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ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

Midwestern Family is a comprehensive guide to fun, health, and happiness for Central Illinois families.

Hello all!

Welcome to the May/June issue of *Midwestern Family* magazine. As always, I hope the year to date has treated you and your family well. Speaking of wellness, that's the focus of this issue. And wellness comes in a variety of forms. It can mean prevention in the form of eating right. Paige Kumpf has provided us (and you!) with several recipes that are both delicious and extremely nutritious. Be sure to try the quinoa, strawberry and goat cheese salad! We also have some excellent tips from the American Heart Association on performing the often tricky task of getting your kids to eat their vegetables. I certainly could have used them when I was raising my kids.

Wellness can also mean taking the right corrective actions. With how much time we spend these days staring at electronic screens both big and small, eye care is as critical as ever. Here in Central Illinois, Bard Optical will be celebrating 70 years of serving our communities, and we salute them.

But wellness isn't just physical, it's mental, too. Cassie Hart has written an excellent piece on how music can play a critical role in the mental growth and well being of children. The idea that music helps a children learn is well-known by most, but it's great to have a resource on how area organizations can help get kids into music.

Well, that's it from me. I'll let you get to the rest of the issue. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed making it! And as always, like us on Facebook for more info! Thanks!

Jenny

Jenny Rudd

midwestern Family

A Guide To Family Living In Central Illinois

May/June 2012

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Ottawa, Illinois
Civil War Monument and Rose Garden
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MUSIC

and Young Minds:

TEACHING CHILDREN THE VALUE OF SONG, DANCE, & PLAY

Parents want their children to excel in life, so we do everything possible to boost brain growth and increase intelligence early on: read books, provide healthy meals and snacks, and of course, turn on the music.

It's no secret that early exposure to music fosters physical, emotional, and intellectual development; increases listening skills; and encourages self-expression. Countless studies have shown that sharing musical experiences with babies and young children stimulates the senses and connect those neurons.

But what if you can't carry a tune? What if you have two left feet and no sense of rhythm? No worries—and you don't have to resort to playing endless Baby Einstein DVDs at home, either. Plenty of opportunities to introduce your child to music are available in Central Illinois!

MUSIC CONNECTIONS FOUNDATION: KINDERMUSIK

Moving, learning, playing—Kindermusik programs embrace all of these concepts. “[Kindermusik] was developed with not only experts in the music field, but [also] early childhood experts, speech-language pathologists, child psychologists, neurologists, movement specialists, etc.” says Katie Henderson, founder of Music Connections Foundation, Inc. in Bloomington, and a licensed and trained Kindermusik teacher since 1993. She adds that early exposure to music, specifically with parent involvement,

cultivates bonding between parents and their children. “[The] experience of sharing quality time together in a loving, personal way is something that, with the busy lifestyles of today’s families, is more and more rare.”

Kindermusik programs offer classes for newborns through age seven. Sessions are broken into fall and spring semesters, plus summer camps. Music Connections has nine trained teachers who lead four class levels: Village (0-18 months), Our Time (18 months-3 ½ years), Imagine That! (3 ½ -5 years), and Kindermusik for the Young Child (5-7 years). All classes encourage children and their parents sing, move, and play simple instruments together.

Home materials are an important part of Kindermusik programs, and take-away packets include CDs, literature books, a parent resource guide, and an instrument. “Just by popping in the music [at home], memories are triggered for children of what we did in class, and they repeat the experiences,” Henderson says. “Repetition is crucial for kids at this age; it actually strengthens the brain’s neural connections and helps cement the learning.”

Music Connections also offers classes for Hispanic families, at-risk two-year-olds, families with adopted children, and senior/baby mixed classes.

“Children who have been in Kinder-musik with their parents or caregivers ...take away a lifelong love for music and creativity,” Henderson says.

MUSIC ALIVE WITH GOD'S CHILDREN: MUSIKGARTEN

“Music and children go together like peanut butter and jelly, hide and seek, and shoes and socks,” says Mary Van Deven of Bloomington-Normal, who spearheads Musikgarten classes. This developmental learning program for babies and children from birth through nine years teaches music literacy and improvisation. Each class level revisits songs and concepts learned previously, a characteristic of the program’s Montessori influence (one of Musikgarten’s founders is a Montessori teacher). Classes for babies and toddlers are ideal for parents looking for an activity to do with their children, and those geared toward older kids emphasize more independence as keyboard skills are introduced. All levels focus on movement, listening, singing, and playing.



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KINDERMUSIK LOCATIONS MUSIC CONNECTION FOUNDATION/KINDERMUSIK CLASSES

Evangelical Free Church

2910 E. Lincoln, Bloomington
www.musicconnections.net
309.828.6806

Kidder Music Service

7728 N. Crestline Drive, Peoria
309.692.4040
www.kiddermusic.com

Kindermusik at Trinity

135 NE Randolph Ave., Peoria
309.676.4609 ext. 202
www.kindermusikpeoria.com

Kindermusik by Faulkner Studios

3800 W. War Memorial Drive, Peoria
309.966.0028
<http://kindermusikbyfaulknerstudios.weebly.com>

MUSIKGARTEN CLASS LOCATIONS

Blair House, Normal

1200 E. College Avenue

Epiphany School Early Learning Center, Normal

1000 E. College Avenue
630.640.2168

www.MusicAliveWithGodsChildren.com

Community Activity Center, Normal

1110 Douglas St.
www.normal.org
309.454.9543

The Music Factory, Springfield

1139 N. MacArthur Blvd.
217.502.4958
www.springfieldmusicfactory.com

MUSIC TOGETHER LOCATIONS

331 SW Water St., Peoria
309.202.3858
www.musictogetherpeoria.com

V Gallery, Morton

330 S. Main St.

Peoria Academy, Peoria

2711 W. Willow Knolls

Classical music and traditional songs, dances, poems, and chants rooted in folk culture are the basis for this program. "Musikgarten is based in the aural and oral tradition [where children] listen to a storyteller," says Van Deven. "[This] encourages creative thinking skills, stimulates the imagination, and strengthens listening skills and focused attention." A mixed-age class for newborns to five-year-olds, Music Keys (3-5 years), Music Makers I at Home in the World (4 ½ to 6 years), and Music Makers at the Keyboard I (6-9 years) are offered each session.

All Musikgarten classes embrace nature and encourage children to use their senses. "Listening to sounds of nature helps [children] experience the rhythm and music of the world around us, and also express the sounds and movements of nature through their bodies and their instruments," explains Van Deven. Buzzing bees, hopping frogs, and stormy afternoons all have their place as children notice patterns and tones that connect music to nature through games, songs, and play.

