

SEPTEMBER 2023



## Exploring New Possibilities at

# PEACE!



## Thank you for helping bring joy to Peace Youth this summer!

I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and high spirits after a wonderful summer. It is hard to believe that the school year is already under way! Our staff has been busy planning another amazing Fall semester, and we're looking forward to welcoming over 120 students next week as we kick off our After-School Programs on September 18th.

**Before the Fall season gets away from us, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the tremendous memories you helped us create in our Summer Camp programs this year.** Your generosity gave over 140 young people the chance to enjoy a range of fun experiences this summer. Recreational activities, special interest clubs; educational workshops; and field trips to local parks, museums, and the zoo all provide our young people the chance to learn new skills, explore new places, and make new friends. Learning experiences that leave an indelible impact on their lives and what's possible.

**I cannot begin to express the joy our staff experienced welcoming smiling campers to Peace every morning—**without masks and the shadow of fear they carry. After a challenging few years for many, witnessing our kids' laughter and camaraderie was a true source of inspiration and hope.

This summer also included two Transformational Road Trips that offered entirely new experiences: the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Alabama and the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee. Please check out the highlights on page 4.

I am also elated to share that we have been busy developing plans for a new full-service community center in Ypsilanti Township. The new HUB Community Resource Center is a natural extension of Peace's mission to help people change the trajectory of their lives. At the HUB, we have plans to partner with eight local agencies who have pledged to work together to provide a range of community services and programs that will provide vital support to Ypsilanti residents in their own backyard.

**Of course, none of this would be possible without your continuing commitment and generosity.** Your belief in Peace's mission, our values and approach, has been essential to our long-term success. We are profoundly grateful for your partnership in helping our kids and families create brighter futures. Thank you for being part of the Peace family!

With deepest appreciation,









We filled this summer with fun new places, new learning opportunities, new friends, new hobbies and interests—and a brand new podcast hosted by our Summer Day Camp youth and Counselors-in-Training.

## 20+ Field Trips

To the Toledo Zoo, the Henry Ford, Matthei Botanical Gardens, area metro Parks, local playscapes, the Ann Arbor Fire Station, the Leslie Science Center, Domino's Farms, the Ann Arbor Art Fair, and Silver Lake meant Peace youth were on the road most of the week.

## 18 Weekly Special Interest Clubs

gave youth the chance to explore and experience a range of activities: tennis, gardening, dance, skateboarding, teen cuisine, conditioning & training, spoken word, design/build and STEAM.

## 7 Camp Counselors-in-Training

received a summer stipend, leadership development, and on-the-job skills training as they helped lead camp activities, and served as role models for younger campers.

## 450+ Hot Dogs grilled at Silver Lake

## 2,600+ Miles logged on the Peace Van for two Transformational Road Trips

## 1 New Podcast Launched

featuring Peace's Summer Day Camp youth and Counselors-in-Training

## ∞ Memories Made

Too many to count!!

# Thank you!

to all of our community partners who offered their time, talents, and perspective to provide unforgettable learning experiences this summer.

- **Friends of the Ann Arbor Skatepark** for introducing Peace kids to skate boarding and giving each participant new gear including a skateboard, a full set of pads and a helmet.
- **Ann Arbor Area Tennis Association** for providing fun tennis instruction and play.
- **Master Gardeners Elizabeth Lindsley and Patricia Patail** for leading Peace's Summer Garden Club.
- **The Henry Ford Museum** for hosting 80 Peace campers for a fun day at the museum, free of charge.
- **Hail! Impact** for coordinating several visits from members of UM's Softball Team, who connected with Peace campers, led fun sports activities, and shared their experiences as Division I NCAA athletes.
- **Washtenaw Camp Placement** for providing scholarships to ensure Peace middle school youth had the chance to spread their wings at overnight camps.
- **Ava Debenedet & Amelia Repp, Skyline High School Students** for volunteering their time all summer to help Peace's Little Einsteins group explore the joy of learning.
- **Aliyah Evan, Skyline High School Student** for volunteering this summer to lead Peace's STEM Club and science demonstrations.





# Transformational Road Trips Offer Life-Changing Experiences

▶ We logged over 2,600 miles on the Peace Neighborhood van this summer with transformational road trips to the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama and the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee.



