

Jesse's Camps 2022

Dear Ones:

Jesse's Camps were at Walker-Ford, Jack McLean, Jake Gaither, LeVerne Payne, and Lawrence-Gregory Community Centers. We extend huge thanks to Tallahassee Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Affairs staff for creating a week filled with all kinds of activities. We are grateful to be able to work with Ashley Edwards, director, and Bobby Sparks, recreation superintendent, along with all the community center supervisors and their staff. Their commitment and dedication to our community throughout the year is evident in all they do. We could not do this without you!

The traditional kick-off to camp week is for Donna Dillon and me to enjoy our annual shopping excursion to buy fresh fruits and veggies and snacks for our campers. Every year Donna does her special fund raising for this. Having this gift is such a wonderful addition enjoyed by our kids. Thank you, Donna!

We extend a heartfelt thank you to City Commissioner Curtis Richardson for spending time with our youngsters at all five locations. Commissioner Richardson shared how his early life was spent in a small segregated southern town where his parents were not allowed to vote, and all lived under Jim Crow laws. His message to our youngsters was to make sure they get their education, and when they turn 16, they must register to vote and then vote when they turn 18. "You cannot take voting for granted," he stated, "because there are still some who want to block your ability to vote." He also challenged them to read a book during Spring Break telling them that reading opens the world to them, allows them to go places they've never been, and exposes them to new ideas. Our youngsters had so many questions, and Mr. Richardson took the time to answer them. Thank you for being an inspiration to our youth!

We had the great fortune of having the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra's Youth Orchestra join us. Their viola-violin-cello trios performed a classical piece, and they demonstrated how the same instruments could also play popular songs. They chose a song the kids knew, and the kids responded by singing along and clapping. The best part was that every youngster was given the opportunity to try each instrument. The looks on their faces as they did this was priceless. Please visit the TYO website to learn more about them: <https://www.tallahasseeeyouthorchestras.com/>

Music therapist Jane Shaw also went to each site with her instruments, talent, and enthusiasm to give our youngsters an experience in the power of music with dance and with relaxation. Jane also led exciting drumming circles and taught how to keep two different rhythms going. What a great way to harness energy and create connections among our youth!

Daily schedules at each site were full of outdoor activities including kick ball, dodge ball, exercise, games, arts and crafts, tie dying shirts, special educational programs with snakes and alligators, and so much more. I know you'll enjoy the pictures that capture these moments which will be posted on our website soon.

One of the community center supervisors summarized the week by saying this had been his first experience with Jesse's camps, and he was thrilled by all the activities his youngsters had the opportunity to enjoy. More than that, he spoke about how some had made great new friends during the week. He loved that they were leaving with new connections.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the gift given to Jesse's camps by a dear friend and neighbor. As she wrote:

Matching funds to the Jesse Correia Memorial Fund are made possible through a generous gift from Margaret Anne Chase and made in honor and loving memory of Margaret and her brother's grandson, Thomas Colby Hollister (MATC2H).

Margaret Chase was born in 1925 in Warroad, Minnesota, the middle child of educators. Paul and Bess Chase instilled a love of learning, nature, and music, and being "useful to help uplift mankind," in Margaret and her elder brother Thomas and youngest Harriet. Margaret ultimately found her calling and an enriching career as a teacher and Presbyterian missionary in the Republic of Cameroun in equatorial West Africa. Margaret retired in 1990 but not before her grand-nephew, Thomas Hollister, and his twin brother Samuel were born October 7, 1987, on the other side of the continent in Nairobi, Kenya. In early 1989, Tom and Sam took the "slow route" with their parents through Thailand, Hong Kong, and China before settling in Miami. In 1992 the boys moved again to Bangkok, Thailand and spent the next ten years before mom and dad said it was time to get closer to family in Tallahassee. Tom was a drummer and had a great wit and had just started at the UF College of Engineering when he and his dad, Dave Hollister, perished in the same accident on March 13, 2010.

Margaret and Tom, and Dave, would all be pleased to know that they are contributing to instilling the love of learning, nature, and music in children through Jesse's Camps. May this gift, in some small way, be useful to help uplift mankind.

I am so grateful to all our donors and am delighted to report that we were able to match this generous gift! We accept donations throughout the year. Your tax-deductible check should be made out to "Friends of Our Parks/Jesse's camps" and mailed to FOOP c/o Tallahassee Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Affairs, 1201 Myers Park Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32301.

Please visit our website to learn more about Jesse's Camps. <https://www.talgov.com/parks/JesseCorreiaMemorialScholarship.aspx>

Thank you again to all who have helped create and shape this wonderful program that benefits so many of our youngsters throughout our community. It means so much to me to be able to honor my beloved Jesse's life in this unique and exciting way.

With gratitude,
Martha Weinstein, Jesse's Mom