Children with special needs are also encouraged to participate. "[These] children benefit greatly from a Musikgarten class," says Van Deven. "Music and movement can help developmentally with physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and language skills."

Two types of Musikgarten classes are currently offered: Alive with God's Children follows a Christian-based curriculum featuring prayer and Christian songs, and classes with a secular focus are available through the Normal Parks and Recreation department.

MUSIC TOGETHER OF PEORIA

"If adults have fun making music, children will, too," says Keith Lindgren, teaching director of Music Together of Peoria. That's why parents and grandparents of babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age-children through age seven join their favorite little people in Music Together's studios to tickle, touch, clap, sing, and dance together.

"During the early years, it is extremely important that parents and caregivers be the ones who create a nurturing environment," says Lindgren. "Children are biologically 'wired' to respond most to those with whom they have close bonds. Music Together classes help build that bond, regardless of your musical background and abilities."

This internationally recognized, early childhood program is founded on the belief that all children are born musical. "Programs like Music Together are research-based," Lindgren says. "The myth is that if mom can't sing and dad can't sing, then junior won't be a singer. This is not the case at all. You have a window of birth to age nine. During that time if you get a child plugged into a program like Music Together, music will become a big part of their lives."

Each class lasts 10 weeks (six weeks during summer sessions) and features songs, rhythmic rhymes, movement, and instrument play. Two CDs and a songbook are included for enjoyment at home.

Lindgren believes his students benefit most in three areas: musically, socially, and intellectually. "Something that really resonates with me as a leader is this program is not about performance. It is not about who teaches better. It is not about who is the best singer. It is not about status or if we can get the child to be the first four-year-old on The Voice. It is not about perfect pitch or stardom. It is about bringing the power of music to life, teaching mom and dad how to be at the center of the learning, and then letting a child create the magic that will last a lifetime. It's that simple."

KIDDER MUSIC SERVICE: CHILDREN'S MUSIC TOURS

Most local music teachers, students, and musicians know Kidder Music Service as a place to find sheet music, obtain and repair instruments, and take lessons. After all, this family-owned business has been serving Central Illinois musicians for over 35 years.

Then, in 1998, Kidder Music began to reach out to the youngest potential musicians in the area. When the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) launched a program to introduce instruments and basic music concepts to preschoolers, the store got on board.

Josh Urban, customer service representative and composer/musician, organizes and leads the tours. Other staff members also lend their talents to provide this free program for four to seven-year-olds each spring. About 50 groups—preschools, early grade school classes, and home school groups—participate during the two months the program is offered.

CLASSICAL MUSIC AND
TRADITIONAL SONGS, DANCES,
POEMS, AND CHANTS ROOTED
IN FOLK CULTURE ARE THE
BASIS FOR THIS PROGRAM.

Musikgarten



During the tour, children are introduced to the different instrument families and are encouraged to ask questions about what they see and hear. They also enjoy a hands-on activity as they create a simple instrument, walk through the store's departments, and engage in an instrument tryout session, where they play various string and percussion instruments.

"We want kids to see how music can be fun and enjoyable," Urban says. "[Parents and teachers] will see how it can help in the development of the brain and other learning skills...and help kids socially interact with others."

Beth Houlihan, president and owner of Kidder Music, says the response to the tours has been fantastic. "The majority of [teachers] return with a new group each year. Many of the teachers and parents are surprised to learn that there are items they can use without much musical experience, like Boomwhackers, hand drums, etc."

"We all have certain moments in our childhood we can vividly remember," Josh adds. "And for a lot of us, music was somehow involved. [Maybe] something funny I do or say, or some song I play, or something quirky like seeing the inside of a tuba will hook a kid on music for life. You never know!"

The tours take place during March and April, with one morning and one afternoon session each day. Teachers: sessions fill up quickly, so it's a good idea to schedule your group as early as possible.

If you're looking to give your child an experience that's beneficial to their development and fun, too, consider the gift of music. Aren't we lucky to have this support in our communities for something so important? ♥

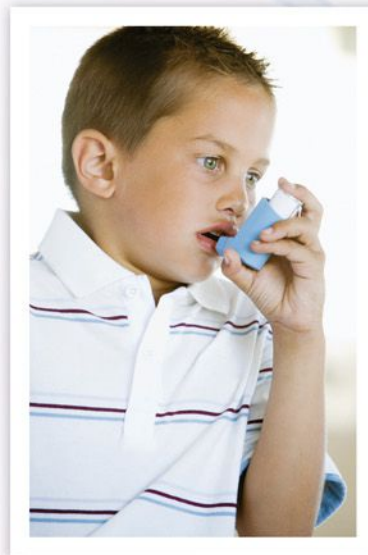


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Personalized PEDIATRIC ASTHMA CARE AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF ILLINOIS



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More Americans are suffering from asthma than ever before, including nearly five million children under the age of 18, making this the most common chronic childhood disease. One-quarter of emergency room visits nationwide are associated with asthma, so it is important for parents and others who care for young children to be familiar with asthma – signs and symptoms associated with the disease and treatments.

What exactly is asthma? It is an inflammatory disorder that causes the airways of the lungs to swell and narrow, which causes variable and recurring symptoms. Symptoms, such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and coughing, are primarily related to irritation of the smallest part of the airway. This irritation to the airway makes it difficult for patients to empty air from their lungs.

Some patients experience symptoms in response to environmental allergens, such as dust, mold, pollens, and animal hair. Other patients experience symptoms when due to changes in air quality, temperature, humidity or exercise.

Asthma has not been linked to a genetic component; but if a parent or the parents have asthma, their child is at higher risk for developing symptoms. At this time, there is no cure for asthma, but symptoms can be managed through treatments customized for each patient.

RECEIVING CARE AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

At Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria, doctors provide care to patients with asthma from the moment they enter the hospital, which continues after discharge in our outpatient clinics.

The Pediatric Pulmonary Clinic provides care for children with asthma. This includes the most critically ill patients who require care in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) as well as children brought into the hospital for observation for one night.

This continuity provided between the inpatient and outpatient setting not only assures medical care for the patient, but also peace of mind for the child's family by allowing close follow up after being in the hospital.

Dr. Jeffrey C. Benson, Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, at UICOMP, has a primary focus in Pediatric Pulmonary Medicine. He completed residency training at UICOMP, followed by fellowships in Pediatric Critical Care and Pulmonary Medicine in Milwaukee. He returned to Children's Hospital in 2011 to develop clinical programs to meet the health care needs of children with asthma and disorders of the respiratory system.

Dr. Benson provides care to patients referred from their primary care provider as well hospitalized patients. With his primary focus on pediatric pulmonary medicine, he works first on a diagnosis and establishing an action plan for treatment.

