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Summer 2026

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Summer 2026

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Best Buddies comes to Springfield

Southeast High School launches first chapter, Lanphier and Springfield High to follow

CC PARENT | Cinda Ackerman Klickna

Southeast High School students filled the commons area during their lunch break on April 1. The Southeast drum line kicked off the festive gathering; students ate their lunches, purchased T-shirts and snacks, and took part in face painting and other activities. It wasn't an April Fool's Day celebration but the kickoff of the Best Buddies Friendship Walk scheduled for May.

The first Best Buddies International program has been established in Springfield and students at Southeast High School are breaking barriers. Led by special education teacher Kate Marley, the work brings life skills students together with general education students. Marley says, "This has been life-changing for students as they learn to look at people differently and accept classmates."

Best Buddies International is a nonprofit organization that creates friendships and leadership opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). It was founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, the son of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who founded the Special Olympics, and Sargent Shriver, who was the founding director of the Peace Corps. What started as a lone chapter has grown to 3,000 chapters around the world.

In Illinois, the state headquarters is located in Peoria. There are 153 Best Buddies International chapters in Illinois; many are in schools, but chapters can be community-wide also. Becca Impens, the state communications director, joined the group eight years ago and says,



Lindsay Auguis, left, is the Southeast High School student who serves as president of the school's Best Buddies chapter. She is pictured with teachers Kate Marley and Miles Tepatti. PHOTO COURTESY BEST BUDDIES

"I knew I wanted to be a part of the program when I discovered how this can help people. My nephew is autistic; I want him to be welcomed by others."

The initiative to start a chapter in Springfield came from incoming District #186 Superintendent Terrance Jordan, who shared information about the program with the Southeast High School principal, Cody Trigg. Trigg approached first-year teacher Marley at the beginning of this school year, asking if she would be willing to develop and lead the work. Marley jumped at the chance.

As a special education teacher, she knows the needs of students and how many in special education are often shunned by other students due to their disabilities. Bringing students from life skills together with students in general education classes was "just the right thing to do to close the gap between students and create inclusivity," Marley says.

General education students were invited through school announcements to come to a meeting to find out about being a buddy and many showed up. Some couldn't commit, but 25

students are now part of the group. They are buddies to around 20 special education students.

The group, "more like a club," Marley says, meets every three weeks after school. The general education students create events for their life skills buddies. The students have not only become friends with students they had never met, but also have taken on the work of organizing, hosting, delegating and more, developing leadership skills.

Daily, students might stop by a classroom to say hi, high-five a buddy in the hallway or eat lunch together. Marley says, "the life skills students had their own area to eat; now they are welcomed into the regular school area."

Life skills teacher Miles Tepatti is enthusiastic about the impact of the program. "My students are often seen as different; many times, in my own schooling, I saw that special ed students were often housed in a separate area of the school. This program is getting rid of barriers. I see smiles of joy on the faces of my

students."

The group chose a student president, senior Lindsay Auguis. She says, "I love that Best Buddies opens students' eyes to the other class down the hall and helps them to see that they are no different than us. Being mean and judgmental is the ugliest thing you can ever do."

The group decided they needed to raise money for a special event for their buddies. When a jewelry maker donated items to the group, they set up a stand at the Golden Hour Bake House downtown (now closed) and made \$200. Then, they took more jewelry to Southeast basketball games and made another \$300.

The money allowed them to host a holiday party for their buddies. The life skills students enjoyed hot cocoa, treats, pizza, crafts, face painting and even a dance in the Southeast library. A Valentine's party mirrored the holiday event.

The impact of the program reaches more than the students in it. Tepatti says, "I see our life skills students

approach students who are in general ed but not officially a Best Buddy, and they, too, are welcoming – giving a hug or smile."

Best Buddies International holds annual Friendship Walks in more than 80 cities across the world that draw over 50,000 participants. Marley learned from her Peoria contact of the Friendship Walk and the need to raise close to \$15,000 so the group has been selling T-shirts, looking at other fundraising opportunities and seeking donations. Jordan found a donor who helped pay for the May 3 Friendship Walk and will also help start chapters at both Lanphier High School and Springfield High School next year.

The Friendship Walk planning is going strong for events at the new Spartan Field with food trucks, infield activities, music, track walks and more. Marley says, "I know it will be smiles and happiness." □

Cinda Ackerman Klickna loved visiting the April event as she previously taught at Southeast High School.



