



Common Place...where love works!

GOODNEWS

April 2011

Connie Voss
Managing Editor

Stephanie Marchand
Editor

Our Mission is to strive to eliminate the root causes of poverty, racism, and other social injustices by recognizing the dignity and self-worth inherent in each person.

Common Place Board Chair
Roberta Koscielski

Board Officers
Jim Bremner
Phil Cline
Cheryl Dawson



Summer Youth Programs Focus On Learning

When it comes to education, teachers will tell you children lose some of the information they've learned throughout a school year during the summer months when they are away from school. This makes the first semester of school a time when teachers need to review instead of move forward in learning new facts and information. One way of changing this pattern is to offer a summer youth program for children that focuses on learning, but in a fun way.



Children enrolled in the Summer Work Study Program and the Summer Teen Employment Program learn how to plant and maintain a garden.

Common Place's summer youth programs will concentrate on retaining learned subjects by having a Brain Bowl. The youth staff will create a game show atmosphere with educational topics, such as math, comprehension, and grammar being the concentrated areas that will be explored. Children will compete in a scholastic bowl and work on improving their own personal educational goal. The children's progress will be measured throughout each session, and parents will be invited at the end of each session for a Brain Bowl tournament. Although this is the plan for this summer, bringing light to this plan is dependent on funding and support from the community.

During the two, four-week sessions children will have the opportunity to earn an allowance. Allowances are important to the youth enrolled because it sometimes helps pay for school clothes, shoes, or school supplies. Allowances are based on the same principles of any employment: attendance, cooperation, work ethic, and attitude. This year allowances will also be based on achieving their own personal educational goal. Just the cost of allowances alone is approximately \$80 - \$120 per child.

Common Place also provides summer tutoring for grades K - 12. Children have the one-on-one opportunity to receive the extra help they need in certain subjects, such as math, reading, science, or alphabet recognition, or to help them retain skills they already have acquired.

Tutors are needed during this seven-week program. Children meet two days a week for a one or two hour session. If you are interested in helping a child this summer, please call Helen Jenkins at Common Place at 674-3315.



Summer youth participants picking up litter in the neighborhood as part of their community service.

Calendar of Events

Friday, April 22	Common Place Closed
Wednesday, April 27 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Tutor Training Workshop, Session 1
Saturday, April 30 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Tutor Training Workshop, Session 2
Saturday, May 9 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Tutor Training Workshop, Session 3
Monday, May 28	Common Place Closed
Thursday, June 9 5:30 p.m. Reception 6:30 p.m. Dinner	Love In Action Award Dinner Pere Marquette Hotel

Pennies! Pennies! Pennies!

Do you have a pennies jar? Remember saved pennies can help support the summer youth programs. Pennies can be dropped off at Common Place anytime.

Meet Our 2011 Board of Governors

Common Place is proud to announce its 2011 slate of officers and board members:

Roberta Koscielski (Peoria Public Library), Chairperson
Jim Bremner (Winters Insurance), Vice-Chair
Phil Cline (Retired), Treasurer
Cheryl Dawson (Heartland Bank), Secretary

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We are grateful for the following generous grant support to assist our programs---

Churches in Illinois and Wisconsin, for Promising Futures Program; Rotary of Peoria for the Emergency Food Pantry; Illinois Humanities Council for Peoria Reads 2011; Peoria Pilot Club for materials for New Challenges adult literacy classes; and Grace and Peace Church for "Eye on Success" group for Adult Literacy.

Common Place's 10 Most Wanted

1. Email Address for sending newsletters – please help us cut back on mailing expenses
2. Sturdy, new or gently used card tables
3. First Aid Supplies: bandages, antibiotic ointment, gauze pads, medical tape, and alcohol wipes
4. School/Office Supplies: 1" and 1-1/2" size binders, any color; two-pocket folders; tape – masking, packing, duct, and Scotch; washable markers; and, glue sticks
5. Batteries: AA and 9-Volt
6. Postage Stamps
7. Cleaning/Kitchen Supplies: bleach, all-purpose cleaners, toilet bowl cleaner; sponges; window cleaner, liquid hand soap, disinfectants, air-fresheners, paper towels, paper napkins, plastic gloves for serving food, plastic food storage bags, and aluminum foil
8. New or gently used vacuum cleaner, commercial use preferred
9. Yard Tools: lawn spreader, rakes, loppers, hedge trimmers, and lawn waste bags
10. Metal Shelving Units for food pantry

You can help us with our effort to keep our expenses to a minimum and to concentrate resources directly on serving our program participants, by donating any of the above ten most wanted to help Common Place operations!

