also found a good and professional cooperation in the new people's cooperative Buitengoed with Alexander Proot and Joke Coopman. The new forest will be planted on 19 December 2021 at 1 pm in the Belgian city center Ostend (Karperstraat). Anyone can come and plant, but must take into account the Covid measures that still apply in Belgium. This forest was financed purely by friends and sympathizers. Every eurocent was invested in trees. With the forest, Andy Vermaut who now lives in the other Belgian center city Diksmuide,



Joke Coopman, Alexander Proot, Yves Miroir, Andy Vermaut, driver tractor, Johan Gysel and Griet Depreitere (Photo thanks to Franky Jonckheere)

realizes his 11th hectare of forest in Ostend. "The fact that we have always financed this without government subsidies has to do with the goodwill of the people. This last hectare of forest is very special to me. This forest comes in honor of Charlotte Gysel and all the 1.35 million victims worldwide who have lost their lives due to traffic crimes, a large part of which is due to alcohol and drugs in traffic. This new forest can only come about because of the personal support of friends, family members of Charlotte and supporters for this project. Without their support and their love for Charlotte Gysel and all traffic victims, this would never have been possible."



Franky Jonckheere took this panoramic photo of the site at Karperstraat in Ostend that will be planted on December 19, 2021. He is a close friend of Johan Gysel and Griet Depreitere parents of Charlotte Gysel.

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