



DCP Playground/Track Grand Opening – April 2024

Dream Center Peoria is extremely grateful for the grant funding made possible through Impact Central Illinois, which made our Indoor Playground and Track renovation a reality. Having this area available for our families living in our 24/7 Emergency Shelter and The Village apartments, in addition to being able to offer a space for fitness and health education for our DCP Students, has provides a safe place for those we serve to exercise and improve their overall physical and mental health. Since finishing the project, we have been able to open the space on an organized schedule each week with volunteer and staff supervision.



One of our regular volunteers who serves weekly to supervise our Shelter and Village children in the Playground/Track area shared the following:

“The DCP Playground and track have been a blessing for the children living in the Shelter, The Village, (and to me)! It provides a safe space for them to run and play, climb and slide...simply just to be kids!

It is so fun to show up in the Shelter on Thursday afternoons and see kids’ faces light up knowing the playground is open!!! But it offers so much more than that! It is a space for children to be seen and loved! There is ample space for the children to gather around a table and share a snack, or to be creative by coloring or doing a simple craft. The kids have done mini talent shows and have taken turns singing or doing silly stunts.

It has provided an opportunity to encourage reading, too, as I have been accumulating a small lending library to share with them. Sometimes, parents even join in the fun! This was a great investment in the children served by Dream Center Peoria!”

- Melissa Nichols, DCP Volunteer



In 2024, Dream Center Peoria has been receiving an average of 150+ guests each night who are seeking safe sleeping quarters in our 24/7 Emergency Shelter (with numbers as high as 196 guests several nights consecutively). A full third of these guests are age 17 or younger and having a space on-site for them to exercise is a huge benefit! Not only are they receiving nutritious meals from our DCP Commercial Kitchen, but they also have the opportunity to run and play with abandon!

Our DCP Students After-school program has been welcoming close to 100 students total each day after school, and of those, around 25 are under the age of six. These younger students are thrilled to be able to show their prowess on the rock-climbing wall, and as they race around the new track surface. The laughter and joy are contagious as they play!



A special “Thank you” and huge shout out to the members of **Impact Central Illinois** who made these experiences and this safe space to play available for the children Dream Center Peoria serves throughout the year!!

You are making an impact that will make a difference in countless lives for generations to come!