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Postpone the smartphone

New group encourages parents to seek solidarity
in delaying giving kids phones

PARENT | Melissa Hostetter

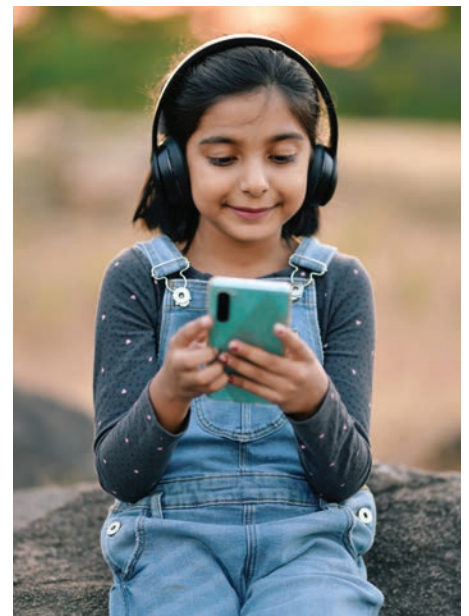
“Let kids be kids a little longer” is a motto of Wait Until 8th, an organization that encourages parents to delay giving their children smartphones until the end of eighth grade. With the advent of the iPhone in 2007 and the rise of YouTube and TikTok, our children have slowly become the “anxious generation,” a term coined by psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt. Wait Until 8th seeks to turn this tide.

Why wait until 8th grade? Evidence indicates that a child who receives a smartphone before the age of 13 is more likely to have higher rates of suicidal thoughts, difficulty with self-regulation and lower self-esteem.

There are many other reasons why parents should wait to give their child a smartphone. First and foremost, the very nature of childhood is changing. Over the last century, childhood usually consisted of playing outside, hanging out with friends, playing with toys or spending time with family. Over the last decade, this time-honored tradition has started to go by the wayside.

As a teacher, I have observed a decrease in attention spans and engagement over the last decade. Smartphones and other screens have served as a constant distraction. The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study from the National Institute of Health in 2025 indicated that higher screen use was associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder and attention disorders.

Additionally, research has demonstrated that smartphones are addictive. The tech industry has



intentionally designed apps and social media to draw us in and keep us craving more. With every ding and beep, we get a hit of the “feel-good” neurotransmitter, dopamine. Even adults struggle with this endless loop.

Smartphones can also impair relationships. Once a parent gives their child a smartphone, the efforts to minimize the risks begin. Parents block apps and schedule “downtime.” They may insist the phone be put away during meals or kept out of a child’s room at bedtime. Due to the addictive nature of the phone and a child’s desire to never miss out, these actions often lead to arguments. These disagreements can erode a parent’s relationship with their child. Parents are often left feeling

isolated and helpless.

To address this common experience, Wait Until 8th takes an approach that builds community among parents. Parents may take a pledge to delay giving their child a smartphone on the Wait Until 8th website. Once 10 parents from the same grade and school have made the pledge, all parents receive an email listing the names of the other parents who have made the pledge. Parents will know they are not alone in delaying this new rite of passage.

The good news is that there are many alternatives to smartphones. First, ask yourself whether your child truly needs a phone to reach you. If not, then hold off. If your child is old enough to start chatting on the phone with friends, consider a TinCan phone, which offers the wonder of an old-school landline. The Wait Until 8th website lists several other smartphone and smartwatch alternatives.

There are currently two local chapters of Wait Until 8th in Springfield and Chatham. Both chapters have active Facebook pages. In early May, we held a Screen Sanity Parent Training and hope to hold another in the fall. Keep an eye on our pages for future events.

Other organizations also offer encouragement and information for parents. The Anxious Generation Movement suggests the following four “new norms” for childhood: no smartphones before high school, no social media before 16, phone-free schools from bell to bell and more “independence, free play and responsibility in the real world.” Other groups such as Let Grow, a Smartphone Free Childhood and Fairplay also focus on restoring childhood.

When parents delay the smartphone, their children will miss out. They will miss out on potential cyberbullying, inappropriate content or attention-stealing videos. Instead, by postponing the smartphone, we can make room for real-life friendships and experiences. Our children, like us, are wired for human connection.

Melissa Hostetter is the leader of the Springfield chapter of Wait Until 8th. She is also a middle school teacher in Springfield District 186.



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CC PARENT | Karen Witter

How to Raise a Citizen (And Why It's Up to You to Do It) by Lindsey Cormack. Jossey-Bass, publisher, 2024. \$15.80.

"A well-informed citizenry is the backbone of a healthy democracy," writes Lindsey Cormack in her 2024 book *How to Raise a Citizen (And Why It's Up to You to Do It)*. She contends that raising engaged and informed citizens is an often-overlooked aspect of parenting. Cormack persuasively argues that parents have an essential role in talking with their children about politics, and she provides age-appropriate ways to do so.

