

For Immediate Release:

For Additional Information Contact:

John Gardner, President & CEO

Phone: (888) 728-1954

Pana, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote the volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize outstanding community members for their volunteer efforts of improvement to our community.

The Pink Panther Running Club has been chosen as our current Volunteers of the Quarter. While training for the Chicago marathon in the summer of 2006, Pattie Gatons and Jessica Miller discussed an article both had read in a recent *Runner's World* magazine featuring a running club for young girls. They agreed that this type of program would benefit young ladies in the Pana community. Running was something both truly enjoyed, and still do to this day. It has helped both women build self-confidence, maintain healthy lifestyles, and overcome a number of life's obstacles. Jessica mentioned this running club idea to Christina Sloan, another running friend and close colleague of hers. Pattie, Christina, and Jessica began The Pink Panther Running Club in the fall of 2006 for young ladies in grades 4-6.

With the help of the Pana Education Foundation Mini-Grant Program, the Pink Panther Running Club was able to hold its first training session. Roughly 52 girls trained for 6-7 weeks to complete the Mt. Zion Gettin' on Track 5K, benefitting Mt. Zion's cross country program. Since then the program has continued to grow. Numerous young ladies have completed multiple 5K races with the Pink Panther Running Club. Since 2007, the club has organized the Panthers in the Park 5K, a local race to benefit the Pink Panthers. Many local businesses and individuals generously support this race each year.

The Pink Panther Running Club holds two training sessions - summer and fall. Participants are encouraged to set their own goals and run at their own pace. Throughout the training program the Pink Panthers discuss building self-esteem, goal setting, and maintaining healthy eating habits.

In honor of their volunteer services, Peoples Bank will make a donation to the Pink Panther Running Club and their name will be placed on a plaque to be displayed at the bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Tower Hill, Charleston, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples is a full service bank offering outstanding customer service to consumers, small business, and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.