

## **Adventure Club Takes the Vare Recreation Center's After School Program To New Places**

*By Aaron "Shaggy" Hoffer, Recreation Leader 1, Vare Recreation Center*

The New Adventure Club at Vare Recreation Center enhances the After School Program with weekly field trips. Schools used to provide students with many exciting and educational experiences away from the classroom, but budget cuts, school restructurings and increasing focus on testing has made these increasingly rare. Vare is picking up this slack by working with fellow rec centers to make more trips possible for our kids.

While the city boasts many free and low-cost trips, it takes more than a phone call to get kids from a rec center to a museum. Fortunately, we don't have to do it alone. Carousel House and the South Philly Older Adult Center make our trips possible by lending their precious vans to the cause. These vans solve our greatest challenge, getting our kids to the trip sites!

With this help, the Adventure Club's first season has been a great success. More than 100 unique students, parents and community members have enjoyed 10 trips so far this year, and we still have ice skating to go. Our brave adventurers have journeyed to:

- Eastern State Penitentiary
- FDR Park
- The Franklin Institute Paine Skate Park
- The Seaport Museum & Waterfront area
- The Art Museum
- The Liberty Bell
- Independence Hall
- LOVE Park
- Franklin Square and
- The Please Touch Museum.

The Adventure Club's recreation leader, Aaron "Shaggy" Hoffer, says, "These trips show our little guys that Philly is bigger than their schools and so much more than their block, that the city is more than just school and places to spend money." Aaron hopes to increase the scope of the trips and is eager to apply this past season's experience to future adventures. Aaron's overall goal is structure a sustainable program that provides extended educational experience and engenders appreciation for our beloved Philadelphia.

If you desire trip information to get your own field trips going, have questions, comments, or would like to assist with the program, just shoot an email over to [varedaycamp@gmail.com](mailto:varedaycamp@gmail.com).

**The current Adventure Club Mission Statement:**

The Adventure Club provides weekly field trip opportunities to the after school program and its extended local community. This experience enriches the quality of life for the participants by encouraging new interests, developing social skills, increasing awareness of Philadelphia's vast resources, helping students relate their school experiences to real-life, and, of course having fun.