

2025 Summer Vacation

There have been some really exciting trips suggested for Summer Vacations by our participants over the past 30+ years. We have enjoyed trips to Chicago, Memphis, Milwaukee, Wisconsin Dells, Hershey PA, Niagara Falls and many more. Some have been Cardinal Road trips and others have been educational and fun, or just plain FUN.

We'll be crunching numbers and researching travel costs to determine the next vacation destination. Keep checking future mailings for the announcement of our 2025 vacation. If you think a trip with Leisure Services sounds like fun, start saving your money. Plans for vacations must meet final approval by Pony Bird, Inc.

We always have a great time on our vacations and we have visited a lot of great places across the country. To join us on a vacation we ask that you actively participate in Leisure Services activities for a minimum of 1 year. This allows our staff and other participants to get to know you and it allows you to get to know us as well. When we travel out of town we have one chaperone for every 5 travelers. This assures everyone have a safe and enjoyable trip. Due to financial reasons,

we are unable to support individuals on trips who require higher levels of support. However, special arrangements can be made for traveling with a personal assistant for an additional cost. And keep in mind that not everyone finds group travel suitable. You have to be patient with your roommates, flexible with changes, and willing to go along with a group itinerary. If you are more of an individual traveler, our trips may not work for you.

If you have an idea for a fun-filled trip, please list your suggestion on the registration form. We will take all suggestions into account with hopes to offer a trip that will guarantee a good time for all. We now begin the process for another adventure!! Look for our 2025 vacation announcement soon.



**Basketball 2025
Sign up now!**

CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS

Main Line:	636-282-1414 636-933-3764
Direct Lines	
Terri Dallas	636-282-1419
Donna Cooper	636-282-1411
Information Line	636-282-1422
After Hours	314-210-8760

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UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Basketball Practice Begins
January 8th
See page 5

**St. Louis Area Special Olympics
Basketball Tournament**
January 18th

New City Museum
January 25th
See page 3

Night To Shine
February 7th
See Page 6



**HAVE YOU SIGNED UP FOR
"REMIND TEXT ALERTS"**
See page 2 for the fastest way of receiving notices on activity updates and cancellations for inclement weather.

New Year Greetings



I would like to wish everyone a very happy 2025. As we move forward to another year, may you find happiness, health, and wealth in every aspect of your life. This next year will mark my 40th year of having the privilege of serving so many amazing individuals and working with some of the best staff and volunteers a person could ask for. During this time we have enjoyed so much together and always knew there was more to come. We hope you can grace us again in 2025 with your uplifting spirit and join us for what we have in store over the next year. Have a blessed New Year!



Terri Dallas
Leisure Services
Program Manager

Inclement Weather Alert Procedure

Leisure activities that are scheduled when severe weather conditions are predicted may need to be cancelled or postponed. The Program Manager will monitor weather reports closely if serious weather conditions are likely to interfere with a scheduled activity as well as the safe travel to or from the activity. As soon as a decision can confidently be made regarding cancellation or postponement, an effort shall be made to contact all enrolled participants and/or their caregiver/guardian by using the following:

- **Remind Text Alert System** - for the **quickest way** to receive notices, register for up-to-the-minute alerts. Registration procedure is included in this newsletter
- Leisure Information Line 636-282-1422
- Email—check your inbox and spam/junk folder

Congratulations, Kathy!

Kathy Witmeyer was honored at the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame enshrinement banquet in St. Louis on November 24th as an outstanding Special Olympics coach. Special Olympics was a benefiting charity of the Hall of Fame and Kathy was recognized for her talent and years of services as a Special Olympics coach for Pony Bird. Kathy has been a coach for the past 22 years and has done incredible outreach. This includes athlete recruitment and fundraising for Pony Bird's Special Olympics sports program and St. Louis Metro Special Olympics. She is one of our organizations most experienced coaches and a mother of a Special Olympics athlete, making her a great mentor for staff, volunteers, participants, and families. One of Kathy's greatest accomplishments is the development of the Pony Bird bocce program, one of the largest Special Olympics bocce programs in the state. Congratulations, Kathy, and thank you for believing in our athletes!



Remind Text Alert—Sign up now!

