



The Power of Play

The Peoria PlayHouse & Peoria Zoo



The power of play is at the foundation of a child's ability to learn and grow. That's why the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum and Peoria Zoo have joined forces to create a day-long destination for learning through play—one that equips local kids with the tools they need to succeed before they enter the doors of our schools. It's a critical need in our community, and it's critical we take this step now for our future.

Why the Power of Play?

- Research proves that play is a powerful factor in helping kids learn and grow effectively, and our community needs more play-friendly environments.
 - Studies show children who engage in experimental play have better social skills, improved literacy, reduced stress and increased success in life.
 - 85% of brain development occurs by age 3, and kids learn more between ages 4-5 than ages 6-18 combined.
 - More than half of local kids have never traveled more than three miles from home, which means their experiences and behavior are most likely limited to their surroundings.
 - Studies show communities our size need a certain amount of children's museum space, but Peoria currently has none.
- Living, changing exhibits and special programming at the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum and Peoria Zoo have the power to engage children's minds, hearts and bodies like few other attractions in the area. We're bringing the educational, social and physical advantages of play together for local kids, families and schools.
- By bringing the power of play to life at the Peoria PlayHouse and Peoria Zoo, we also power:
 - Quality of life—helping attract and retain young professionals and businesses
 - Local economy—creating jobs and generating tourism dollars
 - Surrounding neighborhoods—enriching Glen Oak Park and creating a community anchor in a historic area
- As parents and grandparents, residents and business owners, we have the power to contribute to our educational infrastructure in a way that better prepares our kids to enter the school system. District 150's struggles are well-documented, and additional help is needed. With The Peoria PlayHouse and Peoria Zoo, we can give kids the opportunity to learn when it matters most and begin to build a better future for our community.

How can you learn more?

- You can email us at powerofplaypeoria@hotmail.com
- You can visit our website at www.powerofplaypeoria.org
- You can follow us on Facebook/YouTube and Twitter at Power of Play Peoria.

Daily updates are being provided on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Pictures of all of our events are being posted on Facebook, and major donor thank you videos are being posted on YouTube. As we achieve major milestones, we will be holding press conferences and releasing press releases to the media. Please also feel free to contact us as listed above.

www.powerofplaypeoria.org



Why is a children's museum important?

A children's museum is about children and learning. It is a family place where children and adults learn about themselves, each other, and the world they live in through exploration, interaction, role play, and direct experience. Visitors of all ages lean on and learn from one another's experience, talents, and expertise. A children's museum presents exhibits, activities, and programs that provide opportunities for visitors to expand their learning, and link their existing knowledge with new experiences.

Mary Sinker is the educational consultant for the Peoria Playhouse. The following excerpt is taken from her website:

We have all walked into exhibits packed with busy children - children figuring out how this works and what can be done with that; learning what they can do with all those pieces; children playing alone and children playing together; children negotiating and sharing roles and spare parts with others: children at play.

Yet, in the same museum we'll enter an exhibit that people pass through quickly. A child may buzz from one component to another; a parent may direct the child into activity, but the happy hum of play is missing.

What's the difference? What is it that draws visitors of all ages to an area and elicits sustained playful activity? What are the deliberate judgments, choices, and decisions that help a designer create a play-filled environment?

In a children's museum, carefully designed environments inspire children's learning through play. As we design exhibits, we tightly knit together two strands: an understanding of children's play behavior, and an understanding of how design influences behavior.

For more information, visit www.peoriaplayhouse.org. For more information on why children's museums are important, visit www.marysinker.com.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this the effort on the Peoria Riverfront?

No. The Power of Play Campaign focuses on the revitalization of Glen Oak Park and the surrounding neighborhood by enhancing the current Peoria Zoo and bringing the Peoria PlayHouse children's museum to the Park. The campaign focuses on bringing interactive exhibits and learning experiences to young children in our community. It is the only effort in our community that focuses solely on the educational needs of children ages 0-8 and their families.

Research shows that children and families who frequent children's museums and zoos are more likely to visit other museums and support arts and culture in their community. As such, the Power of Play will only serve to enhance the success of the Peoria Riverfront museum.

I thought the zoo was finished?