So, what should you do if you suspect your child may have asthma or if you notice any of the warning signs listed above?

"As with any health related issue, the first step for parents should consider is to visit their primary care provider. Many children have mild asthma or seasonal exacerbations due to allergies, which can be treated on an outpatient basis," explains Dr. Benson. "For patients with persistent symptoms - symptoms that do not respond to first line therapies or result in hospitalization - consultation with a subspecialist may be warranted. Any child who has asthma and requires admission to the hospital, especially the PICU, should be referred to a subspecialist such as myself."

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL CARE

At Children's Hospital, part of OSF Healthcare System, it is their mission to serve with the greatest care and love. With these personalized relationships between patients and caregivers, diagnosis and action plans can be put into place faster. Patients are not grouped together into categories but rather treated on an individualized basis for each patient to meet their specific needs.

In respect to patients referred on an outpatient basis, "I prefer to interview the parents, examine the child and review what has already been done prior to ordering any testing," says Dr. Benson. "There are times when I receive a call from a referring physician or review information received in the referral process which proves to be extremely helpful. On a case-by-case basis, I will order testing prior to or on the day of the appointment and prefer to avoid ordering a test previously performed. I feel this is a huge benefit for the patient and family."

When working with younger patients, it is important the care and diagnostic studies fit the developmental age of the child. There are several types of diagnostic tests offered, including blood work or a chest x-ray which are not dependent on a patient's age. At Children's Hospital, our pediatric radiologists provide an excellent partnership when imaging is required to determine whether a child's wheezing is related to asthma or something else.

As for other important tests for patients with asthma, their age is in fact important. One of the measures offered for children over 5-6 years old is a peak flow test. In this case a hand held device, which can go home with the family, determines the degree to which the child is wheezing. Upon follow-up, the results help develop a treatment plan.

Other tests doctors at Children's Hospital have the ability to perform include spirometry, formal pulmonary function tests and cardiopulmonary exercise testing. All of these testing techniques help to assess the airflow of the patient and are determined by the patient's age and ability.

"One of the greatest benefits we provide throughout the continuum of care, is to provide age appropriate care which is different from most hospitals in the region," explains Dr. Benson in describing the specialized care at Children's Hospital.

"As a children's hospital, we have pediatric respiratory therapists who educate patients and families on the use of medication, techniques for medication delivery, use of a peak flow device to measure the degree of wheezing and who help establish an asthma action plan so the family can adjust treatment based on the degree of wheezing."

Treatments prescribed for asthma consist of different types of inhaled medications, those that are nebulized (converting a liquid to a fine spray), or some oral medications, based on the child's diagnosis and age.

If more persistent symptoms occur, a child might have to be hospitalized for monitoring and care while receiving the same types of medications listed above in addition to supplemental oxygen.

The pulmonary care team is always looking for ways to help patients throughout their home communities. In 2011, Dr. Mary Schultz, Children's Hospital Pediatrician and Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics at UICOMP, developed an Asthma Home Action Plan available in the integrated software program used throughout the OSF Healthcare System. Using this electronic version of the patient's status helps connect them to their primary care physicians for easy and immediate access when needed.

The Pediatric Subspecialty Clinic also offers seminars for families. These seminars can help families learn more about a variety of health issues, and provide updates regarding the latest management, education and information about new medical therapies.

If you or someone you know may be suffering from asthma please contact your primary physician for more information or a referral. For more information about Children's Hospital of Illinois services please visit us online at www.childrenshospitalofil.org. ▼



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BARD OPTICAL

70 Years of Success and Growing

By Sandra Rossetti Mitchell

A business that is celebrating 70 years in Central Illinois this year—and is still growing and thriving in a less-than-ideal economy—must have a long list of secrets for success. That business is Bard Optical, but it's no secret that one important reason for the company's great success is its president and owner, Diana Hall.

Bard Optical was founded in Peoria in 1941 by Dr. A. Arthur Bard. Formerly known as Bard 950 Optical because it sold glasses for just \$9.50, the business had downsized from several locations to just one, in the Metro Centre. Diana Hall purchased the company in 1981 and has taken Bard Optical on a journey from a single office to its present size of 19 locations in Central and Southern Illinois.

In Peoria, Bard Optical is located in Campustown, near the Shoppes at Grand Prairie (Jones Bros. Plaza), and (still) in the Metro Centre. They are also in East Peoria, Pekin, Galesburg, Pontiac, Normal, Peru, Rock Island, Springfield, Sterling, Washington, Canton, Champaign, Decatur, Forsyth, Jacksonville and Lincoln. Bard now has a staff of 110 employees, is ranked 37th in the Top 50 eye care retailers in the nation, and is the only female-owned eye care company in the top 50!

Diana Hall is not an optometrist, but a business person who accumulated several years of business experience in the eye care field at Peoria's Weisser Jewelry and Optical, where she started at the age of 16. When she bought Bard Optical, she was a single mother of two, and the local economy was much worse than it is today. Although her "survival" goal was \$20,000 a month at that time, sales are now more than \$10 million annually. How has she managed to beat the odds and achieve such long-term success?



*Bard Optical is the only female-owned
eye care company in the
top 50 eye care retailers in the nation.*





"The success of Bard Optical all stems from our Team being focused on patient care day in and day out. We are a hometown business that started with the mission of providing exceptional patient care coupled with fair and honest prices. We stay committed to that mission every day," Hall said.

PUTTING YOUR VISION CARE FIRST

With continual use of the computer, smart phones and other electronic devices today, visual fatigue is more common than ever. As a provider of eye care health, Bard Optical is a proponent of preventative care—meaning an annual check-up by a thorough, professional optometrist that includes dilation of the pupils – in order to check the retina, blood vessels and optic nerve. Then, if determined necessary by your eye exam, an optician can help you choose glasses or contact lenses. Bard offers a full medical approach to eye care including preventative care for conditions such as glaucoma and complications from conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. They have a full lab and accept most vision care benefits. If, at some point, care by an Ophthalmologist (Doctor of Medicine) becomes necessary, your Bard Optical optometrist can help you select one and make the referral.

SERVICE, SIZE, SELECTION

Part of what makes Bard Optical unique is its size and service. As a locally owned and operated, mid-sized optical business serving multiple small communities in Central and Southern

Illinois, the company can offer personal, small-town service with a large company product selection and range of prices. Hall attributes her success, in great part, to the caliber and dedication of their employees, from medical and technical to professional or clerical. She believes the common denominator is that, "they all truly care about our patients' vision."

Because appearance is important to all of us and glasses are also a fashion accessory, Hall knows the business benefits from keeping up with fashion as well as technological trends. The designer eyeglass frame brands they carry go practically from A to Z – Anne Klein, D & G, Ralph Lauren, POLO, Ray Ban, Tiffany & Co., Versace, Vogue and many more.

