

Amazing Grace Basketball Court

ELEVATOR PITCH

With high schoolers only having access to one basketball court (which is usually occupied for various classes and practices), along with places for after school physical activity being almost non-existent on school property, we thought it would be a great idea to build a basketball court in the grassy area between the middle school and the concessions stand. This would provide a great place for middle schoolers and high schoolers alike to play basketball, as well as a new space for gym classes and teams such as the Unified Basketball team to utilize. And also due to the unpredictability of the future of the pandemic, this court will be a permanent space for outdoor activity.

SUMMARY

The basketball court we hope to build would be located behind the school, on a grassy area between the side of the middle school and the concessions stand. In an attempt to make the project very logistical, we decided that a 59'5" W x 30'9" L half court would be perfect for the space and the intended purpose. The area that the court would be sitting on measures approximately 90' W x 45' L, which would be more than enough space for the court. The area is ideal due to its flat surface, proximity to other athletic fields, and no important structure in the area.

With this half court, there are numerous possibilities. As previously mentioned, the Unified Basketball team is hopeful that this idea becomes a reality. For those of you who don't know, the Unified team is made up of special education students, students with disabilities, and general education peers. The team allows for those who would not be able to otherwise, to have an opportunity to enjoy the game of basketball. When competing for court space with other teams such as basketball, volleyball, and track, we usually have a difficult time reserving a spot for our practice. This outdoor court would be a solution to that issue. Not only would we have a place to practice, but we would be able to spread out during mask breaks (if still necessary), or at the very least get some fresh air while practicing. It would also be easily accessible to both students who have disabilities, along with those who go straight from school to practice.

Another great use for this court would be for the middle school and high school gym periods. When the weather gets warmer, gym teachers love to take their students outside for class. This court would be another good option for the kids to take advantage of, especially due to the intolerable temperatures reached inside the gyms in early fall and late spring. It would also provide great versatility to classes when the students get stuck between choosing the activity for the day.

Finally, the court would also allow for an area accessible to all for physical activity, that is right on school property. Other local courts such as the one located at the Winthrop school or the common park are heavily sought after areas for after school activities, but the problem is

their distance from the school. This court would make for a more logistical location for students after school.

After the tragic passing of Unified member Grace Zinck, we have been searching for ways to honor her. We could think of nothing better than to name this court after her, since being a part of the basketball team was something that Grace was always very proud of. For those of you who didn't get the chance to know Grace, let me tell you a little bit about her. She had a condition called Trisomy 18, which made every day with Grace a true blessing. Living 17 years, she defied all the odds and became part of less than 1% of people with the condition to even make it past 10 years old. Everything about Grace was in that 1%; her strength, her beauty, and most of all her pure joy and kindness. If you ever talk to someone who had the honor of knowing Grace, they will confirm that it was impossible to speak to her without a smile on your face. Since meeting Grace has changed our lives forever, we hope that this court can honor her for at least a fraction of that time. There is no way to give to Grace what she gave to us, but having this court will keep her memory alive.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Background Info -

The Melrose High School has one gym at its disposal for physical activity. This gym is a standard basketball court, with rubber floors. The middle school includes a much larger, newer gym, with a total of 8 basketball hoops. This area however is not particularly accessible to all highschool students, due to the need for middle school gym classes and teams to have a space as well. An outdoor court would be a great solution to this issue due to the flexibility that it would provide teams and other groups of students to have.

The area we are proposing for the court to be built is located between the middle school and the athletic fields. This area is a sizable grass field that has had no purpose for many years. While there is currently a tent set up for middle school students to eat lunch outdoors in order to maintain safer COVID-19 protocols, we do not see this tent still being necessary going into school years in the future. It only makes sense that the school utilizes this space and takes advantage of the surplus in the area.

