

Throughout the summer, Mooseheart students on campus enjoyed the provided summer programming. Younger students up to age 12 enjoyed a Recreation Program which provided lots of fun experiences including an overnight, week-long stay at Camp Ross. Students aged 12 and older participated in the Environmental Task Force (ETF) program and got paid to help keep our campus beautiful and provide extra support in a variety of locations. They enjoyed having every Wednesday “off” with the opportunity to travel to Camp Ross to swim and BBQ.

The end of summer at Mooseheart was marked by a week of cooler days when students could get outside and enjoy their beautiful campus. An ice cream social sponsored by Chapter 3001 of the WOTM officially ended summer on the last day before school started. All the students were enjoying chatting about the first day of school, receiving some donated school supplies and “catching up” with friends they had not seen all summer while also meeting the 6 new students who arrived over the summer.

The first day of school was a rainy one at Mooseheart – students and Family Teachers alike were VERY THANKFUL for the vans that are provided for each home. This ensured that they arrived dry and in the case of many, their “perfect hair and outfits” were intact. 5 new teachers joined the Mooseheart school this year and they were also ready to meet their new students and “get busy learning!”

Everyone on the Mooseheart campus was treated by the Northern IL Council of Higher Degrees to a Corn Boil the weekend after school began. Eating good corn and cooking down by the beautiful Mooseheart lake is ALWAYS a recipe for success!

School picture day will follow on September 5th and “before we know it” it will be Homecoming and Halloween! The Mooseheart senior class has a “lucky 13” graduates this year who will begin their countdown clocks leading to graduation on May 24th. What an exciting occasion it should be with so many potential extra guests since the International Convention is in Milwaukee this year!

Mooseheart is very pleased to have been able to open 4 more homes this past spring and summer, with plans to open 2 more before Christmas should staffing conditions permit. Filling them up with students is the newest goal and we are already working hard at keeping a steady flow of both staff and students into the campus. If you know anyone that is interested in being a family teacher, all the information is available on the Mooseheart Child City & School website.

I would like to share some history of Mooseheart with all of you! This book, “Mooseheart, A Century of Giving” which commemorates the first one hundred years of Mooseheart Child City and School from 1913 to 2013. It’s pretty cool to see how it began and how it’s evolved!

Who’s had a chance to visit Mooseheart? I have and it’s truly amazing to see it in person! In May of 2023, I took the GHV bus and headed to Mooseheart to attend the Class of 2023 High School Commencement and Pilgrim Degree of Merit celebration.

Some history on the Field House: The field house was built in 1963 at a cost of \$600,000 which is \$6.2 million in 2024 dollars. It is large enough to hold up to 4,000 people for events such as the Commencement and even International Convention sessions. The largest Mooseheart graduating class was the Class of 1934, with 161 young men and women. This is the day that the senior class members, many who came as young children and know no other home, leave campus, and say goodbye to their Mooseheart family. Some will go to college (thanks to the further generosity of the Moose), some will enter the armed forces to defend their country, and other will enter the workforce immediately (thanks in large part to their vocational training). But wherever they go and whatever they do, they will always be part of a very special Mooseheart family. They enter to learn, now they leave to serve – just as the founder of Mooseheart envisioned. And every so often, some very special alumni, choose to return home to serve at Mooseheart.

After the Commencement, everyone heads to the House of God to line the streets and await our newest Pilgrims as they exit the church. The Pilgrim Degree of Merit is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a member of the Fraternity. This degree, originally created on August 1, 1918, is conferred only in the House of God and comes as a reward to members of the Fellowship Degree for extraordinary service to the Fraternity. As the new Pilgrims parade by, they are congratulated by family, friends and our Mooseheart children, who look up to them. Some history on the House of God: The House of God was the longest fundraising drive to complete a single structure in the history of the Moose fraternity started at the August 1918 International Convention. By the fall of 1948 fundraising had cleared the \$1 million mark which is \$13 million in 2024 dollars. A foundation was dug and poured before winter. The structure was to be built on an updated-Classical design, in limestone in combination with steel framing. Construction raced through 1949, with the structure fully enclosed by the winter of 1949. Original stained-glass windows, some designed specifically for and depicting scenes of Mooseheart. The total cost had soared to \$2 million which is \$26 million in 2024 dollars. The gigantic pipe organ alone came in at almost \$4 million in 2024 dollars. Finally, 32 years later, during the 1950 International Convention on Sunday, August 20th, with the very well-promoted dedication ceremonies drawing roughly 10,000 members to the campus, one of the biggest dreams in Mooseheart's history, certainly the longest, had finally been realized. The House of God truly is a sight to see!

Sharing in this experience with my Moose brothers and sisters was truly heartwarming. Touring the campus was rewarding, especially seeing all the children out visiting everyone!

God bless Mooseheart, Moosehaven, our service men and women and each and every one of you!

Jennifer Cilley
Mooseheart Chairman