

## Protect our Tuhey Park

21 years ago, I submitted this lovely hand-drawn art piece (bottom left) in 1999 to the annual MITS Earth Day Poster Contest for elementary school aged kids. I was 9. The theme was Earth Day, and how public transit can play a role in protecting our planet. Keeping with this theme, I drew from reference how I saw MITS already doing so in real life: a picture of our city bus transporting happy kids to a neighborhood playground and park, and apparently my desire for more castle looking houses.

Despite drawing the MITS bus driving down the wrong side of the road, I won the 2nd-3rd grade category. As a winner, my family and I were invited to a small celebration during one of their board meetings. They presented my art, and awarded me with a certificate and \$50 U.S. savings bond, which is still around somewhere collecting interest. I met our Mayor at the time, Dan Canan, and was able to share how important and fun I thought parks were for us kids. I wish I could remember our conversation in detail, but even at that young age I left feeling like my voice had been heard by these adults in charge of our city and parks. Two decades later, I'm not sure my voice is still being heard.

At 30, I'm asking our Mayor to again consider an art piece of mine (bottom right), and keep my 9-year-old self's hope for our future in mind as your administration works to enhance the lives of all kids in our community. Please, do not eliminate our city park land, playgrounds, and green space. Tuhey Park is a wonderful gathering place for all, a Muncie treasure with potential to become a world class destination park if given the opportunity. We cannot lose this space to private development. I encourage you to run a new poster contest, let kids draw and paint what they want to see at Tuhey and other local city parks.

I'm asking you to protect our Tuhey Park for future generations of kids who also want to see our MITS busses continue to drop kids off at parks, not parking lots.

Thank you.

Kortnie, a Muncie Citizen

