

Policy item II, Number 5. Is applicable for this naming request.

City of Marquette Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

We appreciate you considering and accepting this proposal to name the Marquette City Skatepark in honor of Nheena Weyer Ittner.

The name being proposed is, 'The Nheena Weyer Ittner Skatepark'

1. Reasons for proposing this name:

The largest reason for this proposal is that the Marquette Skatepark would not exist without the involvement and influence of Nheena Weyer Ittner. To understand how this came to be, we want to remind the advisory board and commission of the background. About a decade prior to the opening of the Marquette Skatepark in its current form, there was an idea to create such a space. The city and the YMCA had worked to provide an option with temporary skate obstacles (made of metal and plastic) and they had to be stored and pulled out each spring/summer season. It was better than nothing, but many knew that the city and area could use something more, something permanent, that will fill the void and provide a safe, welcoming environment with well built structures for kids and persons of all ages, skate abilities and styles to enjoy.

A local group discussed plans and options, but nothing moved forward in an organized way until Nheena got involved. A group of kids explained the idea to Nheena and their hope for such a space and that's all it took. Being inspired by children, as she often can be, Nheena took on this objective. As we all know, Nheena had already founded and opened the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum and was successfully operating as CEO. In addition to this role, and serving on many local, regional, and state level advisory boards, she took on the role of fearless fundraising and organizational leader of the Marquette Skatepark Committee. Nheena pulled in various experts, artists, construction groups, and bikers, skaters, bladers, etc... to get input and buy-in on this venture.

With her concerted fundraising and fund coordination and continued efforts, the Marquette Skatepark was dedicated and opened officially in 2014.

What the Marquette Skatepark meant then and still does, is that it is a space and place for community members and local youth to go and be active while enjoying the outdoors, partaking in a sport they love. As many of us remark every time we go past the skatepark and see two dozen people or more there, where would they be if that park did not exist? Would they be skating on other curbs in the city, where they damage the concrete? Would they be sitting at home, alone, not socializing and finding their own friend group and common bonds with others who enjoy skateboarding, biking, and riding scooters? Instead, they have the Marquette Skatepark, thanks to Nheena and her efforts that rallied a group of city officials and volunteers to create this wonderful park and location.

In addition to the Children's Museum, the Skatepark, and other amazing accomplishments that have benefited the City of Marquette and region, Nheena continues her efforts. She is now helping complete an updated and renovated Lower Harbor Park that will be safe and inclusive and ready for an entire new generation of children.

We all can agree and realize when efforts are made toward initiatives like the skatepark, the Children's Museum, the Lower Harbor Park, and similar efforts, it takes a village, a community, a region. Project and undertakings like those listed here have starts and stops, challenges both large and small, and ultimately success. It takes time and determination to see it through. It involves both public and private participation and a show of appreciation for all those involved and making sacrifices and investments of time and resources. And someone needs to lead. Nheena is a leader. We admire and respect Nheena for her grit, sisu, and 'never give-up' attitude when it comes to helping and serving the Marquette area and specifically our youth.

Nheena should be recognized time and time again for all she has done for this area and in naming the skatepark, the *Nheena Weyer Ittner Skatepark*, her legacy will be honored and recognized as long as the park remains. We are proud to have this opportunity to honor Nheena and all she has done for local children.

Thank you again for your consideration and the work you do on behalf of our area citizens and the City of Marquette.

Jess Jones
3156 Island Beach Road
Marquette, Michigan 49855
906-869-2308
Jessmqt15@gmail.com

P.S. She is unaware of this submission. If you need information from her or on her behalf we are happy to assist or include her if you feel that is helpful or beneficial.

2. Proposed Name: **The Nheena Weyer Ittner Skatepark**
3. Evidence of Community Support from Marquette Residents: (see attached documents)

Submissions by:

1. Andrew LaCombe
TV6
2. Patrick Callahan
Gray Media
3. Meagan Morrison
Eagle Mine

May 17, 2024

Dear Marquette City Leaders,

I am writing to you with great enthusiasm and a heartfelt recommendation regarding the naming of our city's skate park. Because of her work to fundraise for the skate park, I cannot think of a more fitting tribute than to name it after the remarkable Nheena Weyer Ittner.