*** * * * * Save the Date * * * * ***

Common Place
25th Annual Walk for Reading
Saturday, September 10, 2011
8:00 a.m. – Registration
8:30 a.m. – Walk

Organize a team this summer!

*** * * * ***

Family Reading Nights: Discovering the 1940's & 1950's

At Common Place, Youth Director Helen Jenkins knows it can be a challenge to make learning interesting for children. However, she has found children enjoy learning when it is presented in a fun way. Her decision to bring history alive by traveling through the decades with interactive activities is one of her ways to bring fun to learning and to present history.

Mrs. Jenkins decided to start with the 1940's because it was a decade of major change for the United States. To introduce this decade to the children, she and the Common Place youth staff engaged the children in research prior to and after their February Family Reading Night. All the research created a lot of interest in the children and eagerness to learn more.



1940's Reel to reel movie projector. This was a big hit with the children many of whom had not seen one or heard of one before.

At the 1940's Family Reading Night the children and their parents took part in four interactive stations: Home, War, Entertainment, and Memorabilia. The Home station listed trivia facts on the cost of items from the 1940's, demonstrations, fashion, and tasting of food items such as Vienna Sausages. The War station represented military recruitment for WWII and war protests. Since entertainment from the 1940's didn't include television and DVD's, Mrs. Jenkins thought it was important for children to discover the reel to reel movie projector, the first typewriter, and instruments. Since most of the children had not seen or heard of the reel to reel movie projector, they were all very fascinated with it and how it worked. The Memorabilia station was run by an individual who donated her time and her artifacts, and spoke about the items she brought and explained what it was like to live during that decade.

The night would not have been complete without a re-creation of the Bob Hope show with live performances from the children. The children demonstrated dances to the songs *Swing, Swing, Swing* and *A-Tisket-A-Tasket*. After the children's performances a typical 1940's dinner was served with Spam, macaroni and cheese, peas, white bread, and Coca-Cola. Food reactions from children ranged from "eww!" to "that's good!", and for some parents and grandparents it brought back fond memories.

Entertainment in the 1950's really took off in theaters, television, and music. Mrs. Jenkin's goal of recreating the 1950's was to showcase life in Peoria and nationwide.

Once again Mrs. Jenkins and the Common Place staff engaged the children in research prior to and after the 1950's Family Reading Night in March. The children



Common Place youth staff play the role of movie ushers at the Apollo Theater. Seated (L to R): Helen Jenkins, Youth Director; and, Sue Korth. Standing (L to R): Mike Plezia, Libby Taylor, Andrea Griffith, Allie Messmore, and Shundell Broomfield.

worked on performances of hit songs from Alvin and the Chipmunks' *Christmas Song*; *Stagger Lee*; Ray Charles and the Raylettes' *Hit The Road Jack*; and, Chuck Berry's *Ain't That A Shame*. Each age group videotaped their performance which was then made into a movie and was

played at the recreated Apollo Theater inside Common Place's building. The Common Place youth staff dressed as 1950's movie ushers, escorting the children and their parents or grandparents to their movie seats after they earned their ten cents movie ticket by answering trivia questions about the decade. The youth staff is proud to announce all children earned their ticket! During the movie, sponsor commercials were presented from Charmin, and news reports with Ms. Sue gave children an idea of what newsworthy topics were happening during this time. Following the movie families enjoyed theater food of hot dogs, fries, and root beer floats.

Stay tuned for the 1960's!

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?
— Cicero, Orator

Volunteer Corner



Meet Peggy Miller. Peggy has been volunteering at Common Place for less than a year, however she has made a big impact on many lives. Peggy is originally from the south suburbs of Chicago, then moved to the west suburbs after she married her husband, Glenn. She experienced rural living when her family moved to Bradford, living there for fifteen years. Peggy and her husband have now been residing in Peoria for the last nine years. Peggy is a Bradley University graduate and is a certified paralegal. However, learning didn't stop with a degree. She decided to pursue an interest in art and is currently taking art classes.