Cormack's book is a must-read for parents concerned about the state of our politics and wanting a better future. However, it's not just for parents. Whether you are well-versed in the Constitution or want to be better informed, this easy-to-read and insightful book is a handy reference.

A 2022 study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that only 47 percent of U.S. adults could name the three branches of government. Widespread lack of understanding of our political processes contributes to lack of engagement, lower voter turnout and erosion in trust of government.

Cormack is associate professor of political science at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, and a contributor to numerous media outlets. She sees firsthand that many college-aged students don't know how to vote, haven't read the Constitution and lack understanding of the division of responsibilities among the branches of government. Cormack tells her students that politics will happen to us whether we like it or not, so it's better to understand how the system works.

Schools can't solve this issue alone.



Civics education varies by state. Relentless teaching-to-the-test takes time away from civics, which is often crammed into one semester rather than taught over multiple school years. In today's fractious environment, teachers and administrators fear backlash from multiple sources.

Avoiding politics or only discussing the negative is not the solution. Cormack advises parents to help kids understand things government is responsible for, such as roads, clean drinking water, public schools and local parks. Parents should point out bright spots that are the result of government actions. "Knowing how our government is structured is valuable because it allows you to better understand why things do or

do not happen, and what you can do to change that," she writes.

Cormack gives examples of how to engage children ages 5-9, 10-14 and 15-18. She proposes celebrating local community achievements and people who have had a positive impact, regardless of political affiliation. She encourages parents to take their kids with them when voting and find opportunities to meet a local elected official.

The second part of the book is a valuable primer about the foundational elements of our government, the Constitution and all 27 amendments. She explains separation of powers, checks and balances in the system, rule of law, and the concept of federalism – where power is shared between federal, state

and local government.

"Debating whether the United States is a democracy *or* republic is foolish – it's a democratic republic, incorporating elements of both systems," Cormack writes. She emphasizes the importance of knowing the basics of voter registration and voting procedures, being prepared to vote, as well as understanding primaries vs. general elections and federal vs. state vs. local elections.

Adopted in 1788, the Constitution sets forth the principles and structures upon which the government operates. Cormack argues that the more one understands the Constitution, the better able one is to understand roles of government, rights within our system and how to effectively participate.

All seven articles of the Constitution are summarized, delineating the roles of the three branches of government and the states, establishing the Constitution as the supreme law of the land and setting forth how amendments are adopted. Cormack highlights specific things to know about each article.

The Constitution provides the structure of government; subsequent amendments established rights of the people. Adopted in 1791, the Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. Powers not given to the federal government belong to the states or to the people.

Knowing which level of government holds power is the first step in trying to make a difference. Cormack outlines the varying federal, state and local government roles with respect to major issues such as foreign policy, immigration, taxes, health care, the environment, public safety, education and the economy.

Cormack concludes, "By avoiding discussions about politics and government with our children, we leave them ill-prepared to navigate the realities of our world...Political self-efficacy is all but impossible to harness if you don't understand how the system operates...It is my hope that by talking to our children, we can usher in a better, more caring, and more thoughtful system of politics."

Following a career in state government public service, Karen Witter of Springfield is helping her grandkids to understand and appreciate good citizenship.

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Summer meal prep

No-cook or low-cook recipes to prepare ahead of time

CC PARENT | Pamela Savage

As another summer begins, it's time to dust off those no-cook or low-cook summer recipes. Since spare time in the kitchen can be scattered during the summer, planning ahead and pre-preparing snacks and meals can be useful, as can planning for dishes that can be made in stages instead of all at once. Read on for some recipes that are sure to keep your family satiated and energized during the summer ahead.

Ranchy cottage cheese dip

Ingredients:

2 cups cottage cheese (low or full fat, your choice)
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon dried dill (or more to taste)
Juice from half a lemon
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Blend all of the ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth. This recipe is very adaptable. Feel free to increase or decrease any of the spices recommended, or even add an avocado to the mix for more heft and nutrition. Serve with chopped veggies, chips or crackers – it all works.

Chopped green goddess salad

Ingredients:

For the salad

1 head of green cabbage, chopped or diced in a food processor
3-4 baby cucumbers, sliced or diced
1 bunch of green onions, both green and white parts, sliced
1 bunch of chives, chopped

For the dressing

¼ cup olive oil

Juice from 1 or 2 lemons
2 tablespoons rice wine or white wine vinegar
1 cup fresh basil
1 cup fresh spinach
2 garlic cloves
1 shallot
¼ cup cashews
½ cup nutritional yeast
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Remember this viral salad from a few summers ago? It's a great meal prep snack that stays good in the fridge and gets better with time. Combine all salad ingredients in a large bowl. Put all dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Pour dressing over salad and toss to combine. Serve with pita chips, tortilla chips or eat solo as a salad.

