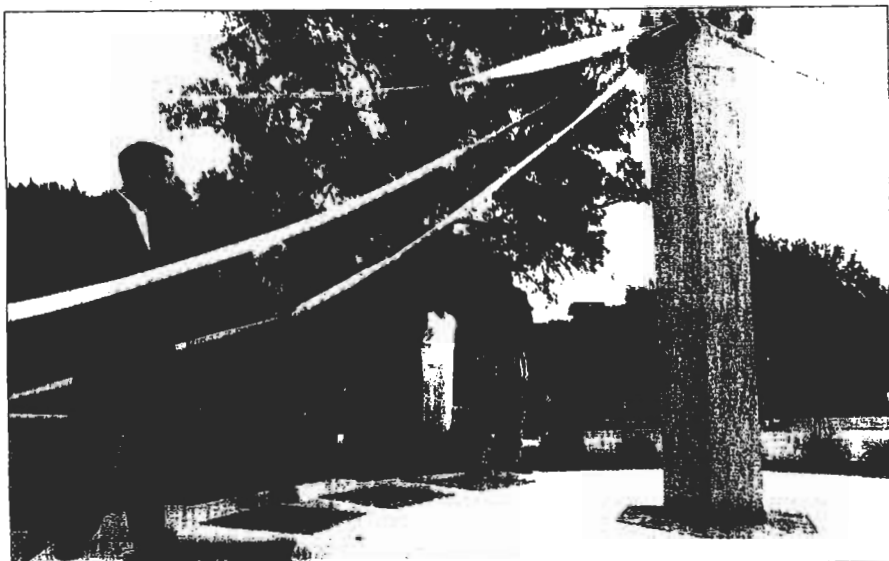


Message is clear: May peace prevail on Earth



Photos by Steven M. Herppich/The Enquirer

Taking their turns in the ribbon-cutting ceremony are, from left: Duffy Beischel, Anderson Park Board president; Jackie O'Brien, honorary chair of Greater Anderson Promotes Peace; Molly McClure of the park district; and Jim Yunker with GAPP.

Peace pole a celebration of group's six-year effort

By Eileen Kelley
Enquirer staff writer

ANDERSON TWP. — The sounds are varied. The alphabets, to the unfamiliar, are jumbled.

But the message unveiled Sunday in eight alphabets and 12 languages was the same: May Peace Prevail on Earth.

Before more than 100 people of various ages, colors and religions Sunday, a peace pole was dedicated at Beech Acres Park.

The peace pole is an international symbol for peace, organizers said.

Anderson's pole joins more than 200,000 peace poles planted in some 180 countries.

The first one was installed in Japan in 1955.

With the ribbons freshly cut, Paul Bergman of Hyde Park glanced at the pole, its surrounding garden and the straw protecting the newly planted grass seed and offered a heart-felt smile.



Barry Reible, co-director of GAPP, speaks to the crowd gathered Sunday for the peace pole dedication at Beech Acres Park.

"This is really neat," said Bergman, 52. "We really needed some sort of symbol."

The effort was a long time in the making.

In 1998, an Anderson area family's home was spray-painted with swastikas. Many churches in the area — 21 — decried the ac-

tion, called for tolerance and agreed to confront hatred.

Six months later, hatred reared again.

And again.

And again in the form of white supremacist leaflets dumped on driveways and porches throughout the area including Newtown,

How you can join the effort

People wanting to donate \$50 to the fund to have their family name engraved on a brick paver around the pole can call Greater Anderson Promotes Peace at (513) 588-8391. Or go online: <http://home.fuse.net/gappeace>

Mount Washington and western Clermont County.

Church members who initially decried the hate knew they needed to do more, and Greater Anderson Promotes Peace was born.

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The Enquirer/Steven M. Herppich

Marie Hill, of Anderson Township, brought granddaughter Natalie Armbruster, 1, of Batavia, to the dedication ceremony. The peace pole was a long-time goal of a group formed in Anderson.

Pole: Symbol of group's motivating sentiments

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"We realized somebody had to do something, and we organized," said Barry Riehle, a co-director of the peace group.

The group found constructive ways to honor diversity and promote inclusion in the area neighborhoods.

It got involved in schools and partnered with other groups to promote lectures, book discussions and celebrations.

"But the one thing that we knew

we needed though – which people always need – is a symbol," Riehle told the crowd in the opening remarks before the ribbons were cut on the pole.

"Think of any religious house of worship that you go into: I don't care if it is a Star of David; crosses; the 99 names of Allah – whatever – they are symbols that people need. For the peace movement, what are used are peace poles."

Six years after the formation of the peace group and with the help of some borrowed money, the

peace pole became a reality.

Of the \$59,000 needed for the nine-foot, six-sided piece of granite surrounded by six, six-foot granite monoliths, \$41,000 has been raised.

"I've been practicing for six years," said Rev. Henry Zorn, the pastor of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, as he stepped up to the lectern Sunday and announced in English: "May Peace Prevail on Earth."

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