Volunteering is not new to Peggy. She has volunteered for her congregation, served on the board at the YMCA in Kewanee, helped at the United Way in Stark County, and at the Friendship House. When asked how she heard of Common Place she replied, "I saw the Common Place sign on Western hill". Seeing that sign sparked her interest to learn more about Common Place and what services we offer to the community. Peggy started her volunteering at Common Place with helping the food pantry. She organized volunteers from Illinois Central College, coordinated a food drive with her congregation, and worked with the Peoria Area Anti-Hunger Coalition Can-A-Thon drive with food pick-ups. She also continues to help our food pantry with food pick-ups at the local food banks. She stated she grew up in a large family that was not financially secure so having food in the house was something her family worked hard for. To this day Peggy says she likes to see a full bag of groceries.

Besides helping out with the food pantry, Peggy also tutors children in our 5th and 6th grade program. According to Peggy, tutoring with the children has been a blessing. She stated, "I never expected to have such a deep relationship between me and the children, and the children with me." Her determination to help others doesn't stop with the food pantry and tutoring. Peggy arranged for a guest speaker for the youth programs to help the children connect with the Peoria Reads book selection and to inspire them to achieve their goals and dreams. She has provided baked goods and other food items for the children as incentives, or to help the staff with Tutor Training Workshops, Family Reading Nights, and Operation Education events.

Peggy truly believes in an old Jewish value Tikkun Olam, which means to repair the world, so she tries to always put her love into action to repair the world. Peggy also stated she likes volunteering for Common Place because she likes helping an organization that gives educational skills to people. She really appreciates how Common Place is a professionally run organization, and she enjoys how everyone gets along like a close-knit family. Peggy's advice for anyone thinking about volunteering: "You get far more out of it than you'd ever dream of."

Thank You!

Thank you to the congregations, individuals, and groups who helped stock our food pantry shelves this past winter! We are very grateful for your generosity and heartfelt responses. Because of your help, we were able to help many families and neighbors.

Teach an Adult to Read

The Adult Literacy staff at Common Place is offering a **Tutor Orientation and Training Workshop** series at Common Place on

- **Wed., September 29, 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday, October 2, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**
- **Saturday, October 9, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Cost is \$20 for materials. Registration is required. Call Carol, 674-3315, to register.

Volunteers



Volunteers from Caterpillar applying a fresh coat of paint to the third floor hallway and 5th & 6th grade room. What a difference the new paint made!



The Faces of Common Place



Top: Children ready to spread cheer through Christmas caroling.



Left: Youth showing off Wii dancing for Common Place Board of Governors.



Bottom: 5th & 6th grade students showing off a dance for Black History Month.



Top: Two of our youth show off their trophy won at the Boys Scouts' Pinewood Derby.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS from November 1, 2010 to March 29, 2011

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Zander; Dr. & Mrs. Mike Zichterman; Alvin & Susan Ziegler; Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Zika; and, Don & Beth Zumwalt

Thank you to all donors. We apologize for any omissions or incorrect listings in the donor list. If you feel that an error has occurred, contact Common Place at 674-3315. Please be reminded that the list reflects contributions received between November 1, 2010 to March 29, 2011.



This is your chance to get a beautiful, weed-free lawn and support Common Place at the same time. Community Lawn Care is locally owned by Don Schumacher, who has over 30 years of golf and lawn turf experience. Community Lawn Care provides fertilization as well as weed, insect, and disease control services for the turf grasses of central Illinois. **The good news is that 10% of every dollar you spend goes to support Common Place.** All Community Lawn Care services are competitively priced and guaranteed. Call 309-369-2378 for a free lawn analysis and estimate.

Peoria Reads! Returns!

Returns? Yes, after being affiliated with The Big Read for four years, we are now back to our original name, Peoria Reads!, for the 10th anniversary of our annual one city/one book community reading project.

This year's project is bringing the community together to try to understand what it takes to help the youth of our community succeed. Our chosen book, *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* is the story of two boys and the journey of a generation. If two boys with the same name grow up in poverty and fatherless just blocks apart in a decaying city, how does one end up in jail for life while the other becomes a Rhodes Scholar, army officer, White House Fellow, and business leader? On December 11, 2000, *The Baltimore Sun* ran an article about how the book's author, Wes Moore, despite his troubled childhood, had just received The Rhodes Scholarship. At the same time, The Sun was running stories about four African-American men who were arrested for the murder of an off-duty Baltimore police officer during an armed robbery. One of the men convicted was just two years older than Wes, lived in the same neighborhood, and in an uncanny turn, was also named Wes Moore. The author decided to write to the other Wes Moore and to his surprise received a letter back and thus began a relationship which exposed how two young men started from the same place, made very different choices at each turn of the road and ended in very different places. As the author states, "The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his." Read the book and decide for yourself, what makes the difference.