INVESTED IN THE COMMUNITY

Diana Hall is well known in the community, partly because she appeared in TV commercials for the company for many years, but also because she has always had a presence in the community. She believes in "giving back," and is known for her involvement with non-profits such as the YWCA, the Center for Prevention of Abuse, the United Way and the Mayor's litter committee. She is also a past winner of the prestigious Athena Award from the Peoria Chamber of Commerce.

Because she is such a community-oriented person, Hall wanted to do something special in honor of the company's 70th anniversary and wanted it to be something that would benefit children. That's how the "70 Pairs for 70 Years" program came about.

"As a celebration of our 70 years, we wanted to create a program that would give back to our communities as well as meet important needs for our young people," Hall said.

"Since approximately 80 percent of learning in a child's first 12 years comes through the eyes, a youngster's vision problems may cause the child to fall behind

With continual use of the computer, smart phones and other electronic devices today, visual fatigue is more common than ever. As a locally owned and operated, mid-sized optical business serving multiple small communities in Central and Southern Illinois, the company can offer personal, small-town service with a large company product selection and range of prices.

in learning, and that is why we decided we would give up to 70 pairs of glasses with examinations as needed to deserving youngsters in each of our office communities. The "70 Pairs for 70 Years" program for public school students 13 years or younger is now offered in every community in which we have an office," she said.

Bard Optical's Diana Hall is obviously as proud of the kids' eyeglass program that honors the company's 70 years in business as she is about her success in creating one of Central Illinois' most recognized eye-care and eyewear companies. Hopefully, many Illinois communities will enjoy the benefits of both for many years to come.

For more information about Bard Optical, including information about symptoms of eye disease, tips on preventative care, current articles about vision health and eyewear trends, addresses and phone numbers for their 19 locations throughout Central and Southern Illinois, and much more, visit their website at www.bardoptical.com. You can also visit Bard Optical on FaceBook. ▼



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Ottawa

THE

Experience:

*Family Fun
is Just a Day
Trip Away*

By Cassie Hart

As the weather begins to warm, some of us start thinking seriously about packing up and heading out in search of entertainment under blue—or starry—skies. If you're considering travel options in the area, Ottawa urges you to "Pick Us!" This mid-sized city, nestled between Central Illinois and Chicago, radiates a warm, hometown atmosphere and offers a variety of seasonal outdoor activities.

There's a lot to do in Ottawa. You can tour historic structures in Old Town and visit scenic spots on foot, bike, or boat anytime. And in May a series of special events begins, featuring celebrations throughout the year. It's an easy day trip to Ottawa from the Peoria-Bloomington vicinity, so mark your map, round up family and friends, and check it out!





ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.

Mark your calendar now for these *2012 events:*

Midwest Morel Fest

May 4-5
www.morelmania.com

2 Rivers Wine Fest

June 8, 9, 10
<http://ottawa2riverswinefest.com>

Ottawa River Fest

July 25-August 5
www.ottawariverfest.org

Scarecrow Festival

September 29
<http://experienceottawa.com>

Ottawa Ice Odyssey & Holiday Bazaar

December 8
<http://experienceottawa.com>



Midwest Morel Fest

Searching for something different? Join mushroom experts, enthusiasts, and casual observers for the annual Midwest Morel Fest, where hunting for, bidding on, and learning about mushrooms urges everyone to discover the “fun” in fungus.

The event kicks off with a group morel hunt. All ages are welcome to participate and prizes are awarded to those who bag the most ‘shrooms. The hunt concludes with an auction where collectors can sell their finds.

All ages are welcome to join—participants range from babies along for the ride to experienced retirees. “We’ve had a 68 year-old woman sign up with her 20-year-old grandson,” says Tom Nauman of Morel Mania, Inc., whose company is one of the event sponsors. “They both had a great time, but Grandma found more morels. [One] 91 year-old gentleman spotted 33 morels, but didn’t bend over to pick them until six younger people walked right through them without seeing them.”

There’s also Morel University, a session for learning more about mushrooms. Sign up to study plant habitats, discover how to identify trees, and gain harvesting tips. This educational opportunity is led by morel hunting experts and is a unique experience you won’t want to miss.

“My favorite part of the event is the people,” Nauman adds. “We’ve made life-long friends through the festivals.”

2 Rivers Wine Fest

What do you get when you combine fabulous food with marvelous music and notable wineries? Enter the 2 Rivers Wine Fest, a three-day event that makes its home downtown where the Fox and Illinois Rivers meet. This outdoor gala is a great way to kick off the summer season.

The City of Ottawa, Illinois Grape Growers and Vinters Association, and Ottawa Visitors Center join forces to present this occasion. “Last year we were already the biggest wine fest in Illinois, attracting some 26 local wineries,” says Julie Johnson, executive director of the Ottawa Visitors Center.

The backdrop for much of the festival is Court Street, which is tastefully accented with botanical crafts and flowering art, and further enhanced by garden demonstrations and topiary experts. While nature lovers may be initially drawn to the festival’s lush displays, many will stay for the antique market, smooth sounds by jazz performers, and quality wines from Illinois-based vinters. For everyone else, it’s simply a weekend full of fun.

If the forecast calls for rain, don’t worry. A massive tent provides shelter, making it impossible for inclement weather to put a damper on the event. “No worries here,” Johnson says. “We are prepared for what Mother Nature may send us!”

Johnson also adds: “With jazz greats like Shirley King (daughter of legendary B.B. King), excellent food, and unique vendors...there is certainly something for everyone at the Ottawa 2 Rivers Wine fest!”

Searching for something different?

Join mushroom experts, enthusiasts, and casual observers for the annual Midwest Morel Fest, where hunting for, bidding on, and learning about mushrooms urges everyone to discover the “fun” in fungus.

Ottawa River Fest

The Ottawa River Fest takes place in the heart of summer. Kids will love the parade and fishing rodeo. Adults will relish craft and flea markets and sidewalk sales. And everyone is invited to cheer on paddle boat races and peruse the carnival scene.

“Our River Fest is one of the oldest ongoing events in Illinois,” Johnson says. “It’s a week of old-fashioned fun coupled with big name bands rockin’ under the stars.”

Nobody will leave hungry as the Taste of Ottawa takes center stage during River Fest, inviting everyone to treat their palate to an assortment of tasty foods from the hottest vendors in town. And speaking of stages, live music can be heard throughout the festival.

“We have music and events for all ages, so check the website daily for additions and announcements,” says Johnson. “Kids, don’t forget the carnival while mom and dad dance the night away!”