Cowboy caviar

Ingredients:

15 ounce can black-eyed peas
15 ounce can black beans
15 ounce can kidney beans
1 small can corn
2 small tomatoes, chopped
1 avocado, diced
6 green onions, both green and white parts, sliced
2 cloves of garlic, minced
2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 or 2 teaspoons, tabasco sauce
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Rinse all beans and drain corn. Add vegetables and beans to a large bowl. Add salt to taste and mix. Add together wet ingredients and garlic in a separate bowl. Whisk together, then pour over beans and vegetables. Mix well. Let sit

for one hour. Serve with tortilla chips, or eat solo as a salad.

Rotisserie chicken salad

Ingredients:

For the salad

1 large rotisserie chicken, shredded (or use pre-shredded chicken, about 2 lbs)
1 cup chopped celery, or 1 teaspoon celery seed
2 cups seedless purple grapes, halved
2 ounces of slivered almonds

For the dressing

1 cup mayonnaise
1 teaspoon soy sauce
Juice from half a lemon
1 or 2 teaspoons curry powder
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Gently combine chicken, celery (or celery seed), grapes and almonds into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the dressing ingredients well. Add to the chicken mixture and stir gently to combine. Salt to taste. Serve on lettuce leaves, sliced bread, rolls or eat solo as a salad.

Marinated grilled chicken

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups vegetable oil
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
Juice from 1 or 2 lemons
2 teaspoons salt
2 cloves garlic, minced
¾ cup soy sauce
½ cup wine vinegar
2 tablespoons dry mustard
1 teaspoon black pepper
6 chicken breasts

Preparation:

Combine all ingredients except chicken

in a gallon freezer bag and store in the fridge. This makes a lot of marinade and can be kept in the fridge for up to a day if you are planning ahead or wanting to split the work. Slice chicken in half length-wise if thinner pieces are desired (thinner slices won't need to be grilled as long). Marinate the chicken in the bag in the fridge for a few hours or overnight. Remove from marinade and grill over medium heat for about five minutes per side, though it depends on the size of the chicken breasts.

Strawberry Jello pie

Ingredients:

For the pie crust

- 1 ½ cups flour
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1-2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons milk

For the pie filling

- 3 tablespoons strawberry Jello powder mix
- 3 tablespoons corn starch
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 quart strawberries, halved

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Mix together flour, salt and sugar for crust in a bowl. Make a well in the center. Pour in oil and milk and mix well. Once combined, press dough into a 9-inch pie dish and crimp the edges. Bake for about 12 minutes, until golden. Meanwhile, in a saucepan on the stove, combine Jello mix, cornstarch, sugar for pie, and water. Stir and cook over low-medium heat until mixture is thick and bubbling slightly. Let mixture cool. Arrange berries in cooled pie crust and pour Jello mixture over the berries. Cover and chill the pie completely in the fridge before slicing and serving. This pie is great to prepare a day ahead, and is a very pretty end to a low-key summer meal.

Pamela Savage is a freelance writer living in Springfield. Though life doesn't always allow it, she loves when she can prepare a few snacks or meals ahead of time and have a full fridge throughout the week.

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The Springfield Park District invites you to enroll your child in our Preschool in the Park program for the 2026-2027 school year!
Classes are mixed with 3, 4, & 5 years old.

TWO DAY... THREE DAY... & FIVE DAY OPTIONS!



Sign up now at
bit.ly/SPD_Preschool-Park
Or Scan the QR Code!
Application due at registration.

TWO DAY – TUE & THUR
9:00 - 11:30 AM Activity #350950

THREE DAY – MON, WED & FRI
9:00 - 11:30 AM Activity #350951
12:45 - 3:15 PM Activity #350953

FIVE DAY – MON thru FRI
9:00 - 11:30 AM Activity #350952

**Prices will vary based on the number of days per month.*

For more information contact Deb Clark at 217-546-3970 or email at dclark@springfieldparks.org

DISCOVER THE SPRINGFIELD PARK DISTRICT!



With **36 parks** and **17 unique facilities**, there's something for everyone!