In June, Peace took a group of middle school girls to Huntsville, Alabama to tour the U.S. Space & Rocket Center—a special road trip inspired by an after-school workshop we hosted back in February with engineers from NASA's Glenn Research Center and students from UM's School of Engineering. The girls also had the opportunity to explore Alabama A&M University. The trip was filled with bonding, team-building and a wealth of new experiences. Trip highlights included:

- A visit to the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**, where we learned just what it takes to become an astronaut
- A visit to **Alabama A&M University**, where the girls explored its heritage as a historical black college and university (HCBU).

An important component of Peace Neighborhood Center's summer programs is the opportunity for youth to explore new places beyond our local community. So many Peace Alum have fond memories of those first camping trips they took with Rose Martin and Bonnie Billups, where they had the chance to experience nature and build new life skills.

Your generous support has helped Peace continue this tradition, offering a select group of older Peace youth the opportunity to take an extended road trip across our country. Beyond fun, these road trips offer young people transformational learning experiences that have a lasting impact in helping to shape their identity and future possibilities.



In August, Bonnie took a group of young men on a retreat high up in the Smokey Mountains in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. While on the trip, the boys were NOT allowed to use cell phones, helping them take a much needed break from social media. Instead, they had the chance to enjoy:

- **Morning meditation**, reflecting quietly with the Smokey Mountains serving as a majestic back-drop;
- **Cooking meals** together in the cabin;
- **Deep discussions** around their fears and strengths, how to address obstacles on their path, and how the choices they make will impact their future;
- A visit to **Smokey Mountain National Park**; and
- **Riding a roller coaster** on the side of a mountain!





## Academic Bridge Camp Sets the Stage for Success

We often focus on all of the fun happening in our Summer Youth Camps, but it is important to note that each camper is supported in their summer learning with age-appropriate academic exercises each day. These programs help improve summer-time knowledge retention between school years in both mathematics and language arts.

Studies show that children who don't practice academic skills over the summer experience what is known as "the summer slide". When they return to school in the fall, these kids may have lost the equivalent of up to 3 months of knowledge from the previous school year and find themselves well behind their peers.

As a jump start to the coming school year to help combat summer learning loss, Peace Neighborhood Center offers a two-week Academic Bridge Camp between our summer programs and the start of school. ABC is an academic refresher camp for students, K-6, who need help maintaining their academic skills.

Students work one-on-one with an academic tutor to refresh and build their skills for the upcoming school year. Academic camp provides practice in all skill areas with an emphasis on literacy. Tutors and youth work on workbook activities, academic games, reading practice, and literacy skill building.



## A New Peace Podcast is on the Air!

Peace is excited to announce the launch of its very own podcast led by Executive Director Bonnie Billups and Peace's Counselors-in-Training. If you ever wondered what it was like to be a part of Peace's summer programs from an insider's perspective, tune into our Soundcloud and learn all about the Peace Summer Day Camp culture and the traditions that create this transformational summer experience.

<https://soundcloud.com/peaceneighborhoodcen>

## Highlights of the summer that campers shared on the podcast cast include . . .

“ I liked it when Bonnie found a fish swimming around him [at the lake] and I accidentally splashed [him].”

“ I saw a pig, I got to pet a goat and also saw a llama and got to feed sheep.”

“ NaTiyah makes me laugh the most.”

“ CITs [Counselors-in-Training] sing a lot of camp songs and the kids really like that...[Like] *Popsicle*: My hands up high, my feet down low, this is how we popsicle!”



# A new HUB Community Resource Center coming June, 2024

will provide Ypsilanti Residents with acces to vital programs and services.