The companion book chosen for middle school readers (but of interest level for adults as well) is *We Beat the Street*, by Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins, and

Rameck Hunt. These three successful doctors grew up in the inner city with many strikes against them. Their lives could have turned out differently, but their promise to support each, along with the help of others along the way, carried them through to reach their goals.

Even though limited funding has presented some challenges this year, interest and community support is high. Alumni groups, book clubs, PNC Bank (in conjunction with District 150) and others have worked to see that books are available for students. Peoria Reads! has also been fortunate to supply some books through a grant from the Ross E. and Susan M. Canterbury Fund of The Community Foundation of Central Illinois, as well as a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Illinois General Assembly.

Our two community events this year are:

Interview with Wes Moore (by skype)
Monday, April 18 at 9am
Bradley University, Marty Theater

"Helping Youth Succeed" Panel Discussion
with keynote by Carl Cannon
Tuesday, April 19 at 7pm
RiverPlex

Wes Moore says that public servants—the teachers, mentors and volunteers who work with our youth—are as imperative to our national standing and survival as are our armed forces. As we say with Peoria Reads!----Read the book and get involved!

Common Place Love In Action Award Dinner

CARL CANNON
2011 recipient

Thursday, June 9, 2011
5:30 p.m. Reception & Cocktails
6:30 p.m. Dinner

Pere Marquette Hotel
Tickets \$50
Reservation deadline May 31, 2011

Call Stephanie at 674-3315 ext. 11,
for information or reservations.

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_____ Contribution to General Fund

_____ Contribution to Summer Youth Programs

_____ Volunteer to tutor

MY NAME & ADDRESS _____

**Check out our website: www.commonplacepeoria.org for online giving.
Starting in April!



COMMON PLACE

514 S. Shelley St., Peoria, IL 61605-1837
(309) 674-3315 FAX (309) 674-0627

commonplace@sbcglobal.net www.commonplacepeoria.org

April 1, 2011

Dear Friend of Common Place:

In spite of ailing government budgets, there is some improvement in the general economy---but not for the people we serve. More people than any time in recent history have come to us for help, and continue to do so. Our program enrollments have soared and many have waiting lists. We regularly see the needs and we also see the changes in lives, in small steps and big ones. Through our programs, a grandmother is now able to read to her grandchildren so that someday, they will also be able to read to their grandchildren; a young man escaped the streets by growing up in our youth programs and now is an intern, helping with younger children; a single-parent mother has new hope since not only has her child improved in school through our after-school program, but she herself has learned how to help her child succeed. There are so many stories to tell.

Where would they go? Where would they go if a child is struggling to survive, in and out of school. . .an adult needs intensive reading help . . . emergency food or home repairs? No, we are not closing the doors. But this year, more than any time in recent history, there are funding uncertainties that could affect the life-changing help that we provide to children, adults and families.

We were fortunate to have had the resources to weather the storm the past two years, thanks to the generosity of many. A *minimum* of 67% of our state and federal funding is in jeopardy. Other areas also show reduction in revenue, as we all try to recover from the economic downturn. What are we doing? We already have trimmed tight expenses, used donated goods whenever we can, leveraged resources, and put every dollar that we can into direct service to children and families. We are also exercising strategic planning in order to focus our decisions to solidify our future.

Through our nearly 44 years, the generosity of caring individuals who give their time, prayers, and donations has supported our work. We need your help. Please give generously.

Gratefully yours,

Roberta Koscielski

Chairman, Board of Governors

Connie Voss

Executive Director

DID YOU KNOW

Research has shown that---

Low-income children are more likely to have chronic health problems; delays in development; suffer from trauma due to violence exposure; be affected by family stress; and are less likely to live in safe and supportive neighborhoods.

High school dropouts are 3.5 times as likely as graduates to be arrested.

About 40% of high school graduates lack the literacy skills employers seek.

Only 47% of low-income students in Illinois were at or above the "basic" achievement level in fourth-grade reading, compared with 80% of other students.

'08-'09 child poverty rate in Peoria County was 25%, 3rd highest in the state.

32 million adults—1 in 7—have reading skills so low they can't read much more than a child's picture book.

Annual health care costs are 4 times higher for individuals with low literacy skills than those with high literacy skills.

Over 30 million adults in the US don't read well enough to complete a job application.

Over the past year, over 3,200 adults and children were positively impacted by our various Common Place programs!