

January 2024

A BRAND NEW YEAR

Here at the Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service, we are thrilled to enter another year of serving the Peoria community! It is truly our blessing to get to contribute to the lives of the many children and adults who visit our building every day, and we hope to continue to grow and expand that contribution throughout 2024. We give thanks to our generous donors, our Board members, and our community at large for making what we do possible. You help us stay inspired everyday!

Already the new year has been eventful and exciting, bringing us new growth, new challenges, and a whole lot of joy. It has been our priority in January to expand the enrollment of our programs in order to provide for more and more families in the community. We have already seen this hard work pay off through the increased numbers in both our S.T.E.A.M.S. and Parent Mentor Programs. We will continue to not only expand our programs, but improve upon the structure of them as the year progresses. We have a lot to look forward to in this brand new year!



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MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

In January we had...

- **40** new students join our After-School S.T.E.A.M.S. Program
- **5** new enrollments into our Parent Mentor Program
- **4** individuals pass the U.S. Citizenship Test
- **2** successful All-Day S.T.E.A.M.S Camps



UPCOMING EVENTS

Immigration Project: 2/2 – 9AM-5PM

The Immigration Project will provide assistance completing paperwork for those wishing to become permanent residents of the US, or those seeking asylum.

Workouts With Chip: Mondays & Wednesdays – 5PM

Beginning in February, our Director of Operations, Chip, will be hosting free workout classes every Monday and Wednesday. Open to the public. Ages 10+. No registration required.

OSF Care-A-Van Mobile Health Clinic: 2/7 – 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.

President's Day S.T.E.A.M.S. Camp: 2/19 – 9AM-5PM

We will be hosting an all-day camp for students K-8. Registration required. Please visit our website to register.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Citizenship Program



Our citizenship program has been hard at work assisting those in the community. This month, Ms. Catalina Zavala, the director of our La Familia program and head of our citizenship classes, worked with over twenty individuals who are preparing to take the U.S. Citizenship exam. Ms. Catalina teaches free classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-7PM, where she helps clients study and prepare for their upcoming exam.

In January, four of

Catalina's clients passed the citizenship exam. One of those clients was Bernabe (pictured left). He achieved a perfect score on his exam by answering every question correctly! After passing his exam, Bernabe continued to be a friendly face at the Peoria Friendship House by assisting with our Food Pantry Program.

Congrats to Ms. Catalina, Bernabe, and everyone who passed their exams this month. We recognize your hard work!

S.T.E.A.M.S. Corner

Our S.T.E.A.M.S. Academy has been busy this month! In January, we hosted a Winter Camp and a Martin Luther King Jr. Day Camp for our S.T.E.A.M.S. students. These camps were full of field trips, food, fitness, and fun! During our Winter Camp, students were treated to field trips every day. They enjoyed ice skating, bowling, roller blading, and trips to the Peoria Riverfront Museum.

Back at our building, the students sweat it out during their fitness classes with our Director of Operations, Chip, where our older students learned proper weight-lifting technique, flipped tires, and did battle rope conditioning.

Our students also cozied up with warm soup during Winter Camp...soup that they cooked themselves! The students were so excited to wash and chop their own veggies, measure out their broth, season their soup, and then wait patiently for it to cook! This activity was perfect for learning fine motor skills and



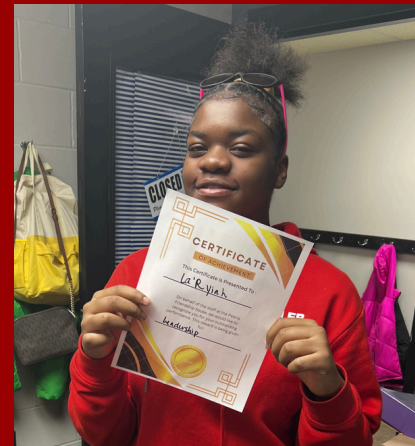
measuring skills. It also gave students a chance to learn about cross-contamination and proper sanitation techniques, and to gain experience in food prep, an activity that many had never tried before!



Later in the month, during the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Camp, we huddled up and stayed warm during a frigid snow day, keeping things light and fun! Our students enjoyed a movie, pizza, painting crafts, and even painting their nails in an impromptu spa day! This was a great reprieve from our normal busy schedule to just relax and keep cozy!



PATHWAY SPOTLIGHT



La'Ryiah Barnett

Our "Pathways" are high school students who work as mentors to our S.T.E.A.M.S. K-8 students, while also gaining real-world job and leadership experience. This month we recognized Pathway La'Ryiah Barnett for her outstanding leadership in the "Littles" K-2 classroom. Peoria Friendship House teacher Shay Brown commends La'Ryiah for always being on task with the little ones. "La'Ryiah is so patient, motivated, and self-driven. You never have to tell her what to do." Congrats, La'Ryiah. We appreciate your hard work!



Thank you for supporting the Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service!

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