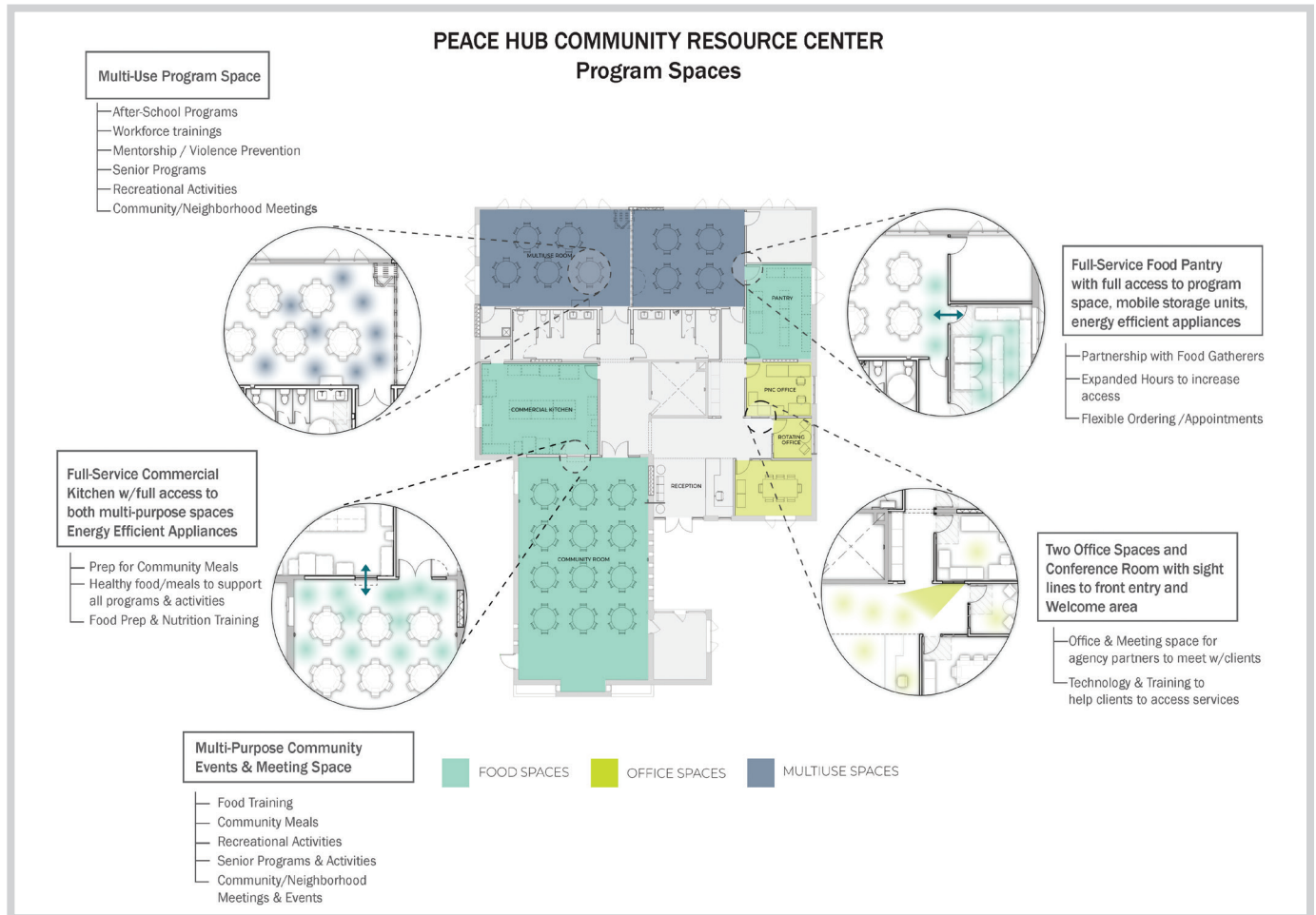
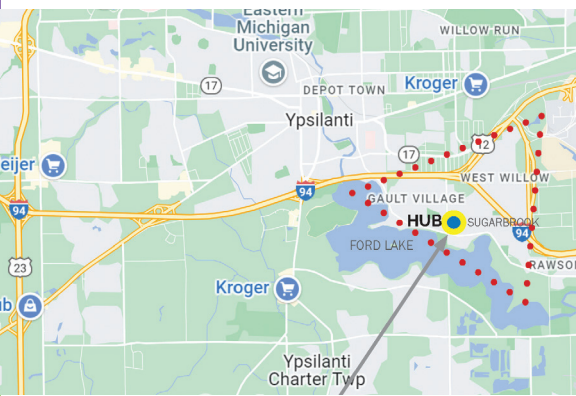
Peace Neighborhood has often been asked if we could bring what we do in Ann Arbor to other communities. We now have that opportunity! On June 21st, Peace's 52nd birthday, our long-time community partner Zion Lutheran Church transferred title to an 8,000 square foot, 2.1 acre property in Ypsilanti Township. Their goal: to transfer ownership to a trusted organization who can serve the surrounding community—three geographically isolated neighborhoods in an underseved area of Washtenaw County with prominent racial disparities in income, education, employment, and food insecurity.

