

JULY Newsletter

July was full of sunshine, smiles, and whole lot of support. From summer camp fun to powerful generosity from the community, July was a month of impact. Here's what we've been up to!



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Earlier this month, our daily food pantry was forced to temporarily close after our shelves went completely empty due to area supplier closures and funding freezes. It was a heartbreaking moment, but one that showed us the incredible generosity of the community. We put out a call for help, and Peoria answered with unwavering support. It has been a beautiful reminder of the strength in community that makes Peoria so great.

Thanks to generous individuals and community partners, our pantry is back open and serving those who need it most! We were



even able to partner with Grand Prairie Hy-Vee and Muir Omni, who joined together to host a food drive at Hy-Vee that brought in needed supplies. We also received generous donations from Walmart on Allen Road, who has agreed to partner to contribute regular donations to the Friendship House Food

Pantry. We are so touched and grateful for every donation that came through our doors!

Though we're restocked for now, it will be an ongoing effort. Donations of nonperishable food items can be dropped off in our lobby Monday-Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Monetary donations can be made online at www.friendship.house. Your support keeps our shelves full! We are so proud to serve such a giving community.



ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10

Two are better than one, for they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.



MAYOR'S PROGRAM CELEBRATION

Each summer, Peoria Friendship House proudly partners with the Mayor's Youth Internship Program, which provides Peoria-area youth (ages 16–18) with firsthand experience and job training in public service and civic engagement.

This year, we welcomed nine incredible interns who contributed their time and energy across multiple programs, including our



STEAMS Academy summer camp, food pantry support, facilities maintenance, and even helping renovate our new outdoor activity center.

This month, we celebrated the completion of their 8-week internship at the Champions for Life Celebration, where they received certificates of completion for their

hard work. We are inspired by their growth, commitment, and bright futures. These young leaders make us hopeful for tomorrow!



UPCOMING EVENTS



BEGINS
7/30
2:30-5:30PM

STEAMS Academy After-School Program

Our 2025-2026 After-School program is now enrolling for K-8 students. Please register online or contact us at 309-671-5200 for more information.

8/6 &
8/21
9:30AM-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.

8/20
6PM-9PM

The Putt Club Celebrity Golf Fundraiser

Our 2nd annual Putt Club Celebrity Golf Fundraiser will take place at the Putt Club miniature golf facility in East Peoria. Registration is now open. Visit our website for details and registration!

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

It's hard to believe, but summer camp has officially come to an end! We're sad to say goodbye to the summer fun days of camp, but we're incredibly proud of the unforgettable memories we made along the way!



The last few weeks of camp were jam-packed with exciting experiences and opportunities for our students. Our students participated in swim safety classes at the YMCA, sponsored by NBA champion and Peoria native Shaun Livingston. Campers also took a trip to Herman Brothers Fisheries, where they learned all about fish raising, egg hatching, and hatchery operations—a unique trip that our students thoroughly enjoyed!

Add to that a day at the bowling alley to celebrate the end of our Summer Reading Club, and a day at Glen Oak Park participating in One Peoria Day, both sponsored by State Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth, as well as splash pad outings, movie trips, and time at local parks, and it's safe to say our campers had a summer full of laughter and learning! We're so grateful to our staff and community partners who helped make this summer a success!



BACK TO SCHOOL!

It's time to ring in the new school year! Our STEAMS Academy After-School Program runs from 2:30–5:30 PM, with transportation pickup available from 13 local schools. Please register online or contact us for more information!





WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are still seeking sponsors for our upcoming Celebrity Golf Fundraiser on August 20! Sponsors are *vital* to making fundraisers successful. We offer sponsorship levels ranging from \$150 to \$10,000. All sponsors will receive special perks for the event. If you are interested in supporting, please contact Marcellus at ceo@friendship.house.

A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS!

We are so excited to unveil our brand new library and computer space at Peoria Friendship House. A work in progress for the last few months, the space is finally complete and open to students!

We owe a tremendous thank you to Darlene Violet of Shared Blessings, who hosted a successful book drive at Peoria Academy. Our shelves are now filled with a wide range of brand new and



children's books to accommodate all reading levels.

This space offers students a quiet place to read and study, which has been so useful during our bustling summer camp season, and will likely be even more so during the school year, giving us an extra space for students to do homework, complete MobyMax lessons, and receive small group instruction.

The library came just in time to support our "Every Hero Has a Story" summer camp theme, where each week focused on reading a different children's book.

The new space is an exciting new expansion to our ever-growing STEAMS Academy program, and we hope its not the last! We can't wait to see how we continue to grow alongside our students.





BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: KENDRA BELK

This month, we are excited to spotlight Kendra Belk, a dedicated member of the Peoria Friendship House Board for the past three years. Kendra is a familiar face at our events and a hands-on supporter who leads with heart and action! She brings a passion for empowering youth and families, and aims to curate positive experiences and build life-long skills for the community we serve. Her motivation for serving on the board is to ensure the best possible practices and services for the Peoria youth and their families. Thank you, Kendra, for your consistent dedication!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: SHADAY BROWN

This month we are highlighting Shaday “Shay” Brown! Ms. Shay is a true powerhouse in the classroom. She knows how to rein in a rowdy class and leads with confidence and discipline. Ms. Shay always keeps it real and tells it like it is, making her a strong and steady presence at the Friendship House. But underneath that tough exterior is someone who cares deeply about her students. She has a big heart for her little ones and welcomes them into her classroom with love. She’s a perfect fit for our youngest kiddos, and we’re lucky to have her leading our K-1st grade class!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

This month reminded us just how powerful the Peoria community can be. We are so grateful to every donor, volunteer, and partner who stepped up this month to give and show their support. Thank you for your continued generosity!

Alma Brown, Andrew & 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, Darlene Violet, 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 Corp., Roy & Ellen McRae, Shared Blessings, Slowhand Craft BBQ, St. Paul Church, Tom and Dianne Bayes, Tom Henrichs - CFP® & Benjamin F. Edwards Financial Advisor, Trent & Amy Ahlers, United Way, WestPoint Financial Group, Yezek & Sons, LLC.