

March 2024

## Gear Up for Drive 2 Thrive!

Here at the Peoria Friendship House we are gearing up for our 4th annual Drive 2 Thrive fundraiser event, and we'd like you to join us! Drive 2 Thrive is a scavenger hunt style race in which teams of four will follow clues that lead to various businesses in the Peoria and surrounding community. At each business teams will complete a challenge, receive their next clue, and race (safely) to the next destination! It's an afternoon of great fun to benefit the Peoria Friendship House, and we'd like you to join us!

To make the event successful, we need participants to join in the race! So grab your families, your coworkers,

or your friends, choose a driver, and register for Drive 2 Thrive! The race will take place on April 13 from 2-4pm, with the kick-off at Richwoods High School. At the final destination, there will be an event celebration with lots of food and fun! To register please visit our website at, [www.friendship.house](http://www.friendship.house) and see our Upcoming Events page.



## MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

In March we had...

- **Over 185** students register for our Spring Break S.T.E.A.M.S Camp
- **48** students attend an overnight "Teen Lock-In" at the Riverplex, sponsored by the Peoria Park District
- **13** individuals attend the naturalization ceremony at the Peoria Public Library after passing their U.S. Citizenship Exams

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **OSF Care-A-Van Mobile Health Clinic: 4/3 – 9AM-12PM**

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

## **Drive 2 Thrive Fundraiser: 4/13 – 2-4PM**

The 4th annual Drive 2 Thrive fundraiser will begin at Richwoods High School, from which participants will race around the city to raise money for the Friendship House. Register your team today! See our website for details.

## **Immigration Project: 4/25 – 9AM-5PM**

The Immigration Project will provide assistance completing paperwork for those wishing to become permanent residents of the US, or those seeking asylum. Registration is required. Please call for details.

## **Free Breast Cancer Screenings: 4/26 – 7:30AM-NOON**

We are partnering with Carle Health to offer free mammograms to women over 40. We will provide transportation from our building to the health center. Please call us to make an appointment.



## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: La Familia



Our La Familia members meet weekly at the Friendship House to foster a sense connection, share food and stories, and create lasting relationships within Peoria's Hispanic community. On top of this, our La Familia members dedicate countless hours throughout the year crocheting blankets for those in need. These blankets are donated to families and organizations in the Peoria community. Just having a warm blanket made with love and care can go a long way in making someone's day!

In order to support the La Familia program and their venture to continue making these beautiful blankets throughout the year, we are hosting a Yarn Donation Drive to ensure that they have the supplies they need. We are accepting yarn donations in our front lobby and encourage you to spread the word to your friends, families, and organizations!

We give a big thank you to our La Familia members. Your generosity is always appreciated!

# S.T.E.A.M.S Corner:

## Jumping into Spring!

Our S.T.E.A.M.S. Academy hopped right into Easter this month during their first week of Spring Break Camp. Throughout the week our Spring Break enjoyed their time off school by climbing, swinging, flipping, and, of course, jumping all around Elevate Trampoline Park, where they attended field trips throughout the week. This was such a fun opportunity for our students, and we give our thanks to Elevate Trampoline Park of East Peoria for accomodating our groups!

Once back at the Friendship House, our students engaged in



a basketful of Easter fun. They stayed busy with a variety of Easter crafts and STEAM learning projects, including building their own Easter egg launchers, engineering jelly-bean towers, and designing their own personal Easter bags, which they then filled up with candy and treats during our annual Easter Egg Hunt. They even got a surprise visit from the Easter Bunny himself! We love celebrating with our S.T.E.A.M.S students!

## PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT



### Bria B.

This month's Pathway Spotlight award goes to Bria! Bria is consistently reliable and dependable in the classrooms. Pathway director Amya Mitchell says, "Bria does great with our 6-8th grade class. She's straightforward and passionate about inspiring leadership in the students." Congrats, Bria! We appreciate you!

## Looking Ahead: Summer Camp 2024

Although spring just began, summer will be here before we know it! We are excited to announce that for our Summer Camp this year we will be "traveling" around the world by learning about a new country each week. We will be partnering with international contacts and organizations to learn about their various countries and cultures.

We expect spots to fill up fast, so we encourage anyone interested to register as soon as possible. Registration is available on our website at [www.friendship.house](http://www.friendship.house), and a \$20 deposit per student will be due to confirm your registration. The cost of Summer Camp is \$20 per week, and we have scholarship applications available at our front desk. Call us for more info!



# GIVING CONGRATULATIONS!



On March 15 we celebrated our citizenship students at their naturalization ceremony, where they took their Oath of Allegiance and officially became citizens of the United States!

The ceremony took place at the Peoria Public Library and celebrated a total of 91 individuals from 24 different countries. Of those 91 individuals, an impressive 13 of them were students of the Peoria Friendship House's citizenship classes! These classes are hosted every Tuesday and Thursday

evening by Ms. Catalina Zavala, who has been a dedicated employee of the Peoria Friendship House for over 30 years. Ms. Cata works day in and day out to serve Peoria's Hispanic community, going above and beyond by taking her clients to appointments, serving as a translator, assisting in the naturalization application process, providing clothes and shoes to her clients' children, and overall being an invaluable resource to recently emigrated families. Thank you Ms. Cata!



## BE ANYTHING: Teen Lock-In

In March we partnered with the Peoria Park District to host the first annual "Be Anything" Teen Lock-In event. The lock-In took place at the Riverplex, where students aged 11-18 opted to "lock" themselves into the center overnight and participate in a night of festivities and fun!

The students enjoyed swimming, pizza, board games, basketball, video games, and various arts and crafts. They even got to try their hand at candle-making, getting to choose their own fragrances to cultivate a personalized scent!

The lock-in was a great success with over 45 students in attendance. It provided students a safe space to come together and get to know each other outside of the walls of the Peoria Friendship House, and gave them the important reminder that they can truly Be Anything!

A big thank you to our staff who stayed up all night in order to chaperone the event, and to the Peoria Park District for planning and sponsoring the event and giving our students a friendly place to enjoy a fun weekend!