Statement of need -

With both of us being in the high school this year, we got to talking about something I'd been thinking about since I first came to the school. The highschool gym seems to get awfully crowded during gym class and awfully confusing after school with sports practices. Coming from the newly built middle school which has a double size, hardwood floor gym, our expectations were high to say the least. This left us only to be disappointed with the congestion during gym class and the uncertainty after school. The highschool doesn't have the luxury of being able to have half the class doing one activity while half does the other, or one team practicing on one side and one on the other. We both specifically ran into this problem this year during Unified Basketball practice. We were often having to cancel practices last second due to various other teams (track, volleyball, etc.) having to reallocate. This caused lots of confusion and inconvenience for us as a team. This is when an outdoor basketball court seemed to make a lot

of sense for the school as a whole. Not only would it allow for easier managing of school practice spaces, but it could be utilized for gym classes and even recreational play. While the court would not be available during the winter, that time only encompasses $\frac{1}{3}$ of both the school year and sports seasons.

Goals -

Our main goals are as follows:

1. Establish an additional area for gym classes to utilize
2. Create a space for students to enjoy after school while remaining on property
3. Provide an area for teams to practice, relieving scheduling congestion

Objectives -

Establish an additional area for gym classes to utilize: Gym classes often have days where students are able to choose between a series of activities. The success of the new court installation can be easily judged by how many students are outside using the court throughout the day, as well as the amount of congestion within the actual classrooms.

Create a space for students to enjoy after school while remaining on property: Currently, the number of students that remain on property for activities other than team practices or clubs is practically zero. This will make judging the success of the court very simple. If there is consistent activity on the courts by students after school hours, then we will see that the project has succeeded.

Provide an area for teams to practice, relieving scheduling congestion: This objective is one that will likely impact us the most. Due to the fact that we both take part in the basketball, and unified basketball team, the additional flexibility as to court space should be obvious. For example, the unified basketball team should not be forced to cancel practice even once due to a lack of court space.

Sustainability -

Thankfully our project is very sustainable on its own. Once the court is put into place, our hope is that it can stay for years to come. Basketball courts require very little maintenance as it is, and the VersaCourt material is particularly resilient. VersaCourts are made of a high impact Copolymer Polypropylene that protects against fracturing during intensive play. They also have UV stabilizers and anti-oxidant additives to defend against color fade and tile deterioration. This means that the court will be a very smart investment that will be around for years to come.

BUDGET REQUIREMENT/REQUESTS

The company that will be building the court is called VersaCourt. After asking for a quote, they told us the cost would be somewhere between \$3,100 - \$5,900. This \$5,000 from the mayor's budget initiative would go a long way and hopefully cover the whole court. As mentioned before, we would love to honor Grace through this project. If we built a memorial for her at this court, it would cost around \$100-\$200. Along with the benches we plan to install (\$500), our total would fall to somewhere between \$3,700 - \$6,700. If the \$5,000 doesn't completely cover our goal, we know many people who are willing to help raise the money. First of all, the Unified Basketball team is eager to help and determined to make this happen. Also, Grace Zinck has had many charities and fundraisers run in her honor, which are known for being extremely successful. An example of this is the Grace Zinck Scholarship Fund, which has accumulated more than \$200,000 over the past years. Most recently, her family sold "Live Like Grace" t-shirts, and raised \$5,000 in only 36 hours. The town's love for this girl shines through with their willingness to help. If necessary, reaching our goal should not be an issue.

Item	Cost
Half Court	\$3,100 - \$5,900
Memorial Stone	~\$100 - 200
Benches	~\$500
Total	\$3,700 - \$6,700

POTENTIAL PITFALLS/LIMITATIONS:

1. Company Fallout

If for some reason the company we're speaking to doesn't work out, we have a back up plan. Sport Court Ma is another company that fits our criteria.

2. Ideal Location Not Working

If the location between the middle school and the concessions stand doesn't work, our back up plan is the walled in area to the right of the high school. This area is a little smaller, so some changes to the court dimensions may occur, however this would even end up being less money.