Not yet! Peoria Zoo's new *AFRICA!* exhibit has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors since opening in June 2009. Now we're working to make it a more convenient, accessible and appealing destination for families, school groups, and visitors of all ages. This next phase will include a new Grand Entry Complex that will provide shaded parking facilities, a timeline walk and a state-of-the-art entry building, complete with ticketing, shopping, dining and education, all designed to welcome visitors to the Peoria PlayHouse and Peoria Zoo.

How much are you trying to raise?

To date we have raised \$1.68 million of our 8 million dollar combined goal. You have the power to contribute to our educational infrastructure—giving local kids the opportunity to learn when it matters most. Please help us raise the remaining \$6.32 million to bring to life this daylong destination for learning through play. Your tax-deductible donation stays local, building a better future for our kids and our community.

SO...with the groundbreaking announcement, is your fundraising done?

We still have \$6.32 million dollars to raise to complete this project. Our project team is working on a timeline to opening and the decision has been made to start construction on each phase as the money is raised. To date we have secured the half of the funds for the entry building and parking lot, so construction will begin! We will begin construction on the other pieces as the funds are secured.

Included in the *Grand Entry* Phase 1:

Zoo Entry Complex

- Victorian themed building, similar to existing Glen Oak Park Pavilion
- Basement for storage
- Elevator to 2nd floor that will be used for storage and potentially minimal number of staff
- Size of building: approximate 6,000 sq feet

Parking Facility

- Expanded 40 car parking lot
- Car and bus drop-off lanes

Comfort Center - Part of Zoo Entry Complex

- Men's and women's restrooms
- Concession area open to back porch

What else is still coming at the Zoo with this project?

There are a lot more exciting things to come to Peoria Zoo in the second phase of the Grand Entry project, including the "other half" of the Grand Entry Building, more parking, and more!

Included in the *Grand Entry* Phase 2:

Second part of Zoo Entry Complex (see accompanying drawing)

Parking Facility

- Additional parking and through road

Orientation Plaza (probably will be located where petting barn/zoo is)

- Orientation Plaza Fountain

- Technology & Research Library - Part of Zoo Entry Complex

- Conference & Board Room - Part of Zoo Entry Complex

- Fountain Sculpture – Part of Orientation Plaza

Interactive & Cultural Exhibits - Part of Zoo Entry Complex

- Education center/classroom space

Landscaping & Planting Pockets, Timeline Walk, Plaza & Fountain Area Benches, and Administration Offices

When do you plan to open the Peoria PlayHouse?

Based on our current project and fundraising timeline we will open within 18-24 months of meeting our fundraising goal. Work that can begin as we hit funding milestones will include finishing the schematic design of the project exhibits and engineering plans for the structure of the building.

Where will the Peoria Park District offices be going in order for the Peoria PlayHouse to move into the Glen Oak Pavilion building?

Plans are underway to move the PPD offices into the existing Lakeview Museum building. We like to think of this as a game of dominoes as each piece impacts the next. As each piece nears completion it is contingent on another piece to make all of our projects happen within this community.

I have heard about Peoria Zoo's Australia Walk-About. Is this part of The Power of Play campaign?

The Aussie Walk-About enhancement to Peoria Zoo was funded by a grant. While it will make the Glen Oak Park experience even more amazing for children and families, it is not part of The Power of Play Campaign.

Why are you starting with the Entry Complex?

This important building will serve as the entry point for both the zoo and the children's museum. We would not be able to open the Peoria PlayHouse without parking and ticketing. This is a crucial part of project plan. It will also prove to be an exciting focal point to let the community know what is coming and that progress is being made with our funding efforts!

What will happen to the existing gift shop at the zoo?

There are plans to turn this space into an interactive educational learning space.

What will it cost to go the Peoria PlayHouse and Peoria Zoo?

We haven't set a ticket price yet for the Peoria PlayHouse, but are planning for opportunities for families to purchase joint memberships for both the children's museum and the zoo, and to have a reduced ticket price for families who choose to go to both places in a day. It is our goal to make sure **all** families and children have the opportunity to experience the power of play in Glen Oak Park.

How can I help?

You can help us in two ways: 1) Make a donation to our project to help support our efforts AND 2) Help us get the word out. Please share our information with friends, neighbors, family, teachers, people you know in the community. The more people we can reach the sooner we can open our doors! Please and thank you! You can donate by contacting us or by going to our website at www.powerofplaypeoria.org and clicking on Donate.