

# City offers summertime fun

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During the summer, working parents often have difficulty finding someone to watch their children while also providing fun activities for them to do. Luckily, the city of Peoria offers a summer camp May 23-Aug. 1 that accomplishes both goals.

Recreation Supervisor Liz Bearden oversees the camp and has made significant contributions to how it is run.

"I designed it as a parent by thinking, 'What do I want my children to do all day?'" Ms. Bearden said. "It's designed to allow parents to go off to work and feel good that they found a good place for their children."

Parents can choose from nine schools who will be hosting the camps ensuring that they will find somewhere convenient.

Cheyenne, Paseo Verde, Frontier, Apache, Cotton Boll, Ira Murphy, Parkridge, Zuni Hills and Desert Harbor elementary schools are all participants.

Every week, the children are able to enjoy a special activity.

"They are going to polar ice this year which we haven't done in the past," Ms. Bearden said.

In addition, they will have trips to the circus, Creative Wheel, Build-A-Bear, Oasis Gym and Water World.

Every week, activities are different in order to give the kids a well-rounded experience.

"(The camp) runs on a weekly theme and on Friday they have a big party that is a culmination of

the theme," Ms. Bearden said.

The city of Peoria partners with its water department, fire department, police department and the Peoria Aquatics Center in order to educate kids about hazards and how to prevent accidents.

One Friday, the water department will give a presentation on water conservation in order to make kids aware that they can make a difference too.

"Firefighters bring in the 'Smokehouse' to simulate a smoke-filled room and smoke detector sounds," said Kathleen Kresel, recreation coordinator. "They also give them hand outs and encourage them to make a plan with their families in case of a fire."

Twice a week the children visit the pool and during the first few weeks, lifeguards go over safety around the pool and quiz them on what they would do if certain problems came up around their pool at home.

Although the camp is filled with extracurricular activities, typical days follow a planned schedule.

"First the kids get a snack at 8:30 a.m., and then open free play and lunch and then usually a field trip," Ms. Kresel said. "After their next snack, they continue going through their centers that they might have started during the morning."

The camp runs 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Cost is \$23 a day or \$97 a week and includes all entrance fees and a morning and afternoon snack.

For those who are looking

for something other than summer camp, a summer recreation program is also open 8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. for eight weeks.

"It's a drop off program where kids can come and go as they like," Ms. Kresel said. "It's great for kids in the neighborhoods."

The program costs \$50 for the session with additional costs for field trips.

Teens can participate in a similar program called Step-Out, hosted at four Peoria high schools, and may be bused to Rio Vista Recreation Center if they would like to stay in the recreation program until 6 p.m., rather than 2:30 p.m. at the school.

"We have lots of programs for teens," said Jackie Stanley, Rio Vista Complex supervisor. "For instance, kids can grab a bus from Rio Vista and be picked up for trips from the Step Out program."

Although sports camps and recreation programs will be visiting Rio Vista as part of their programs, the recreation center has some unique and interesting programs to offer as well.

Every Tuesday kids can participate in video game challenges; Wednesdays will host a brown bag lunch and movie; Thursdays kids can play Wuffle ball; and many other daytime activities are scheduled or will be announced soon.

"We have a Wii bowling league in the works," Ms. Stanley said.

For more information on the activities mentioned, visit [www.peoriaaz.gov](http://www.peoriaaz.gov).

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