

Camp Day, Performing Arts fest, Pride Luau planned for Recreation & Parks Month

June is Recreation and Parks Month and, as part of this Ontario-wide initiative, the Town of Aurora has planned something for everyone.

The theme for this year's 'June is Recreation and Parks Month' is 'Community Thrives Here' and is intended to show how recreation and parks spaces bring community together.

As such, this year's local programming features an array of new events and returning favourites including a LeadHER Camp Day on June 7 and Pride Luau on Wednesday, June 26, both sponsored by ParticipACTION. Also planned is a new Play in the Park series tailored to nature, science, crafts, and sport, and a series of drop-in programs ranging from open gym time for youngsters and their families to a seminar for older adults entitled 'Ask the Pharmacist.'

'For us, this is a way to communicate to the community that Rec & Parks have a variety of benefits,' says Franco DeMarco, Recreation Supervisor for the Town of Aurora. 'It's really a way for us to promote healthy, active lifestyles. We know Rec & Parks provide many physical and mental health benefits to the community. That is why we're choosing to celebrate and using the Town's resources [such as] the trails systems, the many parks and amenities that are there in the community, and even our Town drop-ins. It will have a number of free drop-ins for the community to promote those active lifestyles. Whether you're trying a new activity for the first time or continuing with your regular programming, there are several ways to engage the community.'

A full list of drop-in activities scheduled throughout the month of June can be found at aurora.ca/jrpm.

New this year are the LeadHER Camp Day, Pride Luau, and Play in the Park initiatives.

LeadHER Camp Day will take place Friday, June 7, at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

This presentation is hosted in partnership between the Town and the Newmarket-based Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, building on their existing partnership on the Newcomer Bus Tours for older adults. The Camp Day is geared towards newcomers to the community.

The Pride Luau, set for Wednesday, June 6 at the AFLC, is also in keeping with the themes of inclusivity and diversity, says DeMarco.

'We have a whole evening scheduled,' he says. 'The event itself is in collaboration with You Can Play, York Pride, and funded by ParticipACTION. It is in celebration of the LGBTQ2+ community [but] it is for the whole community. It is a full evening of activities at the Leisure Complex including rock climbing, a family open gym, a smoothie bar, programming in The Loft, a vendor hall, a leisure swim and registration is now open. Anyone interested is definitely welcome.'

Play in the Park activities will activate nearby Lambert Willson Park beginning Saturday, June 8, and running on select Saturdays and Sundays through June 23.

First up is Nature Seekers on June 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This will be followed on June 9 from 1 ? 3 p.m. with Spotlight on Science; on June 15 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon with Beach Volleyball; Crafty Critters on June 22 from 1 ? 3 p.m.; and Multi-Sport Fun on June 23 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

These outdoor workshops are 'aimed at getting you and your family moving, laughing and learning.'

'We're always looking at adding different programming to activate different spaces,' says DeMarco. 'When we were looking at the

lineup for this year, obviously a number of the drop ins are free, we talked about other opportunities to provide some family-based programs. That is a new series that is available for all ages and abilities. No pre-registration required. It will be our recreation staff that are delivering that programming and it is very unstructured. Families are welcome to drop in at any point in the two hours, stay for the whole time [or] come for a half hour with the kids.

?For us it is encouraging the community to be active, whatever that case might be. We know that residents and visitors to Aurora are doing these things anyway. The weather is now nicer. We'd [also] love to see how everyone is celebrating 'June is Rec and Parks Month' in their own way. We have a social media option: if you're going for a walk, walking the dog, going for a bike ride with the family, playing pickleball, tennis, outdoors on the courts, whatever the case might be, just keep us in mind and if you're posting to social, they can tag the Town and use the hashtag #aurorajrpm24.

?It's a great time of year for us. Aurora has so many beautiful trails and parks and great amenities that make Aurora a great place to work, live and play and that's why we choose to celebrate 'June is Rec and Parks Month.'?

By Brock Weir