



September 20, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer in support of their Inclusive Playground project. We've been working in cooperation with the club for several years on this project to come up with a viable location for it and we agreed on a perfect underutilized space in Rowden Park within the City of Lapeer.

The future site of the playground will be on site of what currently sits, an abandoned tennis court, which has become an eyesore over the years. The City of Lapeer intends to remove the existing tennis court lighting, fencing and pulverize the asphalt playing surface to make room for the future playground development.

When the project is complete the City of Lapeer Parks department plans to absorb the playground as their own and will perform monthly playground safety inspections, executed by Certified Playground Safety Inspectors. In addition, the department will provide routine maintenance and upkeep to the standards set forth by City of Lapeer policies and procedures.

The Inclusive Playground will be a unique addition to the city park system, Lapeer and surrounding counties. The City of Lapeer is in full support of this endeavor and are willing to help in any way we can.

Feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Rodney R. Church
Director of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery



Disability Network Eastern Michigan

November 25, 2024

RE: Inclusive Playground - Rowden Park

To Whom It May Concern,

Disability Network Eastern Michigan (DNEM) is pleased to provide this letter in support of Lapeer Kiwanis developing an inclusive playground within the Rowden Park.

The Legacy Project, an all-inclusive and universally accessible playground at Rowden Park in Lapeer will provide a nature-inspired playground; one that will welcome individuals of all ages and abilities to play, learn, and grow together.

DNEM is a non-profit organization, federally designated as a Center for Independent Living, which is run by and for individuals with disabilities. DNEM mission and vision is to provide inclusion for all by breaking down barriers and opening paths towards independence and personal choice through resources, advocacy, support and education.

DNEM fully supports the development and implementation of a universally designed playground that can serve our community members in the City of Lapeer and surrounding areas. This project aligns with our Mission and Vision. We are grateful for the opportunity to support it.

Sincerely

Amy Maes, Director of Access Services
Disability Network Eastern Michigan

March 13, 2024

Kiwanis Club of Lapeer
PO Box 501
Lapeer, MI 48446
c/o Tammy Lyerla, President

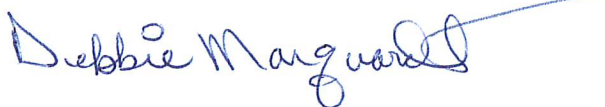
Dear Tammy,

I am writing today to express my total support for the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer's Inclusive Playground, to be located in Rowden Park in the City of Lapeer. Having served in city government for more than 20 years, having served on the City's Parks and Recreation Board over the same time span, and as Mayor of the City of Lapeer for the last four plus years, I am keenly aware of the recreational opportunities the City of Lapeer has to offer. Our Park system, our walking and biking trails, our disc golf course and our dog park, offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities for our residents and visitors to our community. However, access to many of these recreational opportunities is limited to persons without physical or mobility challenges.

The Inclusive Playground will offer exciting recreational and play opportunities to persons of all abilities. Features of the playground are designed to provide these opportunities to persons with mobility issues, hearing and vision impairments, developmental and learning challenges, as well as persons not coping with these challenges. It truly offers recreational, play and educational opportunities for every person regardless of their limitations. This playground fills a distinct gap in the range of activities available to City residents and visitors. The inclusive playground will fill that void and will make the City more capable of providing quality recreational opportunities for everyone, irrespective of their abilities or physical challenges. I believe this playground will attract visitors from outside the City and will create a destination for outsiders to visit and enjoy. Further, I believe that the playground will help the City improve the quality of life of our residents by demonstrating that the City is a progressive leader in Park systems across the state and, the project, fits perfectly into the place-making strategy of the City of Lapeer and the DDA.

I am pleased to offer my support for your inclusive playground project and fully and whole-heartedly endorse your project. Finally, I want to express my gratitude for the initiative and all the hard work that the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer has dedicated to this project. When completed, the playground will truly be the Legacy of the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer. Thank you for all you do for the children of this community. If I may be of any service moving forward, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully yours,



Debbie Marquardt
Mayor, City of Lapeer
(810) 516-5650
denmarq1@gmail.com



Give today. Impact tomorrow.

