

BENCH DEDICATION AT THE PEACE POLE – 9/20/2010 PRESENTED BY DORINDA LAMBERT

AN ACTIVITY BY THE CAMPAIGN FOR NONVIOLENCE AND PART OF THE CULTURAL HARMONY WEEK CELEBRATION

I AM HERE REPRESENTING MY FAMILY WHO, WITH SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS, HAVE DONATED THIS BENCH IN HONOR OF OUR PARENTS, LOUIS AND BRIDGET GUZZO. RESIDENTS OF MANHATTAN KANSAS.

WHY IS THIS A PIECE OF CULTURAL HARMONY WEEK AND WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH NONVIOLENCE?

LET ME FIRST TELL YOU JUST A LITTLE ABOUT THESE TWO PEOPLE:

WHEN LOU AND BRIDGET CAME TO THIS COMMUNITY IN 1987, THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM THE WEALTH OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AS ITALIAN- AMERICANS BORN OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS WHO HAD SETTLED IN BUFFALO NEW YORK IN THE EARLY 1900'S. HAVING LIVED THEIR EARLY YEARS IN THE DIVERSE MELTING POT OF BUFFALO AND THEN SETTLING IN THE EQUALLY DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHICAGO AREA AFTER WORLD WAR II, MY PARENTS FOUND THEIR RETIREMENT TO MANHATTAN, KANSAS TO BE AN ADJUSTMENT TO A SLOWER-PACED LIFE WITH ALL THE FRIENDLINESS OF A SMALL TOWN. I TELL YOU THIS NOT TO GLOSS OVER THE STRUGGLES THAT OCCUR FOR ANYONE WHO COMES TO A COMMUNITY THAT SOMETIMES HARBORS STEREOTYPES OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC AND RACIAL GROUPS. MY PARENTS GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT AND LOVE OF COOKING BROUGHT TOGETHER MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE, WARMLY ACCEPTING ALL INTO THEIR NEW FAMILY HERE IN MANHATTAN. MUCH MORE EXTROVERTED THAN I, THEY MADE FRIENDS WITH EVERYONE WITH WHOM THEY CAME IN TOUCH, SHARING STORIES WITH THE WAITRESSES AT ALL THE LITTLE CAFES THEY LOVED TO FREQUENT, SHARING SKILLS FOR FIXING CARS OR WHATEVER MIGHT BE BROKEN (ONE OF LOU'S SPECIALITIES) OR SHARING LASAGNE WITH THEIR DOCTORS, NURSES, AND ANYONE WHO HAD HELPED THEM (ONE OF BRIDGET'S SPECIALITIES). THERE WERE TIMES WHEN THEY FELT THEY GOT THE "COLD SHOULDER" FROM RESIDENTS WHO LOOKED ASKANCE AT THEM BECAUSE THEY "HAD AN ACCENT" (CAN YOU BELIEVE IT THAT A BUFFALO ACCENT WAS WEIRD TO SOME?) BUT, AS MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAID, YOU CAN DRAW MORE FLIES WITH HONEY THAN WITH VINEGAR...SO THEY KEPT THEIR GOOD SPIRITS , IGNORED THE SLIGHTS, AND FOCUSED ON SHOWING THOSE PEOPLE WHAT IT WAS TO BE TRULY "GOOD HEARTED"FOR THEY LOVED PEOPLE AND WERE COMMITTED TO TREATING EVERYONE AS FAMILY.

AND SO, THIS DEDICATION IS APTLY BEING MADE AS PART OF THE EFFORTS OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR NONVIOLENCE AND THE SAFEZONE PROGRAM DURING THE CULTURAL HARMONY WEEK. BRIDGET STOOD EACH MAY FOR THE PREVIOUS 4 YEARS AT THE PEACE POLE AS A MOTHER IN SILENT WITNESS TO THE NEED FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD. IT JUST SEEMS RIGHT THAT THIS MEMORIAL BENCH IS SITED HERE AT OUR MANHATTAN PEACE POLE IN HONOR OF THIS LOVING AND PEACEFUL COUPLE.

THANK YOU ALL FOR TAKING A FEW MINUTES OUT OF YOUR BUSY DAY TO STAND HERE TOGETHER FOR A SAFE, EQUITABLE, AND PEACEFUL COMMUNITY.