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May 2020 Newsletter

We hope that you and your family are home, healthy and remaining physically distant yet socially connected. Our goal is to provide you with opportunities to stay connected, active and strong while we weather this COVID-19 storm together. Many of our wonderful instructors have been working hard to transition their classes into virtual and remote programs. They are ready to bring these classes to you and they really miss their time with you each week! We hope that you will register for the classes that you have come to love and spend some time catching up with friends and instructors while we keep each other in good company.

Current closures and cancellations:

- Per the State of CT and local mandates, the playground, tennis courts, basketball courts, pavilion and the skate park are closed. The fields are closed to all group gatherings and use.
- All permits that were issued for the RecPlex fields and pavilion, the Town Green and Ruby Cohen have been cancelled through the end of May 2020.
- The Airline Trail spur between Lebanon Ave. and Old Amston Rd. is closed through May for the installation of the natural gas line and the Bloom Energy Project.
- All events through the end of May including the Bark in the Park, Car Show on the Town Green, Lions Club Carnival, and the Memorial Day Parade have been cancelled.

HOW TO REGISTER

Drop Off/Mail In/Online: At this time, the Town Hall is closed to the public.

You can leave forms and payment in the Town Hall drop box or mail them to our office. Make checks payable to "Town of Colchester".

Register Online

For your convenience, registrations can be done online. Simply go to www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department, click on "Register Online" and then follow the instructions on how to set up an account and register online. All major credit cards are accepted. Please call the Recreation Office (860-537-7297) if you need assistance.

Community Events

Spirit of Colchester

Let's show the world the "Spirit of Colchester"! In honor of Memorial Day 2020, we offer this friendly challenge to the Colchester community to create an American flag using recycled materials to display at their homes. Share your creativity on our event page on Facebook!

Scavenger Hunt

When you are out for a walk, picking up your dinner curbside at a local restaurant, look for our scavenger hunt signs! The key to the game- you must remain SOCIALLY DISTANT! It is important to stay at least 6' away from everyone- everywhere you go! So, when you are out, and you see our sign, take a selfie while you are being socially distant and having fun! Any picture with more than one person, shows dangerous behaviors or disregard for local, state, or federal mandates will be removed. The point of the game is to be creative, be safe, and be a good role model for those around you! Send your selfies in a private message on Facebook to Colchester Recreation, or in an email to parksandrec@colchesterct.gov. The scavenger hunt signs are up all-around town- you can start today!

Virtual Race to the end of COVID-19

Sign up to participate in our virtual race! Use your own step monitor to track your miles and submit your miles. Our goal is one mile for every day we are under the "Stay home and Stay Safe" mandate. We do not know how many miles that will be- but if we walk or run a mile a day we will get through this together and feel better too! Mileage tracking will start on April 20, 2020. Those that submit their forms will be entered into a drawing for a wonderful prize! All participants who complete the challenge will earn a "Race to End COVID-19" medal! You can use any app on your phone, Fitbit, or tracker to track your miles. Forms will be available on our website- www.colchesterct.gov. It's not too late to start! Sign up today!

3rd Annual Town Wide Tag Sale

We figured since everyone is stuck at home, it would be a good time to purge and get rid of some old junk! Let's start planning for the 3rd annual Town Wide Tag Sale! All tag sales are held at your home-no need to transport your items. All tag sales are held on the same day - a community day of tag sales.

One map will list all the locations so shoppers can easily find your location!

HOW IT WORKS:

1. Purchase your spot on the map for \$25 by applying before July 19th, 2020. Applications are available on our website at www.colchesterct.gov, under community events.
2. Beginning July 24, 2020 maps of all tag sale locations will be available online.
3. Hold a tag sale at your house or combine with neighbors!
4. ALL proceeds benefit the Colchester Recreation Scholarship Fund.
5. RAIN DATE AUGUST 8TH, 2020.

ONLINE VIDEOS

Garden and Grow

Peggy Wagner takes us on a journey through the spring planting season! You will learn something new in each video about how to grow your own garden- from the preparation, to the seeds, to harvesting your crop!

Random Acts of Science

Twice a week, Lindsay Floyd and her daughter Coral post a new video on our Facebook page that explores a new science experiment. They will demonstrate the experiment, explain how it works and what the science is behind the demonstration. All the experiments use simple, household items that you can find in your homes and you can try with your family

SUMMER DAY CAMP INFORMATION

Our Summer Day Camps will be held...but they will be like no other camp you have attended before! The creativity and the inspiration that you will find will knock your socks off!

