

AM/PM program a fun, safe place for kids



Photo courtesy City of Peoria

Kids make new friends in a safe environment at AM/PM program

By **JENNIFER
HERNANDEZ**
STAFF WRITER

In just 10 days, school is set to begin in the Peoria Unified School District and the City of Peoria has made adjustments to its AM/PM Program, or after- and before-school care.

City of Peoria Recreation Supervisor, Liz Bearden said due to parents requests, the program has changed its start time.

“We are now open at 6 a.m. and close at 6 p.m.,” she said. “We are there until school begins and we open up when

school is dismissed, even during early release or parent-teacher-conferences.”

The program is open to kids ages 5 to 14. The city decided to extend the age to 14 instead of 12 because parents did not want to leave their 14-year-olds at home alone.

There are currently four full-time Recreation Programmers assigned to a site and they also look over other sites as well. They are there to ensure each site is meeting the Department of Health Services requirements.

Anyone who works with the program is required to

have a FBI fingerprint clearance card, 12 hours of annual training with child care or a related field, TB testing, CPR and first aid and have their food handler’s license. The city also requires proof of shot records.

Kids have the opportunity to play outside, create arts and crafts, and work in centers playing games, group games and even homework. The kids also enjoy board games and coloring and appreciate the choices they have on a daily basis.

Breakfast is served in the morning and a snack in the

afternoon and is included in the price.

The cost is \$6 per morning, \$9 afternoon or \$14 a day. If a participant registers for all week for both the afternoon and morning sessions, the cost is \$56. They can attend five days and only pay for four. The program takes place at every Peoria Unified School inside the Peoria city limits.

“Mornings have been quite a popular program and have been growing every year steadily,” Bearden said. “This day and age parents are trying to vary their work schedule to see their kids more often.”

Peoria Times 7/31/09