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www.aok-nwil.com:

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Find us on Facebook: *All Our Kids (AOK)*



Stephenson
All Our Kids (AOK) Network Meeting
April 14, 2026
Time: 9:15 AM

In Person
Freeport Public Library
100 E. Douglas St
Freeport, IL 61032

ZOOM LINK OPTION:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85300775757>

AGENDA

Attendees: Pamela Williams, Bekah Randecker (AOK), Layla Walker, Julian Vilchez (AOK Parent Ambassadors), Danielle Wittig, Linn Carter (Mercy Health/FHN), Crystal Cob (CASA), Nicole Kararkas (FCI), Jennifer Beck (WIC), Patty Monk (Salvation Army), Rassny Homer, Beth Johnson (ROE8/ELA), Jim Peterson, Mary Kelly (YSN), Toni Cummings (Believe in the Children), Kaye Nichols (Freeport Park Dist.), Stephanie Brock (Bright Point), Barb Davis (HFI), Ashley Harms, April Reed (Amity), Sherry Pearson (Hearts that Care), Amy Pinkston (MBD), Janelle Nelson (Hope WINS), Gabby Brunner (Child & Family Connections), Crystal Garkey, Stephanie Jones, Cecilia Van Heeren (YWCA), Shante Holman (IDEC), Ashley McKinney (SCHD), Karen Cassidy (Parent), Katiana Rodriguez (SCHD), Bella Cece (Birth to Five), Connie Kraft (United Way), Chelsea Owens (Head Start), Jennifer Rojas (Meridian/ Youth Care), Tashara Grandys (U of I Ext), Janet Vrtol (RAMP) (37)

Welcome / Introduction: The meeting began at 9:15 AM with welcome & introduction from each participant.

Greetings/Updates from IDEC: We were greeted by Shante Holman from the Illinois Department of Early Childhood. Shante Holman shared that the Customer Service Bureau will continue supporting and connecting partners to early childhood programs during the transition to the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), effective July 1, 2026. Updates will be provided as changes occur. Partners are encouraged to attend IDEC town halls to learn more about the new agency, including topics like technology, data, and grant management. The next virtual meeting for external partners is scheduled for April 15 from 5:30–6:30 PM. You can register at www.idec.illinois.gov. For questions, partners can contact the Customer Service Bureau at DHS.DEC.Info@illinois.gov, reach Shante Holman directly, or email Questions.IDEC@illinois.gov for transition-related inquiries.

Family Engagement Updates- AOK supported two events in March: The Community Baby Shower on March 30, 2026, and the Parent Swap on March 14, 2026. These efforts were made possible through collaboration with multiple partners, including local parent groups, health organizations, community services, the faith-based community and the public library, all working together to support families in the community.

Review of Q3 Report Overview: The local staff shared the progress & barriers that has been accomplished or attempted during Q3. Please click link to review Q3 Report - <https://canva.link/5o0dip0gxcy02xf> . Pam is

requesting a 2-hour meeting in May, so that we might review survey results, parental feedback and begin planning for FY27.

Partner Updates:

All Our Kids of Northwest Illinois - We are excited to offer three “Families, Food, and Connections” events to community members. Food is at the heart of every culture, and we hope to use it as a pathway to meaningful conversations about belonging and racial healing. Stephenson County event will be held on May 2, 2026, at the St Johns UCC. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

Birth to Five: will be hosting a virtual parent café on April 30th from 4:00 – 6:00PM – [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

Stephenson County Health Department: Will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary with an Open House on April 28th from 4PM – 6 PM, all are invited to attend, light refreshments and interactive activities will be offered during the event. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER.](#)

The SCHD is also preparing to offer FREE school-physicals to the community, with the first being offered on June 9th by appointment only, more details to come.

Mercy Health/FHN – Preparing to host their annual diaper drive some time in September, more to come.

Salvation Army – In need of Infant / Toddler clothing and shoes, please bring donations to 106 W. Exchange St. Freeport, IL 61032.

Hope WINS – All are invited to attend/ promote upcoming events – [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

Moving Beyond Depression - is an in-home mental health program that provides a 15-week **cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** intervention for pregnant and parenting mothers experiencing postpartum depression. The program focuses on improving maternal mental health, strengthening parent-child relationships, and supporting overall family well-being. Currently have openings for both English and Spanish speaking mothers who live in Stephenson County. Referrals can be submitted through IRIS.

The Family Enrichment Program- Currently have openings in their home visiting program in Jo Daviess County.

SCHD/ Doula Program – Currently accepting mother who will deliver in May 2026 – Referrals can be submitted in IRIS.

Healthy Families Illinois – Currently seeking to hire to home visitors, currently in the interview process.

WIC – Now offering WIC Wednesdays, which is an outreach events hosted by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program to connect families with nutrition support and services. These events provide information on eligibility and enrollment, along with hands-on nutrition education and suggested recipes that

directly relate to the foods offered through WIC. Participants can learn how to prepare healthy meals using WIC-approved items, while also accessing breastfeeding support and referrals to additional community resources.

U of I Extension - Stephenson County 4-H Super Saturday is a hands-on youth event hosted by University of Illinois Extension at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau in Freeport on April 18, 2026. Open to ages 5–18, participants choose interactive sessions like crafts, food activities, STEM, and agriculture-based learning. The event encourages creativity, skill-building, and fun, with advance registration required. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

RAMP- RAMP Sip & Sample is a fundraising event hosted by RAMP on April 30, 2026, in downtown Rockford at Cahoots. The event features wine, beer, spirits, and food tastings, along with a silent auction, live music, and games. Proceeds support services for individuals with disabilities, with tickets available in advance or at the door. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

*The **RAMP River Run** is a community race event hosted by RAMP in Rockford on August 15, 2026. The event includes a half marathon, 5K run, and 3K walk/wheel, with staggered start times. Proceeds support services for individuals with disabilities, and participants who register by July 20 receive a free T-shirt. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)*

The **Bad Pants Open** is a fun 9-hole golf fundraiser on June 17, 2026, at Timber Pointe Golf Club, featuring contests, a silent auction, and prizes to support RAMP. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

Bright Point – Excited to announce that they have hired a new Home visiting / Doula Supervisor, she will be introduced at next months meeting

Freeport Ministers Fellowship Alliance - A free **Mind, Body, Spirit Community Day** will be held on May 2, 2026, from 10 AM–1 PM at the Stephenson County Farm Bureau in Freeport. Hosted by the Freeport Ministers Fellowship Alliance Barbershop Transformation and Wellness in partnership with Northern Illinois Food Bank and sponsored by Healing Illinois, the event invites organizations to participate by hosting a resource table and connecting with the community. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)

High Hope Freeport – The **Young Entrepreneur Expo** is a community event taking place on **Saturday, July 11, 2026**, from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Adams and Main Street Stage during the Tutty Baker Fest. Sponsored by Operation Love Freeport and High Hope Freeport, the expo invites young innovators aged **8 to 18** to showcase, promote, and sell their unique products and services. Interested participants are encouraged to scan the provided QR code to register and demonstrate their business talents to the Freeport community. [CLICK TO VIEW FLYER](#)