PARKS

Bergen Park	Jefferson Park
Bunn Park	Kiwanis Park
Carpenter Park	Lake Victoria Park
Centennial Park	Lanphier Park
Comer Cox Park	Lawless Park
Duncan Park	Lincoln Park
Dreamland Park	Lindbergh Park
Eisenhower Park	Cadigan Park
Enos Park	Barker Park
Fairview Park	Riverside Park
Gehrmann Park	Rotary Park
Gietl Park	Schlitt Park
Gurgens Park	Southwind Park
Hobbs Park	Stuart Park
Iles Park	Timberbrooke Park
Indian Hills Park	Vredenburg Park
Jaycee Park	Washington Park
Kennedy Park	Westchester Park

FACILITIES

Henson Robinson Zoo
Washington Park Botanical Garden
Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon
Washington Park Pavilion
Eisenhower Aquatic Center
Riverside Campground
Lincoln Greens Golf Course
Bunn Golf Course
Bergen Golf Course
Pasfield Golf Course
Velasco Tennis Center
Robin Roberts Stadium
Nelson Center Ice Rink
Lincoln Park Pavilion
Nelson Center Pool
Erin's Pavilion
Funshop



Find your next adventure at springfieldparks.org
Or scan the QR Code!



UNLOCK THE FUN WITH

Scholarships

AT THE SPRINGFIELD PARK DISTRICT!

BECAUSE EVERY KID SHOULD PLAY!

We believe that every child deserves the chance to explore, learn, and play, regardless of financial circumstances. That's why we're excited to offer **financial scholarships to our residents**, ensuring that no one misses out on the joy of recreation and learning.

Scholarships are available for Springfield Park District residents, making it easier for families to access our diverse range of programs and facilities.

*Please note that while our scholarships cover a wide range of programs and activities, daily admission, private lessons, and season passes are **not included** in the scholarship program.



For more information about our scholarship program, please go to our website at bit.ly/SPD_Program-Scholarship

Or scan the QR code!

Have questions? Contact registration at recreation@springfieldparks.org





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FESTIVAL

May 21-24

Livestream Available

Concerts start at **6 p.m.**
Fireworks: May 22 at dusk

Located at
Washington Park
1740 W. Fayette Ave.
Springfield, Illinois



EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF SPRINGFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION

From first playdates to family traditions, the Springfield Park District is here for every stage of life and every kind of family. Our parks, facilities, and programs are designed to help everyone explore, learn, and grow, while giving welcoming spaces to connect, relax, and make memories together. Discover how each area of the Springfield Park District offers something special for everyone.



WASHINGTON PARK PRESCHOOL

A joyful first step into learning, Washington Park Preschool blends education and play in a nurturing environment designed for curious little minds. Through hands-on activities focused on STEM, art, movement, and social skills, children ages 3–5 build confidence, creativity, and friendships—while parents enjoy peace of mind knowing their child is learning through play.

SPECIAL RECREATION

The Springfield Park District's Special Recreation programs ensure that everyone belongs. Offering inclusive and adaptive activities for individuals of all abilities, these programs support physical activity, creativity, and social connection in a welcoming environment where children and families can thrive together.



THOMAS REES MEMORIAL CARILLON

Music, history, and wonder come together at the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon. Families can enjoy free live concerts in the park. Kids love the bells and breathtaking views, while adults appreciate the unique cultural experience nestled in Washington Park.

VELASCO TENNIS CENTER

Velasco Tennis Center is where kids can learn new skills and adults can stay active. With lessons and programs for all ages and abilities, families can grow a love for tennis together—whether it's a child's first swing or an adult getting back into the game.



WASHINGTON PARK BOTANICAL GARDEN

A peaceful escape that doubles as a living classroom, the Washington Park Botanical Garden invites families to explore nature up close. Children can discover colorful flowers, towering plants, and tropical environments, while adults can enjoy a calm, beautiful setting perfect for strolling and learning.



AQUATICS AT EISENHOWER & NELSON CENTER POOLS

Summer fun starts at the pool! From open swims and lessons to competitive teams, our aquatics facilities offer something for everyone during the summer months.



ERIN'S PAVILION

Located at Southwind Park, Erin's Pavilion is more than an event space—it's a gathering place for families. From birthday parties to celebrations and community events, this eco-friendly facility offers scenic views and modern amenities in a setting that's both welcoming and memorable.



FUNSHOP

Designed especially for young children and their caregivers, Funshop is where learning meets laughter. Through interactive play focused on creativity, motor skills, and social development, children explore the world around them while parents actively engage and grow alongside them.



GOLF AT LINCOLN GREENS, BERGEN, PASFIELD, AND BUNN GOLF COURSES

Golf is a game the whole family can enjoy. With four unique courses ranging from beginner-friendly to championship-level play, families can introduce kids to the sport, enjoy junior golf opportunities, or simply spend quality time outdoors together.