Scarecrow Festival

As the sun sets on summer and fall emerges, Ottawa’s annual Scarecrow Festival provides another reason to celebrate. Stroll down LaSalle Street and admire cleverly-staged scarecrows as they grin at passer-bys from beneath wide-brimmed hats and peer dramatically from behind jail cells. Creativity is at its finest here!

Family activities include buckboard rides, face painting, a petting zoo, a craft fair and, of course, outhouse races. Local shops and boutiques offer in-store specials, and artists also take advantage of the opportunity to showcase their work, which is admired by folks sampling warm bowls of chili during the cool fall day.

“This is a great family atmosphere,” one resident of nearby Sheridan told MyWebTimes, an online paper promoting local events, after spending the day enjoying the festivities. “My family and I came here to check it out and we’re glad we did.”

Ottawa Ice Odyssey & Holiday Bazaar

Be sure to dress warmly as you welcome winter at this outdoor celebration. There’s a cold-weather carnival for children, live reindeer, and holiday carolers in the streets. Perhaps the most unique aspect is the ice sculptors, who can be seen actively creating carvings on the sidelines.

“This is the most fun you can have with a chain saw!” Johnson says enthusiastically. “Ice artists will turn those boring blocks of ice into winter wonderlands’ most-loved characters, [bringing] our favorite stories to life.”

The Holiday Farmer’s Market makes a late-season appearance by providing tasty treats, and attendees can shop the Holiday Bazaar for baked goods, crafts, and auction items. Local businesses battle for the best window display and carriage rides provide a great way to view downtown décor. Don’t forget to bring the kids to see Santa, too. The Ice Odyssey is a great way to get in the holiday spirit!

“Evening shopping in Old Town is enhanced when the sculptures are lit at night,” says Johnson. “Ottawa has been dubbed the ‘Bedford Falls of the Midwest,’ so come and enjoy!”

If you’re searching for something fun to do with your family, you don’t have to go far. There’s something for everyone in this town—so be sure to Experience Ottawa this year! ▼



ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.



10TIPS

TO GET YOUR KIDS TO EAT VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

Tips from the American Heart Association

It can be a struggle to get your kids to eat fruits and especially vegetables, especially the recommended amount each day. New standards from the USDA recommend a child's plate should be half fruits and vegetables, and that kids should have 1 – 2 cups per day, depending on their age and physical activity level.

It may be a fight in your household, but the battle might be worth it! In a new study, children who ate the most vegetables and fruits had significantly healthier arteries as adults than children who ate the fewest. Here are 10 tips to encourage your children to eat more vegetables and fruits.

1

Make fruit and vegetable shopping fun. Visit your local green market and/or grocery store with your kids, and show them how to select ripe fruits and fresh vegetables. This is also a good opportunity to explain which fruits and vegetables are available by season and how some come from countries with different climates.

2

Involve kids in meal prep. Find a healthy dish your kids enjoy and invite them to help you prepare it. Younger kids can help with measuring, crumbling, holding and handing some of the ingredients to you. Older kids can help by setting the table. Make sure you praise them for their help, so they feel proud of what they've done.

3

Be a role model. If you're eating a wide range of fruits and vegetables — and enjoying them — your child may want to taste. If you aren't eating junk food or keeping it in your home, your kids won't be eating junk food at home either.

4

Create fun snacks. Schedule snack times — most kids like routines. Healthy between-meal snacks are a great opportunity to offer fruits and vegetables. Kids like to pick up foods, so give them finger foods they can handle. Cut up a fruit and arrange it on an attractive plate. Make a smoothie or freeze a smoothie in ice cube trays. Create a smiley face from cut-up vegetables and serve with a small portion of low-fat salad dressing, hummus or plain low-fat yogurt. A positive experience with food is important. Never force your child to eat something, or use food as a punishment or reward.



- 5 Give kids choices — within limits. Too many choices can overwhelm a small child. It's too open ended to ask, "What would you like for lunch?" It may start a mealtime meltdown. Instead, offer them limited healthy choices, such as choosing between a banana or strawberries with their cereal, or carrots or broccoli with dinner.
- 6 Eat together as a family. If your schedules permit, family dining is a great time to help your kids develop healthy attitudes about food and the social aspects of eating with others. Make sure you are eating vegetables in front of your children. Even if they aren't eating certain vegetables yet, they will model your behavior.
- 7 Expect pushback. As your kids are exposed to other families' eating habits, they may start to reject some of your healthy offerings. Without making a disparaging remark about their friends' diet, let your children know that fruits and vegetables come first in your family.
- 8 Grow it. Start from the ground up — create a kitchen garden with your child and let them plant tomatoes and herbs, such as basil and oregano in window boxes. If you have space for a garden, help them cultivate their own plot and choose plants that grow quickly, such as beans, cherry tomatoes, snow peas and radishes. Provide child-size gardening tools appropriate to their age.
- 9 Covert operations. You may have tried everything in this list and more, yet your child's lips remain zipped when offered a fruit or vegetable. Try sneaking grated or pureed carrots or zucchini into pasta or pizza sauces. Casseroles are also a good place to hide pureed vegetables. You can also add fruits and vegetables to foods they already enjoy, such as pancakes with blueberries, carrot muffins or fruit slices added to cereal. On occasions when you serve dessert, include diced fruit as an option.
- 10 Be patient. Changes in your child's food preferences will happen slowly. They may prefer sweet fruits, such as strawberries, apples and bananas, before they attempt vegetables. Eventually, your child may start trying the new vegetable. Many kids need to see and taste a new food a dozen times before they know whether they truly like it. Try putting a small amount of the new food — one or two broccoli florets — on their plate every day for two weeks; but don't draw attention to it.

For more tips on a healthy home from the American Heart Association, log on to www.heart.org/nutrition. ▼



Spring Plant Sale!

Fri., April 27; 10 am-5 pm
Sat., April 28; 10 am-5 pm
Sun., April 29; 12-5 pm
New and hard-to-find annuals,
perennials, heirlooms,
exotics, veggies and more!