We know that that there is great need in Ypsilanti. Over 70% of the emergency assistance requests Peace receives each year come from Ypsilanti residents. We also know that to be successful, we needed to spend time in the three geographically isolated neighborhoods the HUB will serve (Gault Village, Sugarbrook, and West Willow)—connecting with residents, elected officials, community leaders, and local nonprofits to listen and to better understand the community's history, needs, and priorities.

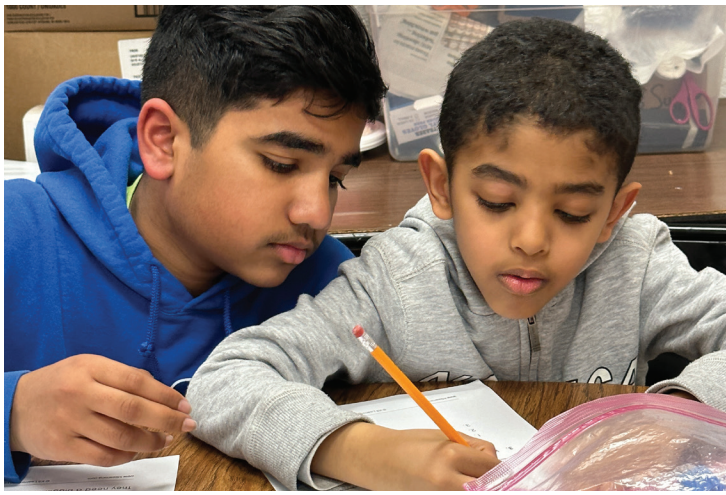
What we learned over the last 16+ months confirmed the need for a new full-service community center that can provide area residents easy and equitable access to programs and vital community resources, right where they live.

Peace is working with number of community partner agencies to offer neighborhood families the same level of comprehensive, wraparound support that Peace has offered Ann Arbor families for over 50 years.

We look forward to sharing more as this project unfolds!







## Helping Peace youth learn and succeed academically can be life-changing — for both our students and volunteer tutors.

Providing one-on-one academic support for k-12 students has always been an integral and important part of Peace's After-School Programs and support.

Peace kids learn from a young age that our expectation is for them "to find their greatness, set their own goals, work hard, and continue to learn and build a positive path forward. Always supported by their Peace Family."

Peace's Youth Program staff regularly monitor each student's academic standing and progress through their Power School account, Schoology for homework, and open communications with teachers. Working with Peace staff, volunteer tutors help students with homework and core academic subjects, including reading, writing, and math.

Tutors are asked to make a commitment to meet at least once a week with a young student throughout the semester, from 5:30 - 6:30 pm, on either a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Tutors can commit to volunteer on multiple nights. Peace's volunteer tutors include U-M students, area high school students, retired educators, and adult community members.

**Volunteers must be in 9th grade or older and fill out our online volunteer application:**  
[peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/get-involved/](http://peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/get-involved/)

## Interested in helping a child succeed this school year?

Peace is currently recruiting volunteers to help tutor kindergarten through high school students in our After-School Programs.

Questions? Contact Anabel: [acruz@peaceneighborhoodcenter.org](mailto:acruz@peaceneighborhoodcenter.org) or call (734) 662-3564.



Peace  
Neighborhood  
Center

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Yes, I/We would like to make a gift to support Peace Neighborhood Center's programs for youth, their parents, and families.

AMOUNT ☐ \$2,500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250  
☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

I/We will pay via: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card

If by credit card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVC \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, I/We would like to learn more about including Peace in my estate plan.

▶ To Give Online, please visit:  
[peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/donate](http://peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/donate)






Peace  
Neighborhood  
Center

1111 North Maple Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

# THANKS FOR GIVING

## Thursday, November 2, 2023

To make a reservation,  
please scan the QR Code   
or visit [peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/tfg](https://peaceneighborhoodcenter.org/tfg)



### OUR VISION

A community where personal growth, opportunity, and diversity are constant; the cycle of poverty and social and economic inequality has been broken.

### OUR MISSION

To provide programs for children, families, and individuals who are affected by social and economic problems. Peace helps people discover options, enhance skills, and make choices that lead to self-sufficiency and positive community involvement.



For updates & news, visit: [peaceneighborhoodcenter.org](https://peaceneighborhoodcenter.org)

Follow us on  