

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Ithaca Children's Garden, Discover Cayuga Lake, Paddle-n-More, Sciencenter, and TCAT team up to offer four weeks of *free family programs with a new collaboration: Explore the Waterfront*

Beginning July 22, families can look forward to four mornings a week of free, hands-on family programming offered through a unique collaboration of 4 waterfront based agencies: ***Explore the Waterfront***

Ithaca Children's Garden, Discover Cayuga Lake, Paddle-n-More, and Sciencenter have joined creative forces to help families get outside and get out on the waterfront with some special, socially-distanced, in-person hands-on programs. Every Wednesday- Saturday, from 10-11:30am, families can find something to do outside along the waterfront.

Starting Wednesday July 22, Ithaca Children's Garden will kick things off with programming each Wednesday, ranging from construction of bug hotels to growing a grass turtle pet and other activities that can be taken home. Quests and scavenger hunts will be ready for the adventurers every Wednesday too.

Discover Cayuga Lake will take families cruising every Thursday morning and focus on a different hands-on learning science theme.

On Fridays learn about Cayuga Lake through a 2-hour guided Stewart Park Kayak Exploration with Paddle-N-More. This family friendly guided kayak trip incorporates both a quick-start lesson in kayaking and an exploration of the waterways of Ithaca. Spots are limited to 8, so registration is required! We welcome children of all ages with their caregivers! The guided kayak trip program requires pre-registration due to limited capacity.

Jennifer Wells, owner of Paddle-N-More says, "I am so excited to partner with such a wonderful group of individuals who want to give back to our community. It has been a long-time goal to provide paddle-sports programming to area youth and

children to gain exposure to our waterways through kayaking. This summer is a kick-start to providing more opportunities through our Stewart Park location.”

Sciencenter will be offering hands-on science exploration outside along Cascadilla Creek every Saturday. Families can explore stream life, meet snakes from the Sciencenter’s collection, and engineer rockets from household materials.

“Ever since starting my role with Ithaca Children’s Garden in 2011,” says Erin Marteal, Executive Director of Ithaca Children’s Garden, “I’ve been dreaming about teaming up on a cultural waterfront trail with the other wonderful waterfront institutions that make our waterfront so unique. It feels great to finally kick that off - a silver lining of this weird time is that with no camp we have the bandwidth to stretch outside our normal operations. We are looking at this at the start of a long-term collaboration to bring awareness to our waterfront as a meaningful resource, not only to tourists but also to local residents.”

Explore the Waterfront partners are committed to making the programming safe and accessible to as many families as possible.

To this end, all partners quickly agreed they wanted to offer the program at no cost; TCAT added a key component of accessibility by generously supporting with a modified Route 22 - free this summer (as are all their routes through September 5) - to align with arrival at each of our program locations at the right time on the right day. (For specific Route 22 information with timetables go to:

https://tcatbus.com/route22_summer/

Explore the Waterfront will run 4 weeks; if it’s well attended, partners may agree to extend through the end of summer.

“Many families have been struggling, not only with unmet childcare needs and lost jobs in some cases, but also a lack of safe activities to provide some structure and normalcy to the week,” says Marteal. “We are all hoping that *Explore the Waterfront* gives families something to look forward to.”

“With our reopening, the Sciencenter is excited to welcome families back,” says Jen Schwade, VP of Education for the Sciencenter. “We want to celebrate by hosting events for the community. Ithaca has so many wonderful institutions, and we love having the opportunity to create something with our local partners that highlights our waterfront neighborhood.”

The program is made possible in part thanks to generous support from GreenStar Food Co-Op. The partners invite additional corporate sponsors and donors to step

forward to help something truly unique and memorable to area families this summer.

While programs are all free, registration is required and early registration is strongly encouraged since space is quite limited, particularly important in Covid times (*Sciencenter and Ithaca Children's Garden are able to accommodate drop-in attendees though pre-registration is still helpful). More information and a link to free registration can be found here:

<http://ithacachildrensgarden.org/explorethewaterfront/>

"It's incredible to see this dream becoming a reality and what a great team to work with!" says Bill Foster, Executive Director of Discover Cayuga Lake.

Explore the Waterfront will run 4 weeks; if it's well attended, and financial support materializes, partners may agree to extend through the end of summer.