The fastest and most efficient way of getting notice of changes with our scheduled activities is to sign up for the Remind Text Alert system. **This will be our primary and quickest way of contacting consumers.** To be placed on our list of recipients, copy the link below in your internet browser, based on the beginning letter of your last name. Fill in your name and cell phone number or email address and stay in the know. It's that easy! Using this service you can also reply to a text we send or send us a text at any time without having to call or email. Once you opt in please reply to the confirmation text with P (for participant). You can opt out at any time by replying LEAVE to the text.

- last names A-D: <https://www.remind.com/join/leisuread>
- last names E-L: <https://www.remind.com/join/leisureel>
- last names M-R: <https://www.remind.com/join/leisuremr>
- last names S-Z: <https://www.remind.com/join/leisuresz>



TRANSPORTATION

Developmental Disability Advocates (formerly JCDDRDB) enables JC Transit services to be available for a limited number of Leisure Services activities for a minimal cost to participants. Seats are limited so call at the time of registration for activities.

JC Transit Phone Number

636-933-9380

You must register separately for Leisure activities and JC Transit reservations. See instructions on the registration form.

Activities with JC Transit Service



Saturday Bowling—January 11th
Movie Nite Events— January 17th

Please note: OATS vans may be used as a back-up to the JC Transit vans

Leisure Services Transportation

Pick-Up Points

High Ridge - Farm and Home
Hwy 30 & Little Brennan

Herculaneum - Pony Bird building
1615 Vine School Rd

Arnold - Lot behind McDonalds
Hwy 141 & I-55

Look for the van icon to indicate that JC Transit services are available or look for pick-up times at pick-up points under the description of the activity. We reserve the right to cancel or change pick-up points when necessary. A minimum of 3 riders is required to guarantee a pick-up site.



Special Events

The fee for Special Events should accompany the registration form to guarantee reservation.

CITY MUSEUM AND LUNCH

Step into a world of wonder and excitement at the City Museum. With so much to explore, you'll never run out of things to do. There are over 30 slides for adults and children, an art area where you can create something special, a circus, full cave and so much more!

We will enjoy a pizza buffet while there. The fee includes entrance to the museum and lunch.



Date:	January 25th
Time:	Herky 9:30 Arnold 10:00
Fee:	\$45.00 activity fee

Night to
Shine
TIM TEBOW FOUNDATION

Hosted by

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church

Friday, February 7th

See page 4 for registration information for guests and volunteers.

Monthly Social Activities

MOVIE NITE

Come see it at the movies! Enjoy a night out with our group of movie buffs. Anyone is welcome. At this time, we are limiting our groups to 15 people so you will want to sign up soon.



DATE: Friday, January 17th
TIME: Meet at theater at 6:00 pm
PLACE: Arnold and Festus Theaters
FEE: \$20.00
 Suggested minimum of \$15 for concessions

JC

Transit available.



DINNER CLUB

LOCAL HOUSE

Now located in the old 54th Street Bar and Grill in Arnold, Local House has a large variety of sandwiches, salads, pizza, burgers and entrées . You are sure to find something you will enjoy. Come out and join your friends and celebrate the New Year.

HERKY/ARNOLD

Date: Jan. 7th
Time: Herculaneum 5:15 pm
 Arnold 5:45 pm
Fee : \$12.00 plus money for dinner

HERKY/ARNOLD

Date: Jan. 14th
Time: Herculaneum 5:15 pm
 Arnold 5:45 pm
Fee:\$12.00 plus money for dinner

BARNHART/HIGH RIDGE

Date : Jan. 21st
Time: Barnhart 5:15 pm
 High Ridge 6:00 pm
Fee: \$12.00 + money for dinner

Based on recent price increases, we recommend you bring \$25.00 to cover dinner/drinks and tip.

SATURDAY BOWL

SATURDAY BOWLING IS BACK AT IMPERIAL AND QUONSET!

Dust off your bowling ball. Get ready to practice your skills for our upcoming tournaments, or just join us for a good time of casual bowling for fun. This is a great way to meet up with old friends and make new friends on the lanes. If you don't have a bowling ball or shoes, no worries. Shoes and ball rental are included in the price for your games.

IMPERIAL BOWL

Imperial MO
Date: Jan. 4th and Jan. 11th
Time: 9:30 am—11:30 am
Cost : \$12.00 for 2 hours of bowling and shoe rental.

JCT is NOT Available For Imperial Bowl.



Everyone is charged a fee of \$12.00 for 2 hours of bowling. This includes your choices of 2 or 3 games plus shoe rental.

