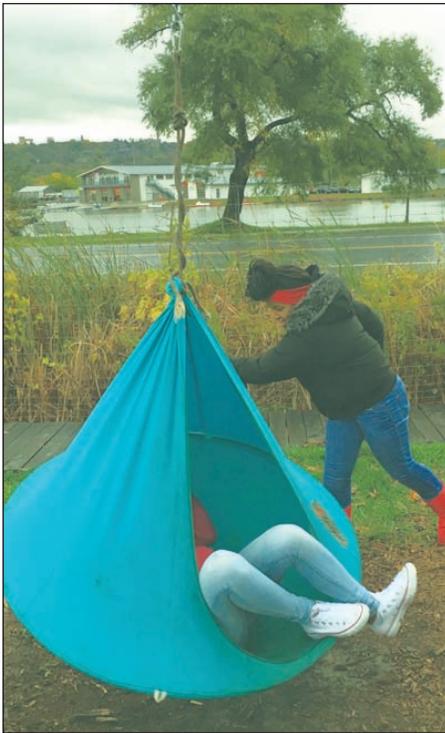




# Northside United

Issue #8: Winter 2017

## Northside Playground Update: Introducing The Hangout

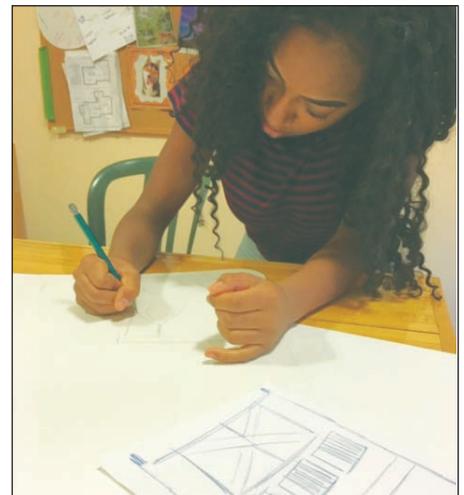


The plan for “The Hangout” is just about ready to go the the Planning Board. Serenity Dixon, Tomi Johnson, Oni Gbangbe and Keylai Burnett have been meeting with other young people at the Beverly J Martin School, Boynton Middle School and GIAC to design a playground for older children. They also have been exploring other playgrounds and working closely with Beth Myers, Cooperative Extension Associate, and the City Landscape Architect to create the design.

This idea was sparked two years ago by Serenity Dixon, a young member of Northside United, who presented a petition to the City in the the Spring of 2015 for a playground for older children. She enlisted some other young people and the pictures show them in action. Their hard work will be presented to the Planning Board in the next weeks.

Serenity says about the Project, “It means a lot for us to be a part of this playground project because we are close with GIAC and other programs for kids and we hear them talking a lot about wanting more outside activities. Two years ago, when I said we wanted a playground, we didn’t think that it would actually happen—but now it has! I didn’t think it would happen because I was 12 and I didn’t think the City would take me seriously—but now it’s exciting. It’s fun to be helping out in our community.”

Beth Myers says, “It’s incredible to witness how kids are authentically participating and have taken ownership of this project. Kids and teens are play experts and if we continue to elicit they voices and ideas in the design and planning of public spaces, especially those for children, we will all benefit. I can’t wait to play at The Hangout.”



From top: The Northside United Teens (Tomi, Oni, Serenity + Keylai) inspiring other kids to get involved in the planning process!; Serenity preparing for the Northside United Presentation; Northside Teens facilitated groups of design teams with the GIAC Jumpers!

From top: We went on inspirational field trips around town + yes, spent time PLAYING!; Keylai working on our shared vision for the space.



## Know Your Neighbor: Fred Wilcox

"I like this group. The food is always good! And I look forward to the meetings." responded Fred Wilcox, a resident of 2nd Street when asked about his involvement in Northside United.