Orchid Show Mother's Day

May 13, 12-5 pm
Mothers and
Grandmothers FREE!
*Beautiful orchid specimens
on display and experts on
hand for tips on care.*



Earth Day in the Garden Sunday, April 22, 2-4 pm

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Spring

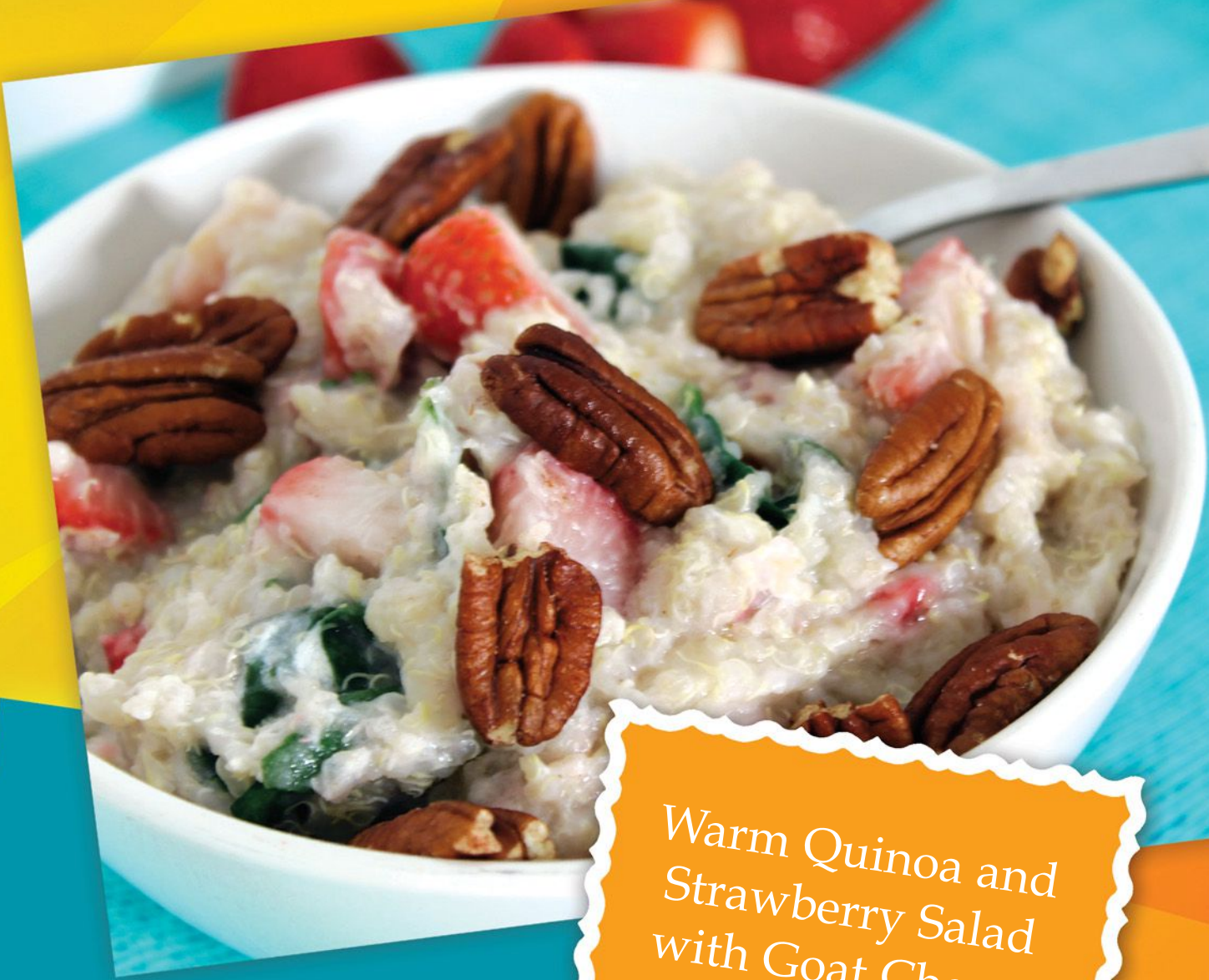
RECIPES

Days become longer. Winter coats are put away. Birds start chirping. After months of cold weather and hibernation, those first signs of spring are welcomed with open arms every year.

Along with warmer weather, spring also brings changes in the produce section of the grocery store. Vibrant blues, reds, and purples from fresh fruits and sweet melons replace the overall beige tones from winter potatoes, squash, and tubers. Although most produce is available year round, come spring time, the price of those vibrant fruits and veggies drops, the quality increases, and the produce is often local instead of shipped from thousands of miles away.

Three cheers for fresh and seasonal produce! Whether visiting your local farmer's market or shopping your local grocer, eating green and clean is easy in the springtime. Fresh and colorful produce also showcases plentiful nutritional benefits with vitamins like A, C, D, E, and K.

With produce abundant, tasty meal choices are endless. Get a healthy kick start to your spring with some light and easy recipes inspired by the tastes of spring. These recipes feature produce that's at the height of the season come spring and summer, such as flavorful berries, dark, leafy greens, aromatic herbs, and the delicious combination of garlic and tomatoes.



Warm Quinoa and Strawberry Salad with Goat Cheese

Quinoa, often touted as a “supergrain,” is actually a seed that’s one of the very few vegetarian forms of complete proteins. Bonus – it’s a super tasty seed when cooked! The goat cheese in this recipe is added when the quinoa is still warm, giving it a comforting mac-and-cheese twist.

Ingredients

- 1 c. quinoa, rinsed
- 1 c. strawberries, chopped
- 1/4 c. fresh, chopped basil
- 1/2 c. goat cheese crumbles
- 3 tbsp. coconut oil
- 3 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. sea salt

Time to prepare: 5 minutes

Time to cook: 40 minutes

Number of servings: 4

Tip: Have a rice cooker? Use it to cook your quinoa! It will take less of your time and attention, and will cook it perfectly with the correct liquid to quinoa ratio.

Directions

Cook quinoa as directed. As soon as the quinoa is done cooking and is still hot, immediately add the strawberries and basil. Next, stir in the goat cheese. In a small bowl, whisk together the coconut oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and sea salt, and then stir it into the quinoa dish. Sprinkle pecans over the top, and serve.



Garlic Shrimp Pasta with Tomatoes and Spinach

This pasta not only tastes amazing, but also plays on the sense of smell and sight. The aromatic garlic combined with the bright pops of red and green from the tomatoes and spinach makes eating this simple pasta dish an experience.

Ingredients

1 package whole wheat linguine
2 tbsp. olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 shallot, minced
1 (12-oz) bag of medium frozen
shelled and deveined shrimp

1 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 c. grape tomatoes, halved
2 c. fresh spinach
1/4 c. shredded parmesan cheese

Time to prepare: 10 minutes
Time to cook: 10 minutes
Number of servings: 4-6

Directions

Cook the linguine as directed. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and shallot, and cook until soft – about 3-4 minutes. Next, add the shrimp, salt, and pepper, and sauté until the shrimp start to turn pink. Add the tomatoes and cook for another 5 minutes and then turn the heat to low. Add the spinach and sauté until it wilts. When pasta is cooked to al dente, add the shrimp mixture to the pasta, and toss to combine. Finish by sprinkling on the parmesan cheese.

Kale is a superfood and has detoxifying properties when eaten. Combined with a little healthy fat and citrus and it becomes a delicious leafy green for a salad.

