

| LOVE |



PEACE PAVILION

By Andy Kroesen
Executive Director of Peace Pathways • Peace Pavilion





My name is Andy Kroesen, and I am the executive director for PeacePathways and the Peace Pavilion in Independence, MO, USA. My wife Loretta and I attend the Woods Chapel Community of Christ congregation in Lee's Summit, MO, USA. I have been involved in Community of Christ throughout my life, serving in various ways, from camp counselor and camp pastor at various youth camps to choir director, Sunday school teacher, and Co-Pastor.

Before I began working at the Peace Pavilion in 2016, I was a public school band director for 29 years. The time I spent in music education helped prepare me for my career in promoting peace because music and peace have a great deal in common. Both require effort, practice, patience, and the ability to work well with others. I went from teaching children about melody, harmony, balance, and blend to teaching children about peace, harmony, balance, and inclusion.

PeacePathways is a self-funded nonprofit organization that was developed for the purpose of bringing together groups and organizations that are actively focused on the mission of peace & justice through programs and activities. PeacePathways provides oversight for the Peace Pavilion as one of our principal functions. The Peace Pavilion is a unique interactive museum designed to teach the concepts of peace and to empower people to incorporate peacemaking skills into their everyday lives. PeacePathways and the Peace Pavilion are affiliates of the Community of Christ.

We are currently engaged in a major expansion project as we are opening a new Peace Pavilion facility that is 5 times the size of our current facility and is located one block east of the Community Christ Temple, in Independence, MO, USA.

For 25 years the focus of the Peace Pavilion has primarily been on elementary-age students, and we will continue to offer exhibits and peace education for children as we do now.

But, in addition, we are expanding our outreach to offer programs, activities, and exhibits for middle school and high school students as well as adults. To better reflect our expanded mission, we've changed our name from the "Children's Peace Pavilion" to "The Peace Pavilion".

Additionally, we are expanding younger to offer exhibits for toddlers. Using the same four areas of

the rest of the Pavilion; Peace for Me, Peace for Us, Peace for Everyone and Peace for the Planet, but presenting these concepts on a toddler's level.

Our Peace Pavilion committee has worked for a few years developing exciting new exhibits, and activities. We have purposely planned for the new exhibit areas to address all learning styles, make accommodations for all abilities when possible, and appeal to all age groups.

So, why are we doing all of this? Well, you don't have to look very far to see how much conflict and pain there is around us. All you have to do is read the paper, look at social media, or watch the news to see that we need more ways to offer peace in the world. How many times have you heard heartbreaking stories about young people who harmed themselves or others because they were rejected by their peers or because couldn't endure the bullying they faced? I think you will agree that there is truly a need for hope and peace, now more than ever.

We want the Peace Pavilion to be a Place for Peace where we can provide a safe environment where children, teens, and adults of all ethnicities and faiths, can learn about peace and what it means to be a peacemaker and to reach out to schools and community organizations to share ways to help promote peace.

We have over 40 new exhibits planned for the pavilion. Many of these exhibits can be found in museums all around the world, others are updated versions of our current exhibits, and some are totally new ideas that are unique to the Peace Pavilion. We are so excited about all the new programs and exhibits that we will provide at the new Peace Pavilion because of the positive impact this will make on our community and on everyone who visits.

One of the Church's Mission Initiatives is to Pursue Peace on Earth. At the Peace Pavilion, we are working diligently to promote peaceful learning, living, and action and striving to help others find ways that they can become peacemakers. Our hope is that the new Peace Pavilion will be a model for peace that can be used throughout the United States and around the world like some of our current associate peace centers in Fremont, CA, Chattanooga, TN, Rolla, MO, Seattle, WA, Kauai, Hawaii, Soule, South Korea, as well as four traveling peace centers in England. All these peace centers are based on the Peace Pavilion model at the Community of Christ Auditorium in Independence, MO, USA.



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