We are closely monitoring all the local, state and federal mandates- and we will follow each and every one. This means that camp information might change weekly based on the mandates. We are adapting and growing every day to keep our campers and staff safe and engaged all summer! Please check the website frequently for all updates: www.colchesterct.gov/recreation/departement

Camp will be held Mondays- Fridays, June 29-August 22, 2020 from 7:45 am- 4:00 pm. The cost has been lowered to \$150 per week, per child to assist all families during this difficult time.

Let's paint a picture of our new 2020 day camp.....

USING OUR IMAGINATION



THE NEW **COLCHESTER SUMMER DAY CAMP**

PLAYING



LEARNING



Spread out over acres of the RecPlex, you will see pop up tents to provide shaded areas with tables and chairs. Each tent will become home base to a group of campers and their staff. These tables and chairs will be easily disinfected throughout the day (unlike wooden picnic tables), there will be hand sanitizer on the tables and frequent trips to the rest room to wash hands with soap and water.

Staff will be wearing face coverings, but the campers are not required to wear them. If you feel more comfortable- we will assist your child with wearing their own face mask, as we do with applying spray-on sunscreen.

Campers will be grouped based on their interest, rather than their ages, although wide age ranges will be avoided. Since each group will remain together for the week and will not interact with other groups, this will ensure that they can do more activities that are of interest to them. In many cases, siblings will be grouped together as well whenever appropriate.

We won't be going on any field trips this summer because they are not allowed by the State of Ct. However, this opens up some time for small group activities that are difficult to do in a large group like....trivia contests, learning magic tricks, hands on STEAM projects, friendship bracelets, sharing chapter books, creating artwork and more. We will be running, playing games and having fun- in small group activities, sports and games. The small groups will not be the same camp experience as in past years...but I am excited to see the way the friendships grow in a small group that has time to work and build together!

The camp staff will be creating projects to keep our campers busy all summer. Our projects will limit high touch items, shared supplies and cross contamination. We will be posting our list of needs on Facebook and the website- if you can help, we would really appreciate your support! These donations will help keep the staff and campers happily engaged and safely separate.

Our sign in procedures will be quite different. Parents will remain in their cars. Our camp directors will approach each car and ask the parent to take the campers temperature with our thermometer. If the child does not have a fever of 100 or higher, the parent will be asked a few more questions about other symptoms common in children. If there are no symptoms or fever, the child will get out of the car and will be assisted by camp staff to their group. We will need your patience with this procedure, we will do our absolute best to keep the line moving, but we are mandated to implement these procedures for the health and safety of everyone at camp. Our staff will be screened as they arrive to work and will stay home if they are sick.

Throughout the day, our staff and the Parks staff will be sanitizing and disinfecting all areas of the park that we will be using- including the tables, chairs, and the bathrooms.

We have cancelled extended care. Unfortunately, our staff cannot work longer than 40 hours per week. We cannot combine the groups at the end of the day into an "extended care group," and we cannot bring in new staff to cover for the day staff. For similar reasons, we cannot offer the 3-day per week camp for those in grades 6 and 7. Preschool camp has been cancelled as well.

While we are doing everything we can to prevent anyone from getting sick while at camp, we must all acknowledge that there are risks involved in being together. If anyone becomes sick or tests positive, we will follow state guidelines and work closely with the Chatham Health Department. This will include contact tracing and the self-quarantine of the exposed group for 2 weeks.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Registration closes one week before the week you are registering for (example- if you are signing up for the week of June 29th, registration closes June 22nd).
- Health Forms- If we have a health form on file from previous years, we do not need an updated form until your doctor's office reopens. If we do not have a health form on file, please send us the most current health form you have.
- If your child is coming to camp and has a medical condition, is immunocompromised, or will need special consideration when being placed in a group, please call the office to discuss with our staff.
- All our camp staff are returning staff- so they have extensive knowledge and experience working with children. Our camp training has started, and will be a combination of Zoom conference calls, online classes, and webinars.

If you have questions, concerns or ideas, please reach out and share them with us! We are here for you!

For the most up to date program information, please visit our website at: Colchester Recreation