

Get Up, Get Out, and Get Active this Summer

By Breanna Gustafson

As things are heating up outside, summer programming is, too. This summer, Charlotte County Community Services will offer a variety of programs and activities for everyone and has all you need to make a picture-perfect summer vacation.

Residents and visitors can beat the Florida heat this summer with the aquatic programs and activities offered by Community Services. Lap swimming, water fitness classes and recreational swimming are available at Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park, Centennial Park and South County Regional Park. The Dever and South County pools offer splash pads with fun features for children. If you're planning a "staycation" this summer, be sure to plan a day at Port Charlotte Beach Park pool. This facility offers water fitness classes, recreational swimming, and offers stunning views of Charlotte Harbor.

Summer is the perfect opportunity to enroll your child in swimming lessons. American Red Cross swimming lessons will be offered at Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park Pool, Centennial Park Pool and South County Regional Park Pool. Scholarships are available for qualified applicants. For information, call 941-681-3743.

For homeschoolers, stop into Centennial Park Recreation Center or Harold Avenue Regional Park Recreation Center for Homeschool P.E. The recreation division provides gymnasium space and various recreational equipment for students to conduct games and challenges which promote physical activity, cooperation and teamwork.

In July, Community Services will celebrate Parks and Recreation Month, a great time to explore a new park or try a new sport. Try playing pickleball, America's fastest growing sport.

"It's social first and skill second," said volunteer pickleball coach Peggy Johnston. "I can have them playing pickleball after a two-hour instruction class."

Drop-in pickleball is offered at Harold Avenue Regional Park, South County Regional Park, Ann & Chuck Dever Regional Park and Centennial Park June 1-Aug. 5.

Community Services is serving up a drop-in volleyball program that will be offered at Centennial Park and at Harold Avenue Regional Park for children ages 10-17 June 1-Aug. 5. Participants will learn the fundamentals of volleyball, including passing, setting, hitting and serving. Games and mini-tournaments will be incorporated. Visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov/recprograms to launch the program guide and view the full schedule.

Harold Avenue Regional Park will be offering youth basketball this summer. This program is one of the most popular recreational youth leagues in Charlotte County. There is an 8-week regular season. There are divisions for 6u, 8u, 10u, 12u and 17u. 10u-17u will participate in a tournament at the end of the season. If you can't commit to a team this summer, you can still join in on the fun. South County Regional Park will be offering adult and youth drop-in basketball. For the full schedule, or to register for programs visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov/recprograms or call 941-625-7529.

There are oceans of possibilities this summer when you participate in Charlotte County Libraries & History Summer Reading Program. The fun begins at the summer reading kickoff

events from 12-3 p.m., June 3-4 at Tringali Park. Pick up your kickoff bag with your reading log and everything that you need to get started. Choose a brag tag necklace to collect the beads you'll earn as you read. If you can't make it to the kickoff events, don't worry, you can sign up at the library any time during the program. For information about library programs and events, visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov/libraries or call 941-613-3200.

The Charlotte County UF/IFAS Extension will be hosting its Florida-friendly Friday event in August at Centennial Park Recreation Center. Topics for the summer event have not been announced yet. Visit the UF/IFAS blog at sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/charlotte or follow UF/IFAS Extension on Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.com for more information on upcoming events.

We're looking forward to seeing you this summer.

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