



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PEACE



Bonnie Billups, Jr.

Peace Neighborhood Center Executive Director

Over the last 50 years, Peace Neighborhood Center has changed thousands of lives, including mine

I've been at Peace most of my life. I will never forget my first introduction to Rose Martin, and all that I learned from her no-nonsense approach and steadfast commitment to helping people.

When I was 10 years old, my father volunteered to drive a bus of young boys up North for a camping trip with Rose, and he strongly encouraged me to go. I will never forget that trip. Picture an open field filled with tents and borrowed camping equipment; \$400 of groceries for 48 hungry growing boys; and after the volunteers quit, only a few of us with any camping experience. It turned out to be a life-changing experience for me.

I started attending Peace's Summer Day Camp a few years later, and Rose gave me a job as a Youth Program Assistant at the age of 15. She always believed in me, giving me responsibility beyond my years. Rose showed me by example what it means to genuinely care about people and how to find the potential in everyone.

Over my 40+ years at Peace, I've had the privilege of meeting thousands of remarkable people. Each with their own personal story that reflects the hard work they've put in to overcome extraordinary obstacles and create a brighter future for themselves. Many have gone on to careers to give back and pay it forward by helping others. All continue to remind me every day that we really do have the power to help people change their lives.

This year Peace Neighborhood Center will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary. While Peace has grown over the last 50 years, we have stayed true to our core values, family-style approach, and unwavering commitment to helping people find their greatness.

I never get tired of sharing the miracles we witness at Peace every day—like the single working mother of four who navigates four virtual classrooms and a rotating childcare schedule, all while ensuring her kids continue to attend Peace programs with near perfect attendance. Or the young man who recently walked into my office and thanked us for helping his mom find housing so his family could be reunited.

I'm extremely grateful for our entire Peace Family—the young people, adults, and families we serve; our talented and committed staff; our dedicated volunteers; and our generous community of donors.

Thank you all for playing a role in Peace's continuing success these last 50 years!



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Center 1971 - 2021