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Peace pole coming to Naperville's Veterans Park



Marie Wilson

A peaceful message is coming soon to Veterans Park in Naperville.

An 8-foot-tall peace pole will be installed next spring in the park at 303 E. Gartner Road as a gathering point to celebrate peace near and far.

The ThinkGlobal Arts Foundation commissioned the pole designed by an Ohio artist to promote peace as a value and to give back to the community, said Revati Natesan, the group's founder.

"We think every moment is peaceful, every day is peace, so we're just going to celebrate," she said.

The brushed stainless steel pole will be erected near a collection of U.S. and military flags at [Veterans Park \(http://www.napervilleparks.org/parks/veterans-park\)](http://www.napervilleparks.org/parks/veterans-park), surrounded by terra cotta pavers and landscaping. It will be maintained by the Naperville Park District, which gave the go-ahead this week for its installation.

Natesan said the pole promotes global unity by displaying its laser-cut message in 13 languages including Cherokee, English, German, Japanese, Sanskrit and Tagalog.

"It kind of displays a message and a prayer and that's what it says: 'May peace prevail on earth,'" Natesan said.

In summer 2013, ThinkGlobal Arts approached the park district and the Naperville Riverwalk Commission about installing a peace pole near a "peace tree" the group planted on the [Riverwalk \(http://naperville.il.us/riverwalk.aspx\)](http://naperville.il.us/riverwalk.aspx). The group was hoping to place the new peace pole along the popular walking path before the Sept. 21 celebration of International Day of Peace last year, but Riverwalk stewards said there wasn't enough turnaround time.

Some also were not sure the peace pole would fit in where the [ThinkGlobal Arts Foundation \(http://www.thinkglobalarts.org/\)](http://www.thinkglobalarts.org/) wanted it placed, so a new location was found.

"We felt that Veterans Park, the veterans plaza area, would be a better location for it," said Mike Reilly, park board president. "When you're talking about world peace, obviously the service members that fought for this country and defended our peace, we thought that was a good connection."

Natesan said she also prefers Veterans Park as the venue for the first peace pole installed by her organization. She said ThinkGlobal Arts is planning a dedication that will include art and music once the pole is standing this spring. She envisions the monument as the future site of ceremonies honoring citizens for their efforts to promote peace.

"This actually was a blessing in disguise because this is so much more thrilling and so much nicer that it's in Veterans Park by the flags," Natesan said. "People who come to see it can also walk by the peace pole and spend some time. I think it'll have a lot more impact on the city where it is at now."