

NT Watch unveils newly renovated 'Imagination Station'

Recently, the North Tonawanda Neighborhood Watch unveiled the new and improved "Imagination Station," a community toy box where residents can stop by and take or leave toys, games or arts and crafts.

First opened in 2020, the "Imagination Station" was inspired by the concept of the "Little Free Library" and food pantries that can be seen throughout local communities.

Joe and Sherri Marranca, both board members of the NT Neighborhood Watch, take care of the station.

"It was something that we were working on in early 2020, and it just so happened when we opened it, it coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic," she said.

Sherri said they were prepared to recalibrate their expectations on how successful it would be given the situation.

"We thought that COVID was going to be a damper on it being used, but it just so happened to be the opposite," she said. "It turns out the station filled a void for parents trying to find some normalcy for their kids during that time. We had many families that brought their kids out to something they felt they could safely do. And they looked forward to it."

Since its inception, the "Imagination



"Imagination Station" is pictured. (Submitted)

Station" has been such a success it needed some "TLC" after three years of use.

"We decided to give it a brand-new look," said Joe, who undertook the renovation.

The newly renovated structure is almost unrecognizable after the transformation.

"We decided to go all out, complete

with siding and trim work, a new metal roof, and the addition of solar lights to illuminate the inside," he said.

The station is under a 24-hour surveillance system.

"With it being located across from the NT Intermediate School, we're excited to have it back in action just in time for the new school year," Joe continued. "We encourage those with kids to come on down with them and check it out, hopefully find something cool inside."

The station relies on donations of gently used or new items from the community.

"We couldn't do it without the support of the community," Sherri said. "We're grateful for the generosity that has been shown over the years, allowing us to continue this."

In addition to "Imagination Station," Neighborhood Watch has hosted events including visits with Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, bike and pumpkin giveaways.

"Imagination Station" is located at 439 Deerfield Drive, North Tonawanda. Those interested in donating can leave their gently used or new items in the box itself or on the Marrancas' front porch.

To stay up to date on "Imagination Station," follow its Facebook page.

NCDOH free chronic pain self-management workshop in North Tonawanda

Submitted by the Niagara County Department of Health

The Niagara County Department of Health nursing division, in partnership with the Niagara County Office for the Aging, is offering a free chronic pain self-management workshop. The six-week series starts Sept. 8, and is scheduled for 1-3:30 p.m. Fridays at the North Tonawanda Library, 505 Meadow Drive.

This program covers both the physical aspects of managing chronic pain as well as the emotional part, and is designed to provide participants with the skills to manage their pain on a day-to-day basis. Workshop topics include: exercise, healthy eating, pain management, as well as how to deal with such concerns as fatigue, sleep problems, difficult emotions, weight loss, communicating with family, friends and coworkers. The workshop is highly participatory, and each participant is guided to tailor the workshop content to their own needs.

Individuals with chronic pain or caregivers of persons with chronic pain can register for the chronic pain self-management workshop program by calling Stacy Knott, MS.Ed., nursing operations manager, Niagara County Department of Health nursing division, at 716-278-1900.

For information on how participating in the workshops can help you manage your pain, please visit https://www.niagaracounty.com/departments/m-r/nursing/chronic_pain_self-management_program_workshops.php.

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