



# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PEACE



## Nicole Perry Banks

Associate Dean, University of Michigan  
Peace Board member

Nicole Banks is grateful for the consistent investment Peace Neighborhood Center made in her at each level of her growth and education. “Always a Peace kid,” she has fond memories of the experiences that opened up new worlds to her, and credits the life lessons and values she learned at Peace, including fairness and a responsibility to the greater community, in helping to shape her career, “which is fueled by the values of access, diversity, inclusion and service to larger communities.”

Nicole first came to Peace Neighborhood Center when she was six. Her family had just moved to Ann Arbor, and her mother, a single parent who worked and took classes, needed reliable and safe childcare. Nicole and her brother both participated in Peace’s After-School and Summer programs from elementary school through their high school graduations. She shares:

“ Though growing up poor came with its challenges and barriers, we found all that we needed at Peace Neighborhood Center—a sense of community, exposure to new places and ways of living, educational support, job training, meals, firm guidance, and the inspiration to pursue our goals. Peace gave me a summer job, and helped me find other opportunities throughout my teens and as an undergraduate student in college. I still remember the camping trips we took with Rose Martin and the cookbook she gave me at my Bridal shower.

As a poor family living in a town where wealth, access, and achievement were a given for most families, the staff and programs at Peace restored our dignity. They also instilled important values of community, education, honesty, fairness, and responsibility—often by example. We learned that we should never allow our circumstances, challenges, or frustrations to trump our responsibility to care for one another and our larger community. And though the staff never shied away from tough conversations, they always handled us with care.

Over the years, I often speak of Rose Martin and Bonnie Billups as mentors and professionals whose compassion and work ethic I aspire to emulate. I credit them both and Peace Neighborhood Center for instilling in me the belief that every individual has worth and a contribution to make.”

Changing People’s Lives for 50 years.



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