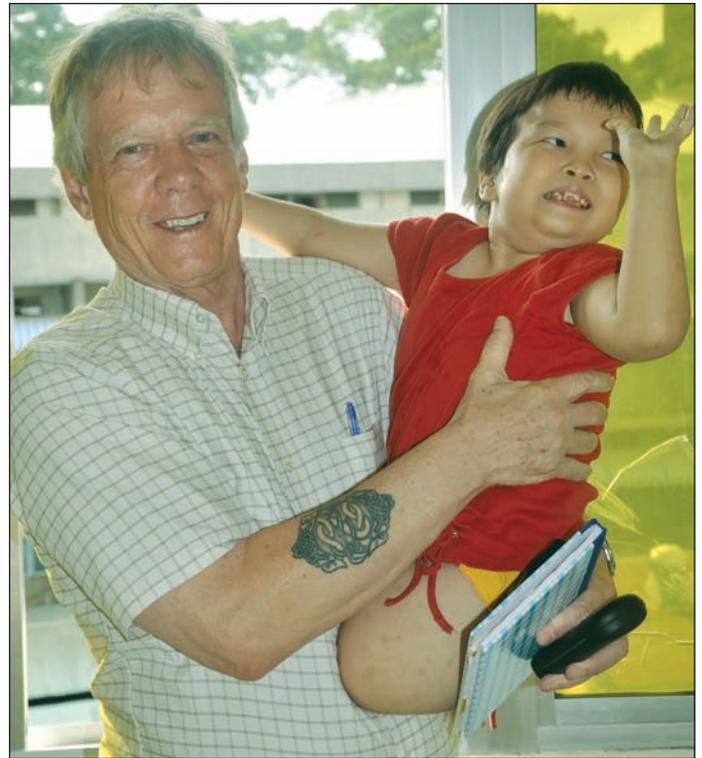
"I think that the way in which Northside United addressed the Maguire Motors development plan across Route 13 was very positive. There are many other possibilities for that area that will be better for the neighborhood." Fred said, "It is a tribute to NU that it was handled so well."

Fred is a retired professor in the Writing Department at Ithaca College. He has taught at several other universities as well, including New York University. He said his teaching style was one of open door pedagogy. He didn't lecture but encouraged discussion and use of life experiences to learn. He taught classes on the literature of the Vietnam War and issues of violence versus nonviolence. He has also

published seven books, the first of which was "Waiting for the Army to Die", a depiction of the effects of Agent Orange on veterans of the Vietnam War. Fred says he wrote his books in a non academic style which is easy for the lay person to read.

Originally a resident of Trumansburg, Fred moved to downtown Ithaca when his children, Danica and Brendan, were attending the Lehman Alternative School and he was teaching at Ithaca College. He didn't have a specific neighborhood in mind but fell in love with an Italianate house in Northside.

When he first moved to Northside the neighborhood was not good. His home was robbed; drugs were being peddled in the streets. But about ten years ago families started buying houses and fixing them up. INHS also did some renovation. The area still has some transients such as graduate students but it is more family oriented and safer now. He likes liv-



Fred and friend

ing on the Northside.

When asked what he would like to see in the future, Fred said he would enjoy conversations about what he sees as fundamental contradictions in how we relate to each other. "It has al-

ways been interesting to me how we live in integrated communities but we don't interact. We seem to be well meaning people who don't look at our own attitudes. I would like us to get to know each other on a deeper level."

## Announcements

**February is Black History Month:** a time to reflect and honor the history and contributions of African Americans to the culture of our nation.

"I appreciate the idea of acknowledging Black History Month. However I believe we have so much history and it deserves to be honored every day. There is history that has not been told and is now surfacing. There is more that needs to be told." Phoebe Brown, Northside resident

### Activities for Black History Month

Greater Ithaca Activities Center presents the Annual Black Talent Show on February 17 at 7 p.m. in the Kulp Auditorium. It is free and all are welcome.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Lecture will take place on February 21 at the State Theater at 6 p.m. It will feature a presentation by renowned film maker, Dawn Porter. Her upcoming project is a documentary based on "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander. There will also be a showing of her film "Gideon's Army" at Cinemapolis on Saturday, February 18 in the afternoon.

**Planning for the Northside Celebration** will start in the month of March. We hope to have a lot of the fun activities we had last year as well as more. If you have some ideas and wish to participate please come to our next meeting.

### Upcoming Meeting Dates

March 7, April 3 and May 1 at the Friends Meeting House on 3rd and Madison Streets. A free dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. The meeting starts at 6 p.m. Childcare provided also.

### An Open Invitation

Please join us; all are welcome, even if you don't live in the Northside. We are working together, learning from each other, and are dedicated to creating a safe, enriching, just home for us all.

*Northside United is a grassroots organization dedicated to strengthening connections between people who live, work and worship in Ithaca, NY'S Northside neighborhood. We meet the first Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m.*