



# Peace Offering

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With Jesus at its heart, the Peace Center strives to "build peace, preach peace, and be peace" with the residents of the area surrounding the center.

## What's Happening

### Play Therapy at the Peace Center



Thanks to a grant from the Institute of Mental Hygiene, the Peace Center has partnered with a play therapist to offer our After School children a unique program. Designed to help them navigate complex emotions, especially related to racial inequality, the program offers play therapy sessions every Tuesday and Thursday.

Keva Carr, a Licensed Professional Counselor pursuing her Ph.D. in Counselor Education with a focus on trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and reference point therapy at Holy Cross College in New Orleans, leads the program.

Keva's goal is to "give hope, encourage, support, and empower children to be the best version of themselves." Her approach has already resonated with our after-school youths, who appreciate her inviting personality and genuine connection. With Keva's expertise and dedication, our children are in great hands!

### Center Spotlight: Brenda Dooley

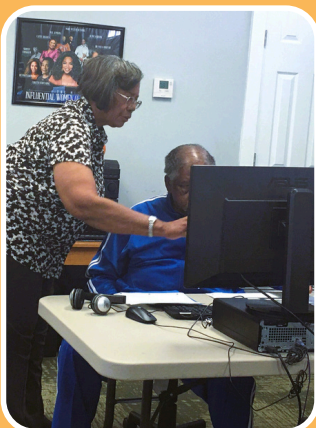
Brenda Dooley has been involved with the Peace Center since its beginning, when she met the Sisters gauging interest in the neighborhood. Originally from New Orleans, Brenda is one of 12 siblings and has four children and 11 grandchildren. Her spiritual strength comes from her faith at St. Rita Catholic Church.



Brenda actively participates in senior activities, serves on the Senior Program Committee and the Advisory Council, and ministers to her neighbors in the Pine Street Apartments by delivering food and organizing celebrations. One of her greatest joys is lending an ear to others, ensuring they feel heard and connected.

For Brenda, the Peace Center is a source of peace, spiritual nourishment, kindness, and enjoyment. She looks forward to celebrating the Center's 10-year anniversary, believing it has "positively transformed the neighborhood."

### Computer Class



The Intermediate Computer Class concluded successfully on February 23, 2024. Over a span of six weeks, Mrs. Bernadette Woods, a Dominican Peace Associate, diligently guided students through various aspects of computer literacy, including internet usage, resume building, and letter writing. Ms. Linda Horton, a former class member, provided valuable assistance to Mrs. Woods. All seven students demonstrated proficiency in the subjects, passing their tests and earning certificates of completion.

The upcoming semester of classes is scheduled to commence on Thursday, April 11, and will continue every Thursday and Friday from 10:00 AM to noon for six weeks, concluding on April 17. To register, please contact Sr. Suzanne at the Peace Center at 504-267-3342.



*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." -John 15:12, NIV*

# What We're Doing...



*Play Therapy Fun*



*Volunteer Appreciation Party*



*After School STEM*



*Easter Celebration for Gert Town Neighbors*



*After School Reading Group with Xavier Volunteers*



*Mardi Gras Queen 2024*



*Computer Class Achievements*



*Easter Gifts for Pine Street Neighbors*

## The Gert Town Fund

To sustain our activities at the Peace Center, we rely on a mix of grants and donations, including the generous support of local entities like the Gert Town Fund, a part of the Greater New Orleans Foundation sponsored grants.

The origin of the Gert Town Fund is rooted in a historical struggle against environmental injustice. Legal action against the Thompson-Hayward Chemical Plant, which had illegally dumped toxic chemicals in the neighborhood in the 1970s and 80s, led to its establishment. Its purpose is to uplift the quality of life for the residents most affected by the contamination, opening doors for non-profit organizations to better serve the community.

For a decade now, the Peace Center has applied for and received grants from the Fund, fueling our growth. Our focus lies on two key demographics within the neighborhood: young children and senior adults.

The grant allows us to run an enriching after-school program catering to students from Kindergarten to 8th grade. Here, they find a safe haven to enjoy snacks, engage with educational software on computers, participate in outdoor activities, and explore their creativity through arts and crafts. Our dedicated volunteers from Dominican and Jesuit high schools, Xavier University, and other community members provide invaluable homework assistance. Some days, our high school students also join us, reconnecting with the center. Field trips to places like the Audubon Zoo, movies, the Space Center, and Xavier University further enrich learning experiences. Additionally, we are able to support them with school supplies and uniforms as needed, and we sponsor their attendance at various summer camps across the city.

Our seniors also benefit greatly from the grant. Bi-monthly bingo gatherings, accompanied by snacks or full luncheons, provide them with a chance to socialize, celebrate holidays, and revel in the joy of winning. Field trips to places like the World War II Museum, Audubon Aquarium, movie theaters, and annual visits to restaurants further enhance their quality of life.

The Gert Town Fund operates with a subcommittee comprising neighborhood residents who review all grant applications and make recommendations for approval. Their intimate knowledge of the community and its needs ensures that the funds are allocated where they can make the most significant impact.

*The Peace Center is most grateful for the funds provided by this grant and the opportunities it gives us to "Be Peace, Build Peace and Preach Peace" in Gert Town.*