QUONSET LANES

Crystal City
Date: Jan. 4th and Jan.11th
Time: 2:00—4:00 pm
Cost : \$12.00 for 2 hours of bowling and shoe rental.

JC Transit will be available Jan. 11th only



Sports

UNIFIED SPORTS

Unified Sports are designed to bring together equal numbers of athletes with and without intellectual disabilities on the same playing field. Special Olympics Unified® Sports could include bocce, bowling, basketball, flag football, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball. Unified opportunities are offered through Pony Bird Leisure Services. We currently have over 20 Unified Partners in our program and growing. Contact Terri Dallas for more information. Make it fun for the whole family! Our current need is Unified basketball players for the 2024 season. If you are interested in joining our teams, contact us now. *"I never could have imagined how much joy this would bring to my life. Practices are a highlight of my week. The competition, comradery, teamwork, coaches, and so much laughter make hard days better". - Unified Partner, Megan Poole.*

BOWLING SEASON—off to a great start!

Congratulations to our bowlers who competed in the Special Olympics Area Bowling Tournament on November 4th. Our bowlers did very well and brought home well-deserved awards. Now they prepare for the State games at the Special Olympics Indoor Tournament in St. Charles on March 15th. There is still lots of practice ahead where they can enjoy it with good friends.



BASKETBALL

If you like the game of basketball and want to take part as a Special Olympics athlete, consider joining one of the teams at Pony Bird for athletes 15 years or older. We offer training for all levels of abilities and have actively participated in Special Olympics competition for 40 years. See attached flyer. We have well-trained volunteer coaches who love teaching the game and look for new players to join us each year.

Basketball Practice at Festus Elementary Gym

Beginning Wednesday, January 8th 6:30 p.m.

Scheduled practices every Wednesday through March 26th

2025 Tournament Schedule

Area - January 18th- Wentzville

Regional - February 16th, Cape Girardeau

State Indoor Games—Bowling/Basketball St. Charles

March 28th & 29th

(Transportation will be offered for tournaments)

Coaches and Unified Partners needed for basketball



If you enjoy the game of basketball and want to take part as a Special Olympics coach or unified partner, consider joining our teams. We offer training for all levels of abilities and have actively participated in Special Olympics competition for 40+ years. We have well-trained volunteers who love teaching the game and look for new people each

year who have the desire to lead our athletes through the season. This is one of the most rewarding roles you will take on. It is gratifying to see an athlete improve their skills and gain confidence on and off the court. Knowing that you contributed to their success through your support and guidance leaves you with a feeling of pride and joy that will stay with you for life.

If you are interested in joining the Pony Bird Basketball Program as a coach, we would love to have you. Now is the time to be a part of something great—Special Olympics and Pony Bird.

AN EVENT YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS!

Coming February 7th, 2025

St. Andrews Methodist Church in DeSoto, MO will serve as one of many churches around the world that will host *Night to Shine* simultaneously on Friday, February 7th,

sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. Over 500 churches and thousands of volunteers in 50 states and 20 countries come together on one night to celebrate nearly 100,000 honored guests with special needs.

Every guest of Night to Shine enters this complimentary event on a red carpet complete with a warm welcome from a friendly crowd and paparazzi. Guests receive the royal treatment, including hair and makeup stations, shoe shining areas, limousine rides, corsages and boutonnieres, a catered dinner, karaoke, prom favors for each honored guest, a Respite Room and dinner for parents and caretakers, and, of course, a dance floor as well as other activities... all centered around the moment when each guest is crowned king or queen of the prom. If you would like to attend as a guest or volunteer for this event, you can now register online through St. Andrew's website, <https://standrewsumcdesoto.org/>. You may also contact the Leisure Services office for more details.



2025 Night to Shine Registration is now open!

<https://standrewsumcdesoto.org/>

Event Date: Friday, Feb. 7th, 2025 6:00pm-9:00pm

Location: 650 Vineland School Rd, DeSoto MO 63020

Registration forms are also available at St. Andrew's United Methodist Church

1004 Rock Rd, DeSoto MO 63020 (Monday-Thurs 9am-2pm)

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Below is the procedure we recommend you use to successfully register for Leisure Services activities.

