This summer my family and I had some opportunities to “Ponder on the Porch” as our oldest son went off to college. What I mean is that we had meaningful time to sit and talk about life and smile. These moments don’t happen every day, but when they do, they bring heartwarming joy and huge smiles to my face.

As fall begins, this is a moment to ponder the start of another school year. What an opportune time to set the standard of excellence in our minds as we make new goals and look forward to educational experiences and positive moments we will share this year.

At Mooseheart, we are fortunate, blessed, and thankful because we have a terrific supportive cast of Fraternal members! We look forward to sharing this year with all of you! We are extremely grateful for the countless efforts provided by everyone associated with the Moose and Mooseheart, including our wonderful staff.

We must focus on the significance we have in educating children and providing the best care for them. We must continue to demonstrate care, concern, and to nurture our children, no matter the challenges.

What if we only accepted children who are the most well-behaved and academically-sound? It would be easier to only work with children like that. I believe it is most rewarding to work with children who push us to be great role models, educators, coaches, and staff members.

The children of Mooseheart – our children – often inspire us and capture our hearts. It is our sacred duty to provide them security, instill confidence, and broaden each child’s skills and abilities, while teaching them to dream about future successes.

Thank you, Moose Fraternity, as well as the staff and community at Mooseheart for mastering the power of unity, teamwork, and hope. Thank you for supporting such a unique and special place. When people outside the Fraternity ask why you are a Moose, I hope you can reply with conviction, “because we support Mooseheart!”

If you should find yourself on a porch this fall, take some time to ponder your fellow Moose. Appreciate them for being strong and powerful, mighty and relentless, loving and caring, supporters and encouragers who want nothing but the joy of seeing others succeed.

As you ponder, also be grateful for each opportunity to take a child’s hand and heart and show them that opportunities are still endless and that wonder, enchantment and dreaming are not gone. God Bless Mooseheart!

— From my heart to yours, Gary Urwiler, Mooseheart Executive Director
New students to Mooseheart this summer brought approximately 60 suitcases to our campus as they moved in and got settled in their new homes.

Wonderful donors, both corporate and individual gave over 300 backpacks complete with start-up supplies to the Mooseheart campus. Each student received a beautiful new backpack and there are enough for new students who will come throughout the school year. Thank you Donors!

Summer closed at Mooseheart with the wedding of Moose members who were also former Mooseheart staff. Their wedding was one of over 1,000+ weddings that have been held at the House of God since it was built in 1950! What a beautiful setting!

Mooseheart students began their school year with new shirts and pullovers as part of their coordinated clothing. It took over 1,500 new Mooseheart shirts and pullovers to outfit the student body! They look FANTASTIC!

Mooseheart students traveled to Indiana to pick blueberries for the entire campus. They brought back enough blueberries to make approximately 16,000 blueberry muffins OR 17,000 blueberry pancakes! YUM!
Exciting Events

100th Year Celebrations
June 2 marked the 100th graduating senior class for Mooseheart school and the celebration of the 100th Pilgrim class of the Loyal Order of Moose.

Back to School
August 15 and 16 saw the kickoff of the 2018-2019 school year with the annual “Back to School Bash” and first day of classes for students.

International Inspiration
Jeremy Kalicum (Nanaimo BC, Lodge 1052), Mooseheart class of 2014, shared his story of thanks and appreciation with those in attendance at the International convention in New Orleans. (Right) Mooseheart 5th grader Gracie Edwards (Meridian, MS Lodge 441), enjoyed teaching Mooseheart Board member, John Mangiatini (Pullman, WA Lodge 943), a lesson about hockey at the Mooseheart booth.

Yes to VBS
Mooseheart children and volunteer staff enjoyed a week-long Vacation Bible School at the Mooseheart House of God. This year’s theme was “Game on.”
From the Mouth of a Child

Mooseheart students share their thoughts on Mooseheart School and all it offers.

With the start of a new school year comes the renewed hope and the excitement of a fresh start. Some of the students are experiencing the Child City for the first time while many seniors are in the last lap of a long run at Mooseheart. Either way, they all have different thoughts about what this year will bring.

This year at Mooseheart I plan to ...

- go to camp!
- eat snacks!
- win!
- be happy!
- score touchdowns!
- grow!
- play!
- go to camp!
- conquer my fears!
- graduate!
- get all A’s!
- read!
- eat snacks!
- focus on classes!
- play basketball!
Rambler Roundup

Visit Facebook for the full collection of Mooseheart photos.

Welcome
This summer saw many new faces join the Mooseheart community.

Kohl’s Cares
The Kohl’s Cares team of volunteers continues to partner with and serve the Mooseheart community. This June they visited campus in full force to wash the entire fleet of Mooseheart vehicles. Mooseheart is glad that Kohl’s cares!