RE: Letter of Support for the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer Inclusive Playground Project

Greetings;

I am writing on behalf of the Lapeer County Community Foundation to express our enthusiastic support for the Inclusive Playground Project being spearheaded by the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer. We commend the Kiwanis Club for their dedication to creating inclusive spaces that promote accessibility and bring joy to all members of our community, regardless of age and ability.

As an organization committed to enhancing the well-being and quality of life for all individuals in our community, we recognize the importance of projects like the Inclusive Playground. Inclusive playgrounds provide opportunities for individuals of all abilities to play and interact together, fostering a sense of belonging and friendship among children and families from diverse backgrounds.

The benefits of inclusive playgrounds extend far beyond providing a space for recreation. They promote physical activity, social interaction, and cognitive development for people of all ages and abilities. By creating environments that accommodate diverse needs, we promote empathy, understanding, and acceptance among children and adults alike.

Furthermore, the Inclusive Playground aligns with our organization's mission to create a more inclusive and equitable community for everyone. We believe that investing in projects that prioritize accessibility and inclusivity is essential for building a society where all individuals can thrive.

We are inspired by the Kiwanis Club's commitment to making our community a better place for everyone, and we stand ready to support the project. This commitment has been reflected in the Foundation granting a total of \$65,300 towards this project across four endowment funds held by LCCF. Whether through financial contributions, volunteer efforts, or spreading awareness, we are dedicated to ensuring the success of this important initiative.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer for their leadership and vision in championing the Inclusive Playground Project. Together, we can create a community where every child has the opportunity to play, learn, and grow in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Sincerely,

Nancy Boxey

Nancy Boxey
Executive Director



Excellence. Accountability. Impact.™



October 26, 2023.

To whom it might concern,

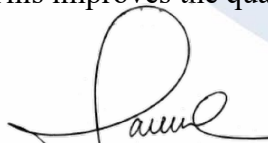
I own Journey Therapy Center in Lapeer (a center for children with autism) and am a parent of a child with a disability. I am writing to express my support for creating an inclusive playground in Lapeer.

The inclusive playground will allow all children to play in an environment where they are not limited by physical or cognitive ability. Our goal should be to bring together children of all abilities to engage each other in play and exploration, develop gross motor skills, build social skills, and provide an environment of tolerance, diversity, and acceptance.

Unfortunately, we live in a small community where families cannot afford to provide inclusive play opportunities within their budgets, and sadly, the needs of disabled children and adults are overlooked. Efforts that enhance quality of life and promote inclusion, tolerance, and diversity require a critical mass of dedication and purposeful funding outside of traditional sources. Inclusive play spaces improve the quality of life for children with disabilities and their families and the quality of life for children without disabilities.

The inclusive playground in Lapeer will allow all children to play alongside one another, which supports the physical, social, and cognitive development of all children and benefits everyone. Children with disabilities benefit from active play, including building valuable physical and social skills in integrated, more natural environments. It is also relevant to mention that children without disabilities get the same benefit from the active play environment. They learn valuable lessons about the world, most notable that everyone has similarities and differences. They develop improved attitudes towards children with disabilities. They learn how to interact with, be friends with, assist, and advocate for peers with disabilities. It teaches them vital lessons of compassion and awareness in a natural, child-centered setting where everyone has fun together.

There are also tremendous benefits for the adult community. Not only can all children take part in active play alongside one another, but parents, grandparents, and adults with disabilities can experience and enjoy the space as well. Adult residential communities can enhance the quality of life for their residents with this expanded recreational space. This improves the quality of life for all family members and our community.



PhD, BCBA-D, LBA

Claudia Leandres, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA
Clinical Director & Founder, Journey Therapy Center
Professor, Oakland University
Phone: (810) 358-0373
www.journeytherapycenter.com



September 28, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Kiwanis Inclusive Playground in Lapeer, Michigan. I am a Physical Therapist with 19 years of experience. I was born and raised in Lapeer County. I currently own an outpatient orthopedic physical therapy practice here and welcome this playground to improve the health and fitness of our residents.

