

AUGUST Newsletter

With back-to-school season in full swing, August was a month of fresh starts at Peoria Friendship House. From programs resuming to celebrating opportunities ahead, it was a time of new beginnings. Check it out!



PUTTING FOR A PURPOSE!

This month, we proudly hosted our 2nd annual Putt Club Celebrity Golf Fundraiser at the Putt Club miniature golf facility in East Peoria. It was an exciting day filled with friendly competition, delicious food, refreshing drinks, and plenty of laughter as attendees hit the 36-hole course!

The event also featured a raffle table, offering a variety of exciting prizes. Raffle items included jewelry from Bremer Jewelry, a Tanners Orchard basket with tickets and goodies, various sport-

themed baskets, and more!

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors and the tremendous turnout of attendees, we successfully raised a grand total of \$46,174 to support and expand our programs! The funds will go directly toward educational activities, family services, and community outreach initiatives that help strengthen our city.

We would like to extend a special shout-out to all of our sponsors, and a HUGE thank you to our title sponsor Benjamin F. Edwards for donating \$10,000 to the event!

We'd also like to thank the Bradley men's basketball team and all of the celebrity guests who volunteered at the event, and Bobby Parker for making this year's event possible. We thank all whose efforts help us continue to fulfill our mission!



THANK YOU TO OUR PUTT CLUB SPONSORS!

Benjamin F. Edwards, OSF Healthcare, St. Paul Peoria, RLI, Rammos Plastic Surgery & MedSpa, David Vaughan Investments, Morton Community Bank, MH CPA PLLC, J.P. Morgan, Bremer Jewelry, Widmer Interiors, CEFCU, Shared Blessings, MSI-BASe2, Glen Oak Church, Tom & Diane Bayes, Paulson Family, First Baptist Church, University United Methodist Church, & First Mid Bank and Trust



CELEBRATING OUR NEW CITIZENS

We are proud to shine a spotlight on our citizenship program, led by our committed La Familia Director, Catalina Zavala. Every Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 5 pm, Catalina hosts classes that prepare aspiring US citizens for the naturalization exam and life as new Americans. This program is instrumental in helping many community members achieve their dreams of full participation in our society.

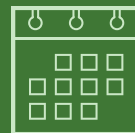
Congratulations to our newest graduates who recently passed

the citizenship exam and achieved their goal of becoming U.S. citizens! We are proud of all participants in this program as the number of graduates continues to grow. We are touched by the hard work and perseverance of the individuals have successfully attained citizenship with the help of our classes.

And, of course, we are continually grateful for our La Familia Director, Catalina Zavala, who supports the Peoria Latino community day in and day out. The success of this program would not be possible without her tireless efforts. Thank you, Cata!



UPCOMING EVENTS



**9/3 &
9/18
9AM-12PM**

OSF Care-A-Van Mobile Health Clinic

The OSF mobile clinic will be parked outside our building to provide free walk-in health screenings, immunizations, and to assist in healthcare planning.

**TUES. &
THURS
5-7PM**

Citizenship Classes

Prepare for the U.S. Citizenship Exam by attending our free classes. Classes are taught in English. Please contact us at 309-671-5200 for more information.

**MON.-FRI.
2:30-5:30PM**

STEAMS Academy After-School Program

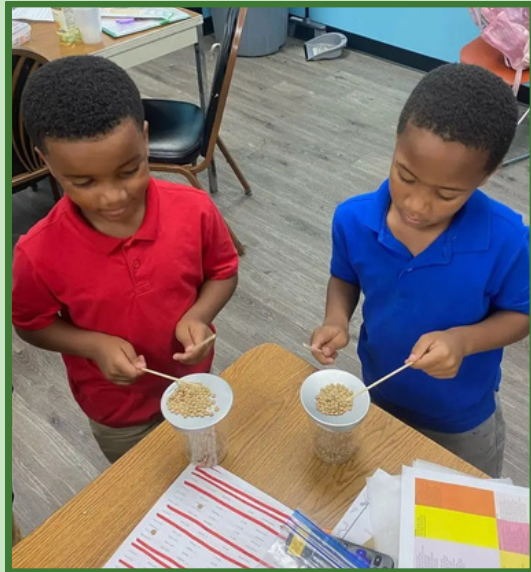
It's back-to-school season! Our after-school program will continue Monday through Friday. Please contact us to join the program's waitlist!