HENSON ROBINSON ZOO

A favorite destination for families, Henson Robinson Zoo brings children face-to-face with animals from around the world. With engaging exhibits, educational programs, camps, and seasonal events, the zoo inspires curiosity and conservation while offering parents a fun, walkable, and enriching outing.



ICE SKATING AT THE NELSON CENTER

From first skates to family traditions, the Nelson Center Ice Rink offers year-round fun. Kids can build confidence in Learn to Skate classes, teens can play hockey, and families can enjoy public skating sessions that turn chilly days into unforgettable experiences.



PLAY MORE.

Endless recreational opportunities await teens.

Visit springfieldparks.org to find activities near you, register for camps, workshops, lessons or teams, or book a celebration rental. Adventure awaits right outside your door. Rediscover your local parks, lose your phone and find your fun!



Recreational Sports



Leisure Activities



Camps and Workshops

Team Sports



Discover & register today!

TEENS

Find your **FUN**, find your *smile* at springfieldparks.org



ADVENTURE.

Endless new adventures await adults.

Visit springfieldparks.org to find activities and events near you, register for workshops and lessons, or book rentals. Adventure awaits - create cherished memories at your local parks today!



Family Fun



Leisure Activities



Celebration Rentals



Events and Workshops



Discover & register today!

ADULTS

Find your **FUN**, find your **smile** at springfieldparks.org



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VELASCO TENNIS CENTER



BOTANICAL GARDEN



NELSON CENTER AND EISENHOWER POOLS



HENSON ROBINSON ZOO



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JOIN US AT THE SANGAMON COUNTY FAIR FOR
AG-STRAVAGANZA
A FUN DAY LEARNING ABOUT AGRICULTURE!

FREE WITH GATE ADMISSION OR BY DONATING ONE CANNED FOOD ITEM!

June 11 | 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

SANGAMON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Event will be located in the HAYLOFT Building

EXPERIENCE HANDS-ON AGRICULTURE & TALK WITH FARMERS

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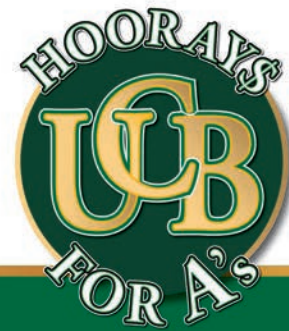
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springfieldymca.org



CAMP TENNIS LESSONS

Family event calendar

PARENT | Daron Walker

ONGOING

"The Road to Adventure: Exploring Route 66"

Wednesdays-Sundays, 9am-4pm. Through Dec. 31. This hands-on exhibit brings the magic of the historic Mother Road to life - and it's fun for the whole family. kidzeum.org. \$5-\$12. Kidzeum of Health and Science, 412 E. Adams St., 217-679-2123.

Kids Fare Garden Club

Mondays, 4-5pm. Through May 25. Kids Fare Garden Club offers hands-on gardening as well as garden-related activities. Registration held on site with a cap of 15 children participating. enosparkgardens.org. Free. Enos Park Neighborhood Garden, 1022 N. Fifth St., 217-610-0720.

Kids Fare Garden Club

Mondays, 10-11am. Through Aug. 10. Kids Fare Garden Club offers hands-on gardening as well as garden-related activities. Registration held on site with a cap of 15 children participating. Free. Enos Park Neighborhood Garden, 1022 N. Fifth St., 217-610-0720.

MAY

PBS Family FUN Day

Sat., May 9, 10am-12pm. The WSIU Public Television PBS Kids is bringing the adventure with Daniel Tiger and lots of activities. Children can enjoy painting, hands-on crafts and exploring the zoo while learning about animals and the world around them. Includes a book giveaway. Free. Henson Robinson Zoo, 1100 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-585-1821.

Learn to Play Hockey

Saturdays, 12-1pm. Through June 13. Children learn valuable life skills in this program that improves physical fitness, builds mental toughness, encourages leadership and fosters character development. Prerequisite: Must have passed Basic 1 or Skating2Hockey before Learn to Play. For ages 6-15. Register at

bit.ly/Learn-to-Play1. Activity #140402. Residents \$67, nonresidents \$77. Nelson Center, 1601 N. Fifth St., 217-753-2800 EXT. 1503.

Learn to Skate

Saturdays, 10:45-11:15, 11:20-11:50am. Through June 13. The Learn to Skate Academy is the perfect place for children to build confidence, balance and skating skills in a fun and supportive environment. Beginners start in Snowplow for ages 3-5 or Basic 1 for ages 6 and older. Register by May 8. Class times: 10:45-11:15am, Basic 1-6 (ages 6+); 11:20-11:50am - Snowplow 1-3 (ages 3-5). Dates and times subject to change. Residents \$77, nonresidents \$97. Nelson Center, 1601 N. Fifth St., 217-753-2800 ext.1503.