1. Look over the newsletter and complete the registration form. Please avoid calling in your reservations.
 - You may print registration form and return by mail with your check to cover fees(please note in memo of check "Leisure Services Activities")
 - You may email your registration to leisure@ponybird.org and send check by mail to cover fees (please note in memo of check "Leisure Services Activities")
2. Please make checks payable to Pony Bird, Inc. and mail to Pony Bird , 1615 Vine School Rd, Herculaneum, MO 63048.
3. You will need to contact JCTransit to request a ride to activities indicating this service. Contact JCTransit at 933-9380. Remember that there are limited slots for transportation so set up you ride as soon as possible. You will also have the option to meet our group at pick-up points or event locations.
4. It is important that you cancel a reservation for any activity you are unable to attend, both with Leisure Services and JCTransit. A 24 hour cancellation notice is required to be considered for a refund of your activity fee, however, refunds cannot be guaranteed upon cancellation.
5. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER, you may call our Event Information Line at 636-282-1422 or 933-3422 to check the status of an activity before heading out the door. All cancellations will be determined by 3:00 p.m. the day of the event. Sign up for Remind Text Alert for instant messages, instructions on page 3.

REGISTRATION FORM

You must register for all activities in advance. If you are not registered, you may be sent home due to staff/participant ratio.

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Nearest pick-up point: _____

Register for E-News Leisure Times. E-mail 1 _____ E-mail 2 _____

PLEASE RATE OUR SERVICE (circle your score with 5 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5

Suggestions/Comments _____

Please send registration form with payment to
Pony Bird, Inc.
 1615 Vine School Road
 Herculaneum MO 63048

TOTAL AMOUNT
ENCLOSED

\$ _____

- Annual Membership Fee** \$20.00
 Covers July 1—June 30th of the fiscal year.

MONTHLY EVENTS

Advance payment for monthly activity is welcome but not required.

- Dinner Club Festus/Arnold— January 7th \$12.00
 Dinner Club Festus/Arnold—January 14th \$12.00
 Dinner Club H. Ridge— January 21st \$12.00

- Movie Night- Arnold / January 17th \$20.00
 Movie Night— Festus / January 17th \$20.00

BOWLING \$12.00

All bowlers are charged \$12.00 for 2 hours of bowling

- Imperial—January 4th 9:30-11:30
 Quonset—January 4th 2:00-4:00
 Imperial—January 11th 9:30-11:30
 Quonset—January 11th 2:00—4:00

SPECIAL EVENTS

Advance payment for special events is required.

- City Museum/Lunch — January 25th \$45.00

VACATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Suggestion for Summer Vacation _____

A \$25.00 sports training fee covers incidental costs for training and competitions for each sport. This fee has increased slightly to support our FY25 budget. Our sports programs offer you 10-12 weeks of practice and competition opportunities.

SPORTS TRAINING FEE

- Bowling** \$25.00 for tournament participants
 Basketball \$25.00 sports fee

Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and in-kind donations of facilities, our sports training fee is minimal. Through our program, you have the opportunity to practice your sport with the guidance of our trained coaches and to compete in Special Olympics local and state competitions. Athletes wishing to compete in Special Olympics at the State level will be charged an assessment fee. You will also be charged an additional transportation fee to offset the cost of rental/charters. Assessments will be collected from interested athletes once qualification is determined. Assistance is available upon request from the Dick Bennett Memorial Fund. Awards of funds are based on individual need.



Pony Bird, Inc.

1615 Vine School Rd
Herculaneum ,MO 63048

Leisure Services office location

3655 Baptist Park Rd
Festus , MO 63028

Phone: 636-282-1414

Phone: 636-933-3764

Information Line:

636-282-1422

or 933-3422

Email:

leisure@ponybird.org

emergency contact

314-210-8760

Return Service Requested

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www.ponybird.org/leisure

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**Dick Bennett
Memorial Fund**

If you are in need of financial assistance to attend Leisure activities, scholarship money is available through the Dick Bennett Memorial Fund. Dick was a long time director for our agency and attended many of our Leisure trips as a chaperone, enjoying the events as much as our participants. Memorial funds have been set up to help others experience that same joy. Your request will be kept confidential and the amount of assistance will be based on individual needs. Funds can be used to pay activity fees, transportation fees, or both depending on your need.

To keep this fund viable, continued contributions may be made, including memorials for loved ones. Please make checks to Pony Bird, Inc and note that it is for the Dick Bennett Memorial Fund. Thank you for your continued support.

DO YOU HAVE A DREAM VACATION?

Make your suggestion for the 2025 Summer Vacation on the registration form. Look for the announcement in February newsletter.

