

Gerry Witherell
527 Butler Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417

April 11, 2024

Members of the Grand Haven City Council
City of Grand Haven
519 Washington Ave
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Dear Members of Grand Haven City Council,

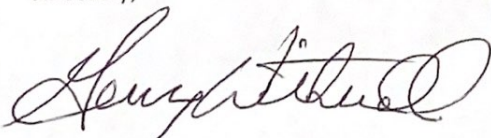
I believe our community's greatest asset is our young people and so, throughout my life, I have championed projects that invest in our youth. The children's museum is one such project and my wife Marcia and I believe it will be a wonderfully valuable addition to our community.

Grand Haven was predominately an industrial community and, early in my career, one of the complaints I often heard was there weren't enough activities for young people. So, in 1960 some of my friends and I started to plan for a new YMCA, and we opened the doors in the fall of 1963. Shortly after, the Ski Bowl opened and Grand Haven became one of the smallest cities in the country to have a ski hill in its city limits. In those days we had more snow than we do now and hundreds of young people learned to ski within walking distance of home. As time went on, the city built a state-of-the-art skate park and two basketball courts on the opposite ends of town. We built the first Imagination Station in the early 1990's with 1,500 volunteers in five days. It was recently refreshed and upgraded by the community.

The hope to have a children's museum in Grand Haven has been around a while. Children's museums are models of investing in our young people and families that are popular in other nearby communities. Twenty years ago, a young mother came to me to help her develop a children's museum but unfortunately her husband was transferred so they moved away and the project was put on hold. Last fall, however, I met with the leader of a new group working to start a children's museum. They have a volunteer board of ten prominent people who have spent well over a year doing their due diligence in planning.

Throughout our lives, Marcia and I have dedicated ourselves to making our community a better place to live. We believe the local children's museum will be a terrific addition to our community and wholeheartedly support the project. We urge your support as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Witherell", written in a cursive style.

Gerry Witherell