Time to prepare: 10 minutes
Serves: 2

Ingredients

3 c. raw kale, rinsed
and torn off stems into leaves
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. sea salt
2 carrots, grated
1/4 c. raw cashews
1/2 c. blueberries

Directions

Place the kale leaves in a large bowl, and pour olive oil over top. Massage the olive oil into the kale with hands until kale becomes soft – about 1 minute. Add the lemon juice and sea salt, and toss to combine. Top with the carrots, cashews, and blueberries.



Powerhouse Kale Salad



Berry Good Yogurt Bread

This bread is made with vanilla Greek yogurt, which adds to both the sweetness and the moistness, while keeping it low calorie and low sugar. Combined with the oatmeal, this bread is berry chewy, moist, and berry good!

Ingredients

3/4 c. old-fashioned rolled oats
3/4 c. whole wheat pastry flour
1/4 c. + 2 tbsp. dark brown sugar
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 c. vanilla Greek yogurt
1/4 c. milk
1 egg
1 tbsp. coconut oil
3/4 c. raspberries

Time to cook: 30 minutes

Time to prepare: 10 minutes

Number of servings: 8-10 slices

Directions

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, mix the oats, flour, brown sugar, baking soda, sea salt, and cinnamon. In a separate bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients except the raspberries. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and stir to combine. Gently fold in the raspberries. Pour the batter into a greased bread loaf pan, and bake for 35-40 minutes.

Bloomington-Normal Area

MAY

1 THROUGH JUNE 2: A Passion for Details: The Architectural Legacy of A.L. Pillsbury. In McLean County and beyond the architecture of A.L. Pillsbury stands out as some of the best. Built in the early 20th century, his schools, churches, businesses and homes represent some of the finest examples of architecture in Central Illinois. This exhibit showcases the hand drawn and colored renderings he produced to enable the client to visualize his designs and explores the styles and techniques he used to create his unique and finely detailed designs. 309.827.0428. www.mchistory.org.

1 THROUGH AUGUST 9: The Greening of the Prairie: Irish Immigrants in McLean County. On March 17, 2012, the museum will open a special exhibit on the Irish who settled here in McLean County. This 1,000 sq. ft. exhibit will contain historic objects, photographs and maps that tell the story of the Greening of McLean County. Leaving your homeland is not easy to do. Heart ties to family, land and language can make such a move a choice of last resort. For over three hundred years Irish people have packed-it-up and come to America, as individuals and as families. For the past two hundred years, Irish people have made their way to Illinois. Here in Central Illinois, our first settlers included Scots-Irish. In 1853, with the arrival of railroads and widespread famine in Ireland, immigration increased dramatically. By 1880 over 10% of the people of McLean County were Irish born. Here communities were built, traditions developed and lives celebrated. 309.827.0428. www.mchistory.org.

19 Family Fitness. Put down the remote control, turn off the video games, and join us at the park! This free event will get the whole family moving! Local businesses and organizations will join us in providing information and activities to further encourage active, healthy lifestyles. There will be games, demonstrations and activities for all ages. This is a great opportunity for the whole family to come out and see how the Bloomington Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Arts Department and other community organizations can help your family start on the path to active, healthy lifestyles today! Admission is free! 309.434.2260. www.cityblm.org.

JUNE

11-15 Camp Discovery: Nature Camp. We'll focus on summertime favorites this week: insects, plants and flowers! All things nature! We'll keep journals of what we discover outside and make all sorts of nature inspired crafts. A snack is provided. For children entering 1st and 2nd grades. Advanced registration is required for this program. 309.433.3444. www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

23-24 Great American Backyard Campout. A partnership with Sugar Grove Nature Center and the Children's Discovery Museum. Grab your sleeping bag and tent and join us as we celebrate the great outdoors for this national event! Bring your family and enjoy science and art activities about nature, view the stars with the twin city astronomers, or just sit by the campfire for stories and songs. A campfire dinner and light breakfast are included. 309.874.2174. www.sugargrovenaturecenter.org.

Bloomington-Normal area

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MAY

1 THROUGH 30: 27th Annual Arts in Education Spring Celebration. When Spring Celebration began in 1986, 1,000 students from 12 Peoria County schools were showcased in one single week. This spring, 27 years later, more than 12,000 students from over 110 schools will perform, exhibit, and demonstrate their talents in the Fine Arts and Applied Arts. Students from public and private schools, grades preK-12, will participate, representing seven central Illinois counties: Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, Fulton, Henry, and McLean. 309.645.6062. www.springcelebration.org.

24-27 Heart of Illinois Senior Games and Fine Arts Festival. The 13th Annual Heart of Illinois Senior Games and Fine Arts Festival features participants age 50 and older participating in sports competitions, art exhibits and fun events such as Wii Bowling and Bingo. The purpose of the games is to encourage and promote an active lifestyle to individuals 50 years or older. There are some new, fun items being thought of to work in the games but as it stands now there is truly something for everyone: athletics, arts, fellowship, health and wellness information and more! 309.686.2860.

26, 27 Mackinaw International Music, Wine and Beer Festival. 8th annual inter-national music, wine and beer festival, admission includes souvenir glass and 5 tasting tickets (additional tickets are available at \$1 each.) There will be wine and beer tasting, over 55 wines and 45 beers to taste and purchase lots of good food and great entertainment. Mark your calendar for great music, wine, beer and summer fun! 309.645.5054. www.mackinawvalleyvineyard.com.

JUNE

8, 9 PNC 2012 Prairie Air Show. It's an aviation extravaganza June 8-9 as the PNC 2012 Prairie Air Show takes flight for the first time over the Illinois River. This family friendly event will feature static and educational displays for children, food and drink concessions, and other entertainment. Among the performers announced for the air show are the precision AeroStars threeplane flight team; Skip Stewart and his "illusion of danger" maneuvers in a beefed-up biplane; Bill Leff's "starfire night" pyrotechnic skyshow; John Klatt's aerobatics twists; and Army Special Operations members that make up the U.S. Army Black Daggers jump team. www.prairieair.org.

16 Antique Tractor Show and Pull. If you have a love of tractors, and a competitive nature, make sure you mark Canton's Antique Tractor Show & Pull on our calendar. From antique steam-powered tractors dating back to the turn of the century, to more modern evolutions of this staple of farm equipment, you can enjoy the noisy, exciting fun of watching tractors of all sizes compete for prizes as they pull ever-increasing weight along the pull track. Grab a pork chop sandwich and get comfortable for this day-long event. 309.647.2677.

