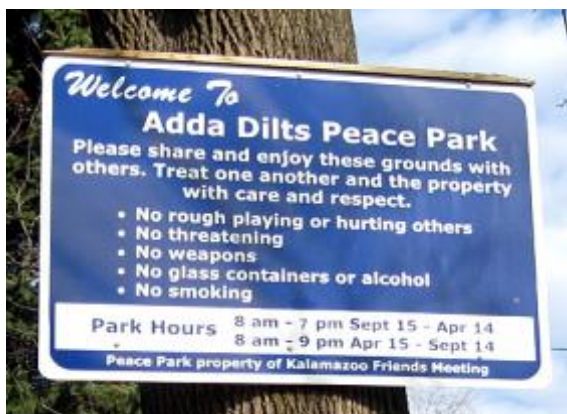




ADDA DILTS PEACE PARK

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.