

# OUR HOUSE

## INFOCUS



### SUMMER PROGRAMS

Meet our Summer VISTAs and hear from the people they serve.

# SUMMER AT OUR HOUSE

Summer is a busy and exciting time for all programs at Our House. Our Children's Center sees the biggest change over the course of the season as children and youth from across our community begin their Summer Break. In Our Club, youth attend Monday-Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. and rotate through programming in Reading, Physical Fitness, STEM, Visual Arts, Life Skills, Reflection, and Service Learning while taking field trips to museums, libraries, parks, and pools every Tuesday and Thursday. Little Learners continues to operate throughout the Summer as well, as children participate in outdoor activities while continuing to work towards meeting developmental milestones. Summer programs at Our House stretch beyond the Children's Center however. The Career Center and Housing programs see an influx of volunteers and meal servers as they continue to work to provide quality services to our adult clients as well. In order to meet the needs of our clients during the Summer months, Our House is fortunately able to bring on a team of Summer VISTAs who give 10 weeks of service across all of our programs. This year, we have 28 VISTAs serving in roles from Our Club Team Leads to Counselors in the Career Center. We're excited to introduce you to some of this year's Summer VISTAs and hear what they plan to bring to our organization and our clients!





# JAELA AND IRELAND

## *Volunteer Relations Summer VISTAs*

Like many of our Summer VISTAs, Jaela Hilliard and Ireland Stone-Smith are current college students, studying at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Central Arkansas. As Volunteer Relations VISTAs, the services they will provide will play an important role in all of our programs at Our House. Ireland's focus is on coordinating potential meal servers to provide quality food and service to our clients while Jaela focuses on the individuals and groups that, like her, have chosen to give us their time this summer to volunteer. Both were introduced to Our House through their mothers, who have been longtime volunteers here.

*"I loved the section of the mission that talks about active participation in the community. This is important because most of the time people become consumed in their daily lives and forget to give back. I wanted to do my part in the community through Our House."*

*-Jaela Hilliard*

*"I feel that Our House is unique compared to other shelters. They don't just provide a home, but also a future, and I think that's really inspiring not just for the residents but for everyone."*

*-Ireland Stone-Smith*



# CLAIRE WHITE

*Summer Green  
Team Lead*

*"Everything Our Club does is so purposeful. In every way it is so thought out and meaningful. It is a place where I have grown and have been given back so much from the staff and the kids"*

Claire White is one of our returning Summer VISTAs in Our Club. A rising senior at the University of Tulsa, Claire stumbled upon Our House somewhat by chance when she received our volunteer newsletter and thought that our mission and Our Club in particular lined up with her passion about community development. After serving as a Summer VISTA last summer, Claire decided to return for another year with Green Team, where she hopes to continue to be able to make a positive difference in the lives of the youth she serves.

*"I like Miss Claire. She's always nice and calm, and gives us a chance to make right even when we get in trouble."*

*-Rayshaun, Green Team Member*

*"I'm happy Miss Claire came back, I'm excited to have her again this summer."*

*-Jaydrien, Green Team Member*





# MIKAYLA NASH

## *Child Development Summer VISTA*

*"My favorite part about Our House is the fact that it's designed to help everyone. It doesn't exclude anyone, everyone is a person at Our House."*

Mikayla Nash is a first-time Summer VISTA who currently serves in our Little Learners program. She learned about the program through her cousin, Chase Pearson, who is also a National Service Member at Our House. She admits that this is a new experience for her, but nonetheless remains excited about the opportunity to play an important role in early childhood development.



*"Miss Mikayla is my favorite because she's my best friend."*

*-Derick'a, 3 Year-Old*

*"Miss Mikayla is the best! I love her! A lot!."*

*-Za'niya, 3 Year-Old*

# JAMES LUMSEY

*Physical Fitness  
Programmer*

*"What keeps me coming back year after year is the kids and the opportunities to give back to the community. I get told 'I want to do what you do when I grow up' and that's why I keep coming back."*



James Lumsey has been involved with Our House for longer than any other Summer VISTA. James himself attended Our Club when he was in high school and served as an intern through the City of Little Rock after he graduated. He has since served multiple terms as a Summer VISTA. This year, as Physical Fitness Programmer, he aims to increase awareness and participation in maintaining a healthy lifestyle among both his students and his fellow staff.



*"Mr. James truly understands us. Everyone looks up to him and he always finds a way to make sure we all have fun and learn at the same time."*

*-Antoinette, Light Blue Team Member*

*"My favorite thing about Mr. James is how fair he is. He can be a teacher, a friend, and a role model all at once to every kid, regardless of who they are."*

*-Trinity, Light Blue Team Member*



# KELSIE HAMMONS

## *Recovery Support Summer VISTA*

*"I have a natural knack for wanting to help. I see the good in people when they don't see it in themselves. Sometimes I see hardships but the good moments, even the small ones, that come through make it worth it. This place gives people a chance and I'm happy to be a part of it."*

Kelsie Hammons has made herself a familiar face at Our House over the past few years. She has previously served as an Americorps member in the Career Center as well as a volunteer with our counseling clinic. She is currently serving a Summer term while she works towards her Masters in Social Work at UALR. This summer, Kelsie will lead four recovery support groups in the Career Center and will work with clients on issues from substance abuse to PTSD in order to better their lives despite the trauma that they have endured.



*"Kelsie is always very available, helpful, and caring. Having a group to talk through my issues has really helped me grow."*

*-Dee Roberts, Recovery Client*



Interested in being a VISTA at Our House? Click here to view our 12 open positions!

This issue of Our House In Focus was written by:



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*Communications VISTA*

*Special Thanks to all of our Summer VISTAs and clients who agreed to be featured in this issue!*

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