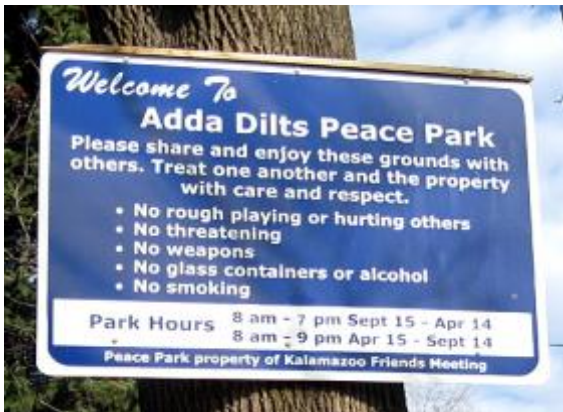




ADDA DILTS PEACE PARK

A Safe Haven for
Youth and Neighbors



History of the Adda Dilts Peace Park

In 1957, the Kalamazoo Friends Meeting (Quakers) constructed a Meetinghouse at the corner of Forbes and Denner. They recognized the value of preserving the land next to the Meetinghouse as a green, open space in the urban neighborhood.

Adda Dilts, the first Resident to live in the Meetinghouse's apartment, created and implemented a summer program for the young people in the neighborhood. After she left, her legacy continued, though on a more informal basis, with KFM adding a playground and a basketball hoop. Through the years, the park was used as a site for informal play, a playground for a childcare center, and a site for a city recreation program and a feeding program. In 1997 the Meeting constructed a new and safer playground thanks to a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

Our current Resident has provided supervision, caring, and mentoring to neighborhood youth for eighteen years. Unfortunately, in 2013-2014, there was an increase in behavior issues and vandalism in the Peace Park, part of a city wide increase in teen behavior problems.

Peace Keepers

To deal with the problems, we hired additional staff to supervise the park and keep children safe from bullying and illegal behavior. These staff members, nicknamed "Peace Keepers", are from a company founded by former Kalamazoo police officers who grew up in the area, are experienced in conflict resolution, and are committed to helping youth reach their potential. These Peace Keepers made a significant difference in restoring peace; and because of their attachment to the neighborhood, they became mentors to the youth using the Peace Park.

Each year new young people participate in pickup basketball and other park activities. Many regular attendees have emerged as leaders who know the rules and abide by them. In concert with the mentoring provided by the Peace Keepers, the teen leaders are passing along the expectations to new park attendees.

Contracting with our Peace Keepers is an expensive proposition, one that is difficult for a group of forty people to maintain. We hope you will join us in providing this safe haven in a challenged neighborhood.



A Peace Keeper oversees park activity.

David Anderson, a Kalamazoo City Commissioner and “friend” of the Peace Park states:

“Sometimes we look at poor people or challenged neighborhoods and think that we have to deliver programs to them, we have something to teach, some skill to model or some form of charity. What the Friends provided at the Peace Park was not that. Instead it supported an activity that was natural and normal for a neighborhood, a couple of village elders engaging, watching out and setting the tone.....”

The result was something that those of us who live in "safe" neighborhoods take for granted. The park became what it was intended to be, a peace park, a place where kids knew that there were rules and that someone would stand for those rules. Not occupiers, but adults steeped in the fabric of the community. Simple rules, no violence, verbal or otherwise. That peace is priceless and unfortunately, especially for many young people who live in the neighborhood, a rarity.”

Please join us in providing a safe, friendly place for creative, unstructured play.

Yes, I want to support the Adda Dilts Peace Park

Donation amount: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Donation checks should be made out to Kalamazoo Friends Meeting and mailed to: Kalamazoo Friends Meeting
Attn. Treasurer
508 Denner,
Kalamazoo, MI 49006.

Donations for the Adda Dilts Peace Park are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed. All donations will be used to hire Peace Keepers.

Thanks so much for your generosity and support!



Besides the basketball hoop, the Adda Dilts Peace Park has an assortment of playground equipment intended for younger children. Due to the behavior of some of the older young people and the potential for violence, many families who had used the park stopped coming and kept their kids away. Since the Friends Meeting hired the Peace Keepers, most of these families and their children have returned.

Using Peace Keeper services has become an ongoing commitment of the Kalamazoo Friends Meeting. We stand together with the Peace Keepers and the Meeting Resident to inspire, to teach, and to require adherence to rules so children and families can be safe and have fun in the beautiful natural space we have to offer. Will you assist us in this endeavor?