S.T.E.A.M.S CORNER

Our STEAMS Academy after-school program is back in session, and it's been an exciting start to the year. Every weekday from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm, our young learners are engaged in hands-on projects

that foster creativity, problem-solving, and curiosity.

We've already seen fantastic projects, including experiments on the effects of acid rain on plant growth, designing origami crowns, planting and harvesting vegetables in our outdoor garden, and constructing musical instruments to explore vibrations. These activities span the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and



math—helping students develop skills that will serve them for years to come.

Our enrollment this year is at full capacity, serving as many students as our building will allow. We remain committed to providing transportation from 13 schools to ensure families have access to this enriching program.

Our students continue to amaze us with their curiosity, creativity, and resilience. We are proud of how much they've already achieved and excited for the many more projects ahead throughout the school year.





ISAIAH 40:31

Yet those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM: BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES & SCHOOLS

As the new school year kicks off, we're excited to reintroduce our Parent Mentor Program, which connects Peoria parents with local schools to support student success. This month we invited prospective mentors to attend an informational meeting about the upcoming school year, with fantastic turnout!

Our parent volunteers serve as classroom helpers, providing vital assistance to teachers and creating a connected environment on schools. This program benefits teachers by offering an extra set of eyes and ears in the classroom, and it benefits families by fostering a stronger partnership between parents and schools, encouraging greater parental involvement in children's education.



Mentors also receive weekly leadership and classroom skills training from our Parent Mentor Coordinators, providing them with valuable skills and confidence. Serving for two hours a day in the classroom, parent mentors are making a

meaningful impact every day on the students, teachers, and their own personal growth.

We're excited for the many parents who have already signed up and look forward to expanding this vital program. If you're interested in becoming a parent mentor, please contact us to learn more. Together, we are building stronger, more connected communities where Peoria students and families can thrive.



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MITCH ZIPPAY

We're excited to shine a spotlight on Mitch Zippay, Treasurer of our Board of Directors! Mitch joined the board just one year ago and has already made a big impact. As a professional with David Vaughan Investments (DVI), he brings strong financial expertise that has supported key developments at Peoria Friendship House. Mitch moved to Peoria with the intention of giving back, and his dedication reflects that commitment. We are grateful for his leadership and for the knowledge he brings to our mission! Thanks, Mitch!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: ELIJAH FORRESTER

We're proud to highlight Ke'Asia, or Keke, Gwinn, who has been apart of our team for four years. Keke started out in our Pathway to Your Future program for high schoolers and has since grown into a vital member of our staff. Working as a teacher in our 2nd -3rd grade class, she brings energy and care to her students everyday. We've loved seeing Keke blossom into the leader she is today as she gains confidence and grace in the classroom. She has even chosen to pursue a career in education to continue working with students. We're so grateful for her dedication!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

As we kick off the new school year, we want to thank our donors, sponsors, and readers for your continued support. Your generosity makes it possible for our programs to resume, for students to thrive, and for new opportunities to grow. Together we are shaping brighter futures every day!

Andrew and Jennifer Paulson, Anthem Financial, Baldovin Co., BAsE2 Group, Benjamin Edwards & Co., Bremer Jewelry, Caterpillar, City of Peoria, Community Foundation of Central Illinois, Darin LaHood for Congress, David, Vaughan Investments, Doug Shannon - Financial Advisor, Glen Oak Christian Church, Greg and Jodi Piene, Illinois Department of Human Services, J.C. Dillon, Inc., Jones Bros Jewelers, Kids First Community, MH CPA PLLC, Morton Community Bank, OSF Healthcare, Peoria Metro New Car Dealers Association, Pop-A-Shot, Pour Bros Craft Taproom, Prairie Home Alliance, Rammos Plastic Surgery and MedSpa, RLI, Shared Blessings, Slowhand Craft BBQ, St. Paul Church, Tom and Dianne Bayes, Tom Henrichs - CFP® & Benjamin F. Edwards Financial Advisor, United Way, WestPoint Financial Group, Yezek & Sons, LLC.