24 Les Misérables. Eastlight Theatre is thrilled to be one of the first exclusive Community Theatres in the nation to have the privilege to produce this remarkable show. Epic, grand and uplifting, Les Miserables packs an emotional wallop that has thrilled audiences all over the world. Rated PG. Please note this is the original version of the show with an adult cast. 309.699.7469. www.eastlighttheatre.com.

Peoria Areas



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COME SEE
THE

CornBelters

AND THE CORN CRIB!

Experiencing the Joys of Independent League Baseball

By Alex Moon

While football has surpassed baseball as our most popular sport, the national pastime rules the summer. Few things signal the coming of summer like baseball. Baseball is meant to be enjoyed outdoors in the warm afternoon sun, or as night begins to creep in bringing cooler air with it. Thankfully, citizens of the Bloomington-Normal area now have a professional team to call their own and enjoy this longtime summer tradition.

The CornBelters

And that new team is the Normal CornBelters. The CornBelters had their inaugural year in 2010, playing in the Frontier League, an independent professional league. The “independent” there means independent of Major League Baseball and its affiliates. Being a separate league than any tied to the majors means teams are run a little differently. For instance, players in “indy” leagues tend to be older, on average, than most minor league players, particularly at the single or double A level. The single to double A comparison is also about right for the talent level of the players on the CornBelters and other indy leaguers, so heading out to the game will still show players with plenty of skills!

Another difference in the team is that players don’t tend to stay with the team over years and years. Going into this season, only one player, Tyler Lavigne, from the original CornBelters roster is still on the team. This happens for a variety of reasons, but it does lead to an interesting consequence. Because baseball season is only a few months long, and players might switch teams midseason, CornBelters actually stay with a host family during the season. It’s a bit like a student exchange program, particularly since some of the CornBelters are from Australia, Canada and the Dominican Republic as well as from across the US. Having team members live with the local families they play for is a great way for the team to connect with their community.



If a team has a great stadium, it'll always be full.
Fortunately for the CornBelters, they have
an excellent stadium.

Special deals

This year, the CornBelters will be featuring a special deal each day of the week.

MONDAY

Illinois Corn Growers Association Night - \$1 Corn Dogs!

TUESDAY

Rosati's of Normal Reading Program Night and Two for Tuesday • Kids can run the bases after the game! Also, you can get two hot dogs and two sodas for the price of one!

WEDNESDAY

Dog Day Wednesdays - Bring your dog to the park and enjoy \$1 hot dogs.

THURSDAY

Thirst Quenching Thursdays - \$1 draft beers and \$1 Beer Nuts Peanuts and Bar Mix.

FRIDAY

CEFCU Fantastic Friday - Enjoy national entertainment acts every Friday night. Also, a fantastic firework show after every Friday game. Enjoy it from the field!

SATURDAY

State Farm Super Saturdays - Reggy the Purple Party Dude will be on hand for entertainment

SUNDAY

Frontier Family Funday Sundays - Enjoy the Frontier Family Four Pack!
You can get 4 hot dogs, 4 sodas, and 4 box seats for only \$40 bucks.

The Corn Crib

Now, I don't want to ruffle too many feathers here, but there's certainly one lesson that can be learned from the Chicago Cubs: If a team has a great stadium, it'll always be full. Fortunately for the CornBelters, they have an excellent stadium.

The Corn Crib, as it's called, follows the recent trend of building modern stadiums with an old-timey feel, and what a welcome trend it is. The Corn Crib, which seats about 6,000 between the seats and the grass, creates a feeling of nostalgia that connects to how unchanging the game of baseball is but still possess all the current day amenities we've come to expect. Part of what creates the classic feel is that there's real corn growing in the stadium! The corn sits out in the grassy area beyond the outfield where you can sit to watch the game.

The stadium is so lovely, it's also going to be used for other entertainment. This year, on July 14th, the Corn Crib will host its first stand alone concert. Dierks Bentley's Country & Cold Cans Tour will be performing with Jon Pardi and Josh Thompson as their opening acts.

But the element of the Corn Crib that got the most attention when I went with a group to a game last year was definitely the "World's Greatest Restroom." It catches your attention with a giant sign staking its claim as the Greatest. Now, sadly, I didn't get to actually experience the restroom, as it's a women's restroom, but I was assured by all the ladies in our group that it earns its title with such luxuries as a velvet couch, ornate sinks, and folded napkins to dry your hands. Clever, unique things like this really indicate the quality of thought that went into making the Corn Crib.

2012: A Special Season

The 2012 season is shaping up to be a particularly amazing season for the CornBelters. This year, the CornBelters will host the Frontier League All-Star Game on July 11th. And while seeing an All-Star game is certainly enjoyable, what is just as fun is all the festivities that go along with an All-Star game.

When I was a kid watching baseball, I always enjoyed the Home Run Derby more than the actual All-Star game. Fortunately, on the night before the All-Star Game, the CornBelters will host the Frontier League Home Run Derby. That night, 14 group leaders will be paired up with a home run hitter. The player who wins gets \$1,000 cash, and so will the fan they are paired up with!

The CornBelters are also running a variety of promotions throughout the entire season, including a deal every day of the week (see sidebar for more details). A quick trip to their website, www.normalbaseball.com, will tell you which ones are upcoming so you can plan your visit to the game accordingly.

Well, opening day is May 18, and I really can't recommend enough that you and yours take a trip out to the Corn Crib to watch a game. Whether you have every opponent's OPS memorized or struggle to correctly identify how many outs are in an inning, a good time will be had by all. ▼

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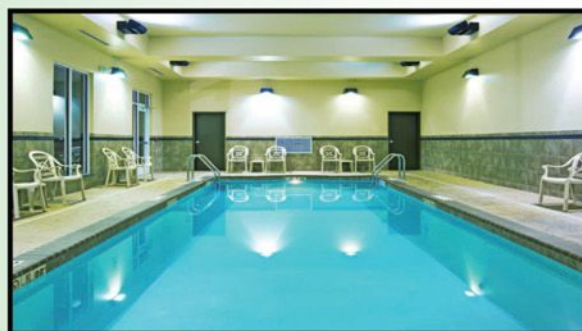
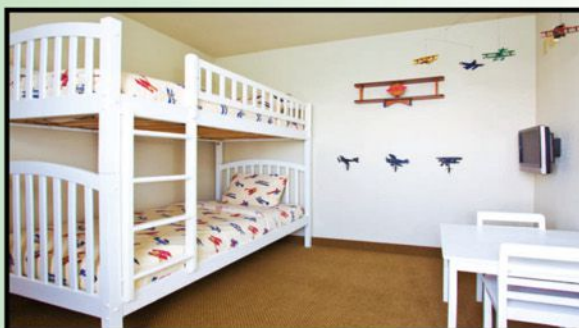
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