

JUNE Newsletter

June has brought longer days, louder hallways, and the start of summer at the Peoria Friendship House. With students engaged in everything from lake days to gardening, it's been a season of discovery, growth, and fun! Here's a look at what your support has made possible so far.



LAKE DAYS AT CAMP DALLAS

This summer, our STEAMS Academy students have been heading out for day trips to Camp Dallas, a local camp designed to give youth a chance to experience the outdoors in a peaceful and supportive setting. Created by two parents in memory of their son Dallas, the camp was built as a space for healing and belonging, particularly for those who have been through more than most.

During their visits, our students took part in classic camp activities like fishing, swimming, tug-of-war, kayaking, and arts and crafts like painting, rock decorating, and sidewalk chalk. For many

of our kids, this was their very first time casting a fishing pole or swimming in a natural lake, and their excitement and energy was through the roof! The days spent at Camp Dallas have exemplified what it means to be a kid in summer—carefree fun in the sun!

The Camp Dallas staff and volunteers served as mentors throughout the day, guiding our students through trying new things and helping them feel welcome in a new environment.

We're grateful to be able to partner with a camp that aligns so closely with our mission. This has truly been such an incredible experience for our students and our organization as whole!



PHILIPPIANS 4:9

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.



SUMMER CEREAL DRIVE

This summer, our community partner OSF HealthCare organized a cereal drive with their staff, and the results were outstanding! Over the course of the drive, OSF Healthcare staff brought in more than 800 boxes of cereal, all of which are now being used to provide daily breakfasts and snacks for our STEAMS Academy Summer Camp students.



This support ensures that every student in our summer camp will start their day off with a full belly, setting them up to focus, participate, and get the most out of the summer camp experience.

We're so thankful to OSF HealthCare and their staff for showing up in such a big way. Their generosity continues to be a meaningful part of what makes programs like ours possible, and we are grateful for their continued partnership.



UPCOMING EVENTS



ENDS
7/25
8AM-5PM

STEAMS Academy Summer Camp

Our Summer Camp will continue for K-8 students. Registration is full. Please contact us at 309-671-5200 Ext. 219 for more information.

7/10 &
7/24
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

We're already halfway through this year's STEAMS Summer Camp, and the program is running smoothly with a full house of students! The theme this year, "Every Hero Has a Story," focuses each week on a different children's book, which then inspires the learning activities, field trips, and, of course, hallway decor for that week!

Books so far have included The Jungle Book, Where the Wild Things Are, Magic Tree House, and Diary of a Wimpy Kid. Students have explored these stories through themed



classroom lessons, crafts, and field trips to places like the Peoria Riverfront Museum, Fon du Lac Farm Park, Forest Park Nature Center, and the local pool.

A highlight this year is our new Book Buddy Program, developed in partnership with Illinois State Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth. Each week, older students are paired with younger students to read the week's featured book together. It's a great opportunity for mentorship, and we love to see our older students building connections and leading the way for the younger kiddos!



**BACK TO
SCHOOL!**

With Summer Camp halfway over, we are already looking ahead to the upcoming school year! We will soon be enrolling for our STEAMS Academy After-school Program. Please contact Ms. Amya at 309-671-5200 Ext. 219 for more information!



CALLING ALL SPONSORS!

We are seeking sponsors for our upcoming Putt Club Celebrity Golf Fundraiser. Sponsors are essential to making this event possible! We offer sponsorship levels ranging from \$150 to \$10,000. Each sponsor will receive special perks for the event. If you or your business are interested in supporting, please contact Marcellus at ceo@friendship.house. We thank you!

GARDEN CLUB TAKES ROOT!



This month also marked the launch of our new Garden Club, where STEAMS Academy students are getting hands-on experience learning how to grow their own plants! With the help of volunteers from OSF Master Gardeners, students meet weekly in our brand-new outdoor garden and green space to dig, plant, and learn. So far, the club has successfully grown jalapeños and tomatoes,

with more veggies on the way! This has been many students' first time working in a garden or seeing where food comes from, and we love seeing their excitement at each new plant! It's been a great way to build curiosity, patience, and teamwork.

We are incredibly grateful to the Greater Peoria Chapter of Jack and Jill of America for their support in getting the garden started. Their members volunteered in preparing the garden space for planting and provided a generous donation to support our ongoing gardening efforts. We are so excited to see this space continue to grow!





BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: BOB WOOLSEY

This month, we're proud to spotlight Bob Woolsey, who has served on the Peoria Friendship House Board for the past four years, including as our former Board President. As CEO of Jones Bros. Jewelers, Bob brings strong leadership and commitment to the team. Bob's mission is about meeting people and organizations where they are and helping them build a strategy toward something better. Bob played a key role in building our partnership with Camp Dallas, helping to bring a unique and meaningful experience to our STEAMS Academy students this summer. We're grateful for his continued energy and passion for Peoria!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: VALERIA ARELLANO

Valeria is an essential part of the Peoria Friendship House team, and we're excited to highlight her this month! She first joined us as our front desk administrative assistant, later stepped into a teaching role with our 3rd-5th grade students, and has since returned to the front desk, where her bilingual skills make her an invaluable connection point for our Spanish-speaking clients. She's a familiar and welcoming face to all who come through our doors. Valeria wears many hats, as she also serves as a Parent Mentor Program Coordinator. She is always willing to serve wherever she's needed most, and does so with kindness. Thank you, Valeria!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

None of this would be possible without your continued support. Your generosity helps create the opportunities and experiences that shape each student's summer. Thank you for being part of the Peoria Friendship House community!

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.