Here's a story that encapsulates the essence of Nheena's influence on our community. It was during my childhood that I first had the privilege of crossing paths with Nheena, an encounter that left an indelible mark on my life. Sliding down a toilet slide at the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum, an institution she founded, was not just a playful moment but a testament to her innovative approach to education and empowerment. Under her guidance, I became involved in the museum's youth journalism program, an experience that ignited my passion for storytelling and community engagement.

Nheena's dedication to empowering young voices through initiatives like the youth journalism program has transformed countless lives, including my own. Her tireless efforts to create opportunities for youth leadership have shaped the fabric of our community, inspiring individuals like myself to strive for excellence and give back in meaningful ways. From serving on the museum's board of directors to assuming leadership roles in local organizations, Nheena's mentorship has guided me every step of the way.

More than just a visionary leader, Nheena embodies the spirit of compassion and generosity that defines our city. Her unwavering commitment to the well-being of our youth has laid the foundation for a brighter future, one where every child is empowered to reach their full potential. As a symbol of our gratitude and admiration, I believe we should honor Nheena's legacy by naming our city skate park in her honor.

Just as Nheena's legacy continues to endure through the Children's Museum she founded, so too will her impact be felt in the hearts and minds of future generations who will gather at the skate park.

Sincerely,

Andrew LaCombe
135 W. Arch St.
Marquette

June 3, 2024

Dear Marquette City Leaders,

I am writing to express my unequivocal support for naming the City of Marquette skate park in honor of Nheena Weyer Ittner. She has worked tirelessly in her efforts to provide safe and productive places for the youth of this community.

You would be hard-pressed to find community leaders who have not been personally and positively impacted by the work that Nheena has dedicated herself to for nearly four decades.

While locally she is most known for founding and spearheading one of the best children's museums in the country. She has also been on countless boards, committees, and initiatives all with the focus of helping other organizations learn from her experiences to make Marquette a better place.

Nheena has always looked at Marquette with the lens of "how can I help make this town better?" A lens that we are lucky she has, and I wish more people used. Years ago, she saw a need for a place for the local youth to go and push themselves, learn from each other, and build memories that would last a lifetime. That vision ultimately led to massive community support and would untimely become the skate park. A community space that while being years old gets used every day by first timers to seasoned vets all with the goal of making themselves better.

Naming the skate park after her would not only honor what Nheena has done for Marquette but also help instill her name on a piece of the city that would not be here if it weren't for her community work.

I urge the City Council to consider this proposal favorably and to take this opportunity to recognize one of Marquette's most hardworking philanthropists.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patrick Callahan
236 W. Park St.
Marquette

June 3, 2024

Dear Marquette City Leaders,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for naming the City of Marquette skate park in honor of Nheena Weyer Ittner. This gesture would be a fitting tribute to an individual who has significantly contributed to our community in many ways.

Nheena has been a pillar of the community for decades, demonstrating unwavering dedication and passion in her efforts to enrich the lives of our residents. Her tireless work to establish the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum has provided countless opportunities for children and families to learn, explore, and grow in an environment that is both engaging and educational.

Nheena's commitment to the community extends beyond the walls of the museum. It was her visionary leadership that led to the creation of the skate park. Her passion for empowering youth demonstrates the kind of positive impact one person can have on a community when they truly care. The skate park is more than just a recreational space; it is a place for young people to challenge themselves, overcome obstacles, and persevere. It is a place of self-expression, connection, and growth.

Naming the skate park after her would not only honor her legacy but also inspire future generations to continue her work in making Marquette a vibrant and inclusive community.

I urge the City Council to consider this proposal favorably and to take this opportunity to celebrate a truly remarkable individual.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Meagen Morrison
440 W. Hewitt Ave.
Marquette