New Playground
Mooseheart inaugurated a new playground in August. Donations came from the John E. Meyer family and Moose member Shirley Watson.
Enter to Learn ...
True stories of two families’ paths to Mooseheart

Rachel was 18 when she married Kevin after a brief romance. Kevin was a few years older than Rachel, and soon after their wedding, the couple moved far from home. The marriage soured within months. Rachel eventually became pregnant and a baby, Helene, was born.

Rachel left town with a boyfriend and left Kevin to care for the infant on his own. Kevin struggled through the next year, and after a failed attempt at reconciliation with Rachel, returned home, where he accepted help from his mother. Kevin worked long hours to support Helene, but this meant leaving her with different caregivers as he tried to make ends meet.

Kevin endured failed relationships, was diagnosed with a chronic disease and developed a drinking problem before he met Rita. While Kevin and Rita were able to make ends meet, Kevin's alcoholism became a problem. After a drunken episode that resulted in Kevin's arrest and incarceration for domestic violence, local authorities referred Rita to Mooseheart. While Kevin was still in jail, Rita and Helene were evicted from their home. As the family tries to get back on their feet and work through the problems they face, Helene is enjoying the safety and security provided by her new home at Mooseheart.

... Leave to Serve

Edgar Weakley was a member of Bloomington, IL Lodge 745 where his daughter Elsie fondly recalls attending the family Christmas parties as a little girl. Tragically, Mr. Weakley suffered a fatal stroke at the age of 44, leaving his wife Doris alone to care for their five children – four boys and her only daughter Elsie. Doris struggled to provide for her family while working as a custodian. As challenges continued to mount on the widowed mother, her family encouraged her to consider Mooseheart for the youngest children, 10-year-old Elsie and her 12-year-old brother. Elsie arrived at Mooseheart on November 22, 1961.

The transition to life at Mooseheart was not easy for Elsie but she found encouragement and kindness from Maddie, a cook who was assigned to her home. As the days turned into years, Elsie developed a love for swimming in the Mooseheart pool, but what she enjoyed most was Camp Ross. She fondly recalls crafts, cookouts, hiking, kickball and climbing what Mooseheart alumni called “Jacob’s Ladder.” As a high schooler, Elsie volunteered each summer to serve as a counselor for the younger children attending camp. Elsie said, “I loved everything about Camp Ross.”

Elsie graduated from Mooseheart in the spring of 1970 and took a job caring for a disabled woman as a live-in caregiver. She later worked in the kitchen at a local convent, where she made use of the skills she had developed during her vocational training in the Home Economics program at Mooseheart. In 1982, Elsie returned to Mooseheart to work in the laundry department. For the next 36 years, Elsie served Mooseheart in different capacities, including phone operator, security and transportation. She particularly enjoyed driving the children to and from the airport.

In September, 2018, Mooseheart, IL Chapter 3001 member Elsie Weakley became a Moosehaven resident. At Moosehaven, Elsie looks forward to swimming again, meeting new people and playing cards – in her words, “retirement stuff.”

Elsie said, “I appreciate all that Mooseheart has done for me and all the people that have helped me.” Today Mooseheart returns that appreciation to its dear friend Elsie for her 36 years of service. Enjoy your retirement, you deserve it!
Mooseheart, IL August 16   New School Year Begins
Mooseheart welcomes a number of new students every year to campus, and this year is no different. More than 40 new students are on-campus this fall, fulfilling Mooseheart’s role as a school that offers an education and a home for children in-need. For many years, Mooseheart has celebrated the start of a new school year with a Back to School Bash the evening before school opens. The Geneva office of publishers Houghton Mifflin Harcourt continued a long-standing partnership by providing backpacks and school supplies for Mooseheart’s elementary and middle school students.

Mooseheart, IL May 25   Students Honor Memorial Day
Every year, Mooseheart students recognize Memorial Day on the Friday before the holiday weekend. This year’s ceremony took place May 25. All Mooseheart High School students are participants in the school’s Naval Junior Reserve Officer’s Training Corps (NJROTC) unit, which conducts the program at the House of God.

Central to the service, which honors fallen U.S. service members with readings, poems and videos, is the placement of a wreath on the House of God altar.

Following the ceremony, NJROTC cadets joined Mooseheart staff and others who attended the service in a silent walk through the campus’ Flag Walk, which consists of flags placed in honor of the military service of Moose members, relatives of Moose members and Mooseheart graduates. NJROTC Commanding Officer Amanda Jones led the procession through the Flag Walk.
http://www.mooseheart.org/2018/05/25/memorial-day-service/

On the Web
Our top news on www.mooseheart.org

Mooseheart, IL June 5
2018 Graduation
Thank you to all of the Mooseheart alumni, Moose members, and guests who helped us cheer on the 2018 graduating class. It was truly a special day! To view photos from Graduation, please visit our Facebook page.
http://www.mooseheart.org/2018/06/05/2018-graduation/