Mothers Day at Henson Robinson Zoo

Sun., May 10, 10am-5pm. Celebrate Mothers Day at the Henson Robinson Zoo, where mothers get in for free and children can create a special craft for Mom in the education room. Mothers free; Adults \$7.50; seniors and children 3-12 \$5.50; children 2 and younger free. Henson Robinson Zoo, 1100 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-585-1821.

Battle of the Sexes

Fri., May 15, 6:30pm. A night of fast pitch softball as the Springfield Lucky Horseshoes take on the Sallies, a team of the area's top softball talent. This fifth annual event will feature professional softball player Jocelyn Alo. \$13-\$16. Robin Roberts Stadium, 1415 N. Grand Ave. E., 561-313-7035.

Girls on the Run 5K

Sat., May 16, 10-11:30am. This 5K is a non-competitive event and culminating experience of a 10-week program. Includes fun activities for the whole family at 9am. Race begins at 10am. Early pricing (before April 24) - Adults: \$30 and children ages 3-12: \$20. Lincoln Land Community College, 5250 Shepherd Road, 217-726-9808.

Old Capitol Art Fair

Sat., May 16, 10am-5pm and Sun., May 17,



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Summer Camps

Hands-On Learning on a Real College Campus

Designed for students in grades 1-10, our summer camps spark curiosity through hands-on experiences in the trades, culinary arts, gardening, martial arts, science, tech, engineering, theatre, beekeeping and more — plus plenty of fun along the way!

10am-4pm. Set against the backdrop of the Old State Capitol, the art fair is the jewel of the Midwest. Free. Old State Capitol, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, 217-553-5564.

Park & Play Palooza

Sat., May 16, 1:30-4:30pm. Children ages 3 to 12 can enjoy hands-on activities, ice skating, fitness fun, sports, dog adoptions and a scavenger hunt to wrap up the day. Ice skating sessions: Registration for skate includes admission to all activity areas plus the scavenger hunt. Ages 3-8: 1:30-2:15pm. Ages 9-12: 3-3:45pm. Registration required. Visit bit.ly/ParkPlayPalooza. Activity #241201. Nelson Center, 1601 N. Fifth St., 217-753-2800 ext. 2003.

Battle of the Badges

Fri., May 22, 6:30pm. Watch members of the Springfield Police and Fire Departments square off. Gates open at 5:30pm. shoesbaseball.com. \$11-\$13. Robin Roberts Stadium, 1415 N. Grand Ave. E., 217-679-3511.

Children of Eden Jr.

Fri., May 22, 7pm, Sat., May 23, 2, 7pm and Sun., May 24, 2pm. Adam, Eve, Noah and the "Father" who created them deal with the headstrong, cataclysmic actions of their respective children. An expansive musical, *Children of Eden Jr.* has plenty of roles and life lessons for everyone. This production showcases fifth- and sixth-graders. hcfta.org. \$12-\$20. Hoogland Center for the Arts LRS Theatre 1, 420 S. Sixth St., 217-523-2787.

Splash Kingdom Opening Day

Sat., May 23, 9am-8pm. Dive into a world of excitement with the wave pool, exhilarating water slides and a relaxing lazy river. Younger guests can splash around in the kiddie pools and enjoy interactive water play areas. knightsactionpark.com. \$25-\$42.95. Knight's Action Park, 1700 Knights Recreation Dr., 217-546-8881.

Lucky Horseshoes home opener

Wed., May 27, 6:30pm. The Springfield Lucky Horseshoes play the Danville Dans in their home opener. For more about the 'Shoes and special events, visit shoesbaseball.com. \$8-\$10. Robin Roberts Stadium, 1415 N. Grand Ave. E., 217-679-3511.

Heritage Days Summerfest

Fri., May 29, 5pm, Sat., May 30, 12pm and

Music Classes for Children from Birth through High School



Summer Music Classes

Musikgarten music and movement classes:

Ages 0-12

- Parent & Child • Group Classes
- Summer Camps • Group Piano

Private Lessons

Piano, Harp, Voice, Band Instruments

Music and Art Camps

Ages: 3 1/2-5 & 6-9

Preschool and elementary students explore the sights and sounds of summer in this camp that includes music, movement, art, snack, and free play.



