

Playgrounds and splash pads at parks set to open

Niagara County will open one playground area in each of Krull, Oppenheim and West Canal parks on Friday, and will open the rest of the playground areas next Friday, Niagara County Legislature Chairwoman Becky Wydysh said. Splash pads at Krull and Oppenheim are set to open by the end of June.

"We know many parents are anxious to see the amenities in county parks open for their children," Wydysh said. "With the assistance of our Department of Public Health and the efforts of our Public Works Department, we have been working as fast as possible to have everything in place to meet state COVID-19 guidelines. Today, we can announce our reopening plan, which begins tomorrow with one playground area in Krull, Oppenheim and West Canal parks."

Niagara County Public Health Director Daniel J. Stapleton said his department has been offering guidance to the county and local governments, as his department must issue permits for public aquatic venues.

"We want to encourage parents and their children to be active and get outside, but the fact is use of playgrounds, splash pads and pools can increase the risk of contracting COVID-19," said Stapleton, who noted pool and playground openings will be decided by each locality. "That doesn't mean you need to stay home, but rather be smart and take the necessary preventive measures if you do go to these places."

Stapleton said it is important municipalities clearly post guidelines and do their best to enforce them. His office said the usual COVID-19 tips are still the best ways to protect your family and reduce risk:

√ Stay 6 feet away from people who don't live with you, both in and out of the water.

√ If you cannot stay 6 feet from individuals outside of your household of family unit and not in the water, wear a face covering.

√ For health and safety concerns, face coverings should not be worn by children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone in the water.

√ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

√ Avoid sharing items with other people (for example goggles, toys, towels, drinks, etc.)

√ Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow, throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands.

√ Stay home if you do not feel well, tested positive for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Niagara County Public Works Commissioner Garret Meal said his department needed time to acquire the necessary disinfection and cleaning equipment, as well as signage.

"Our team has been preparing the playgrounds and splash pads for opening. We are posting signs with the state guidelines, have a cleaning plan in place and will have staff circulating through the parks to ensure compliance. But the bottom line is we are counting on the public to do the right thing. Nobody wants these amenities closed back down by the state because a few people put others at risk by not following the rules."

Niagara County operates a total of five parks. Burmaster Park and Royalton Park do not have any playground equipment or splash pads.

SNAP recipients to receive additional \$100M in food assistance

Roughly 750,000 households will receive supplemental payments for June

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) announced more than \$100 million in additional emergency food assistance for New Yorkers adversely affected by the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. About 750,000 low-income individuals and families enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive the maximum allowable benefit for June to help them avoid food insecurity.

"No New Yorker should be left wondering whether or not they can afford to eat – especially not during an unprecedented public health crisis," Commissioner Mike Hein said. "This funding will help these families, and many others thrust into food insecurity, to put meals on the table as our communities begin to mend from this global pandemic."

OTDA will be issuing the emergency assistance to any SNAP household that does not ordinarily receive the maximum allowable benefit per month, which is \$194 for an individual and \$646 for a family of four. The emergency assistance will be distributed later this month, after the regular

benefits are issued. About half of all households receiving SNAP will receive additional benefits for June.

This will mark the fourth consecutive month all SNAP recipients in New York have received the maximum benefit. In April, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo directed OTDA to submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide emergency supplemental payments to any SNAP household getting less than the maximum monthly benefit, which is \$646 for a family of four. Since that time, approximately \$300 million in additional benefits have been distributed throughout the state.

As with the three prior months, the supplemental payments will be issued over a period of several days once SNAP benefits for June have been issued. The payments will be delivered directly to recipients' existing electronic benefit transfer (EBT) account and can be accessed with their existing EBT card. Like regular SNAP benefits, the supplemental benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. Any unused SNAP benefits will be automatically carried over to

the following month.

The state has also begun distributing more than \$880 million to help New Yorkers with children who previously received free and reduced-price meals at school. The pandemic electronic benefit transfer (P-EBT) program has been issuing the first round of benefits to those New Yorkers enrolled in SNAP or temporary assistance who have existing EBT accounts.

Those families whose children receive free school lunches because they are enrolled in Medicaid can expect to receive notification this month, with their benefits appearing on their Medicaid common benefit identification card in late June or early July. Those families with eligible children who are not enrolled in these programs should receive notification by mail later this month. EBT cards with this assistance will then be mailed out between July and August.

For more information, visit "Frequently Asked Questions for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) Food Benefits."

VFW presents check to scholar



Lukas Larson, center, is shown with VFW members Bill Justyk and Bruce Sutherland, and his parents, Angela and Mark Larson.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Downriver Post 7487 presented a scholarship award to 18-year-old Lukas Larson last Friday. The

Lewiston resident (by way of California) plans to attend Brigham Young University in the fall to begin studies in mechanical en-

gineering and aerospace studies.

Larson was chosen to receive the award based on an essay he wrote. "What does the American flag mean to me?" appeared in last week's newspaper and can be found online at www.wnypapers.com.

BBB warning

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Other times, once scammers reach their target number of "likes," they strip the page's original content and use it to promote spammy products. They may also resell the page on the black market. These buyers can use it to spam followers or harvest the information Facebook provides.

Protect Yourself

√ Use your good judgment. If a post says you can win something just by sharing the post, it's probably not true. If a post tugs at your heartstrings and isn't about someone you know personally, be wary about the truthfulness of its contents.

√ Don't click "like" on every post in your feed. Scammers are counting on getting as many mindless likes as possible, so be sure you only "like" posts and articles that are legitimate. Don't help scammers spread their con.

√ Be cautious when it comes to sharing your personal information. Never give out your full name, telephone number, address, etc., to a person or company you don't know or trust.

√ Update your web browser. Make sure you always have the latest version. That way, if you do accidentally click on a scammer's post, your browser will be more likely to warn you about sites.

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- Online worship can be viewed at MessiahLewiston.org

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