I have reviewed the Inclusive Design Report. The playground offers a safe place for the community (children and adults) to exercise, play and socialize. It is well designed with emphasis on balance, sensory integration, cognition and motor skills. The landscape is well thought out for people who use walkers, wheelchairs and canes (or any other assistive devices) which can be a barrier. Ramps are placed throughout that allow anyone using an assistive device access to different levels of the decks. Sitting areas provide adults and children a place to rest or supervise.

Some of the elements that stood out to me from a disability standpoint are as follows:

- We-Go-Swing: Adults and children in wheelchairs are able to swing. This is not offered at many parks.
- The Symbol Communication Sign and Sign Language Panel is a wonderful inclusion. Many kids have difficulty with speech and this allows them to communicate more efficiently.
- We-Go-Round: Allows anyone using a wheelchair to participate
- The different types of swings that are either age appropriate or disability appropriate
- The variety of sensory and vestibular options that are incorporated in fun activities (ie the rock wall, oodle swing, and climbing wall)
- Landscape: Adults or children could walk as they watch other children or friends playing as well. There is plenty of space around the structures. Research shows that even a short walk a day can improve overall health!

Personally, I love the abundance of play options and how there are different levels for any child's age or for adult participation. Most parks cater to specific age groups, but this one is designed to accommodate people throughout their lifespan. This playground would compliment any therapy a person is currently receiving. (occupational, physical and speech).



In summary, this playground is incredible. A great deal of time and thought went into carefully planning the elements of this playground. Children and adults, with or without disabilities, would benefit from having this playground in their city. However, I imagine many families would be willing to drive to it.

Please contact me if you have any further questions, Heidi@metamorapt.com or 810-212-1277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Heidi Irwin", written in a cursive style.

Heidi Irwin PT, DPT



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810-728-6598
www.downtownlapeer.com
Executive Director: James Alt

Chairman: Catherine Bostick
Vice-Chairman: Tim Roodvoets
Secretary: Ashley Fanson
Treasurer: Megan Gillingham

March 13, 2023

Dear Senator Peters,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of an all-inclusive playground just outside of Historic Downtown Lapeer. This endeavor demonstrates an outstanding community partnership between The City of Lapeer and the Kiwanis Club of Lapeer and holds significant promise not only for the children and families directly utilizing the playground but also for our entire community, including Historic Downtown Lapeer.

An all-inclusive playground embodies the values of accessibility, diversity, and inclusion, serving as a welcoming space for children of all abilities and backgrounds. By providing a space where children with disabilities can play alongside their peers without barriers, we promote social integration and foster empathy and understanding among all members of our community. Such an environment encourages friendships to blossom and nurtures a sense of belonging among children who may otherwise feel marginalized.

Furthermore, an all-inclusive playground enhances the vibrancy and appeal of our city, including the downtown. Families and visitors alike are drawn to locations that prioritize inclusivity and accessibility. A well-designed and thoughtfully constructed playground not only provides a recreational outlet but also serves as a gathering place for families to connect, fostering a sense of community and strengthening the bonds that tie us together. These positive experiences create lasting memories that lead to resident retention, children growing up, and choosing to stay in Lapeer to work, raise their families, and enjoy an overall positive quality of life.

In addition to its social and communal benefits, an all-inclusive playground promotes physical activity and healthy living for children of all abilities.

It is imperative that we, as a community, embrace the principles of inclusivity and accessibility in all aspects of public life. By championing initiatives like the establishment of an all-inclusive playground, we demonstrate our commitment to creating a city where everyone, regardless of ability, feels valued and included.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the creation of an all-inclusive playground just outside Historic Downtown Lapeer. Not only will it enrich the lives of children and families, but it will also contribute to the vitality and inclusivity of our community as a whole. I urge you to support this worthy endeavor and look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our city.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

James Alt
Executive Director
Lapeer Main Street DDA