Register at

www.SpringfieldMusicFactory.com

1139 N. MacArthur Spfld., IL | www.springfieldmusicfactory.com

Sun., May 31, 10am. Annual event featuring food, beer, children's activities including a carnival, and tons of live music. Sunday features an outdoor Mass at 10:30am. There's a \$25,000 drawing at 4pm. Little Flower School, 900 Stevenson Dr., 217-553-5223.

8K Trail Race and Kids Fun Run

Sat., May 30, 7:30am. Eight kilometers (4.97 miles) of trails will test runners' stamina. Race takes place over the scenic trails and pathways of the historic garden, along the trails next to Lake Springfield and through the Ostermeier Prairie Center grounds. lincolnmemorialgarden.org. \$10-\$32 early or \$37 at gate. Lincoln Memorial Garden, 2301 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-529-1111.

JUNE

Little Friends Summer Series: Crowns & the High Seas

Mondays. Through July 6. Set sail for a summer of imagination and adventure! In this engaging early childhood class, children will explore life on the high seas with pirate-themed adventures and step into a world of crowns, castles and royal tales with themed activities and crafts. Section 01: 9-10am. Section 02: 10:30-11:30am. Washington Park Pavilion, 1400 Williams Blvd., 217-544-1751.

Early Childhood Summer Fun Camp

Tue., June 2 and Thu., July 9. This camp is specially designed for children ages 3-5, offering a fun and engaging environment where creativity, movement and social development take center stage. Morning and afternoon sessions. springfieldparks.org. Washington Park Pavilion, 1400 Williams Blvd., 217-544-1751.

Little Friends Summer Series: Cool Summer Eats

Wednesdays through July 8. This hands-on early childhood class lets children ages 3-5 explore simple, no-cook snacks perfect for warm days while learning basic kitchen skills in a safe and playful environment. Section 01: 9-10am. Section 02: 10:30-11:30am. Registration required: bit.ly/LittleFriends_SummerSeries. Activity #250980 (01) & (02). Washington Park Pavilion, 1400 Williams Blvd., 217-544-1751.

Little Friends Summer Series: Kool Summer Science

Start Your Week With Spirit!


unity
of Springfield

Sundays at 10:00 am

A welcoming space for youth and families
to enjoy positive spiritual messages,
uplifting music, and meditation.

   unityofspringfieldIL.org 


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- Ages 18 month through Adult

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Springfield Dance
217•483•3623

Fridays through July 17. This hands-on early childhood science class lets young learners ages 3-5 explore simple, age-appropriate experiments and activities designed to spark wonder and discovery. Section 05, 9-10am. Section 06, 10:40-11:30am. Registration required: bit.ly/LittleFriends_SummerSeries. Washington Park Pavilion, 1400 Williams Blvd., 217-544-1751.

Comic, Toy and Pokemon Show

Sun., June 7, 10am-5pm. Toys, games, comics and cosplay showcase. More than 70 tables. A place to let that geekiness shine. quadcitycon.com. Crowne Plaza Springfield, 3000 S. Dirksen Pkwy., 217-529-7777.

2026 Sangamon County Fair

Wed., June 10, Thu., June 11, Fri., June 12, Sat., June 13 and Sun., June 14. The premier county fair of central Illinois. Entertainment, livestock shows, exhibitors, carnival, rodeo and all the fair food you can imagine. \$5, children 4 and younger free. Sangamon County Fairgrounds, New Berlin, 316 W. Birch St., 2174882685.

Eat A Rainbow! Week 1

Thu., June 11, 10-11am. Celebrate the fifth season of Eat A Rainbow during this introductory session. Participants will have the opportunity to sample a variety of fruits and veggies of different colors. Free. Enos Park Neighborhood Garden, 1022 N. Fifth St., 217-610-0720.

Eat A Rainbow! Week 2

Thu., June 18, 10-11am. The Magic of Seeds. Germination is fascinating, and sometimes, challenging. Discover how tiny seeds become big, strong, healthy plants. Free. Enos Park Neighborhood Garden, 1022 N. Fifth St., 217-610-0720.

Pollyanna

Fri., June 19, 7:30pm, Sat., June 20, 7:30pm, Sun., June 21, 7:30pm, Fri., June 26, 7:15pm and Sat., June 27, 7:15pm. Celebrate the Fourth with this delightful, classic tale of the greatest optimist of all time ... Pollyanna. Theatre in the Park, Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, Petersburg, 15588 History Lane, 217-725-0239.

Legends Classic V

Sat., June 20, 6:30pm. Watch former Chicago Cubs and St. Louis Cardinals battle it out. Includes an optional VIP upgrade to meet the players. \$21-\$31. Robin Roberts Stadium, 1415 N. Grand Ave. E., 561-313-7035.

**20 SUMMER
26 CAMPS**

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