

IT'S A PLACE

Arc Greenspace kicks off summer programming

FOR US

By Chloe Forbes

MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

The Arc Community Greenspace is rolling out the hyperbolic red carpet for local organizations this summer, beginning with Meadville Public Library and its Color Your World summer reading program. On Thursday, the library will be on-site from noon to 1 p.m. with its book bike, puppets and story time.

Recently launched, the book bike is full of literature that passersby can check out on the spot. The library on wheels includes event-centric books for each event it attends, having held fairy tales for First Fairy Friday.

Attendees can also meet the puppets available to check out at the library as they perform a story time.

The ILIP Snack Shack will also be at the Greenspace to offer lunch options. The ILIP Snack Shack is a collaboration between Bethesda Lutheran Services and Family Services of Northwestern PA to support an employment environment affording youth and young adults the opportunity to learn about running a full-service food truck.

This year's programming has 11 free events, runs from the end of May through September, and features midday events to be more inclusive of The Arc of Crawford County's clients. The Arc serves individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities in nine residential group homes, and the Greenspace is adjacent to the rear of The Arc's Chestnut Street headquarters.

Mark Weindorf, The Arc's executive director, said that when we go to the gym or church, we can make friends, but in residential units, it's much harder to be exposed to the community.

"Their folks don't make those connections, so this enables them to feel more included and comfortable," he said. The midday events are specifically for The Arc residents as nighttime

events like karaoke and movie nights are a draw for the community, but there's no staffing to bring Arc clientele to the space, which is located on Market Street between Chestnut and Arch streets.

The "lunchtime lift" events will feature magic, therapy pigs, storytelling and more. All events are open to everyone and are family-friendly.

This summer's programming is supported by Erie Arts & Culture's Creative Sector Flex Fund, which was matched by The Arc and Meadville Neighborhood Center.

Amara Geffen, a volunteer who coordinates programming for the Greenspace, said the space is a golden opportunity for local See GREENSPACE, Page A6





Amara Geffen, a volunteer who coordinates programming for the Greenspace, said the space, which is adjacent to the rear of The Arc of Crawford County's Chestnut Street headquarters, is a golden opportunity for local organizations and entrepreneurs.

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Greenspace

Continued from Page A1 organizations and entrepreneurs. The Meadville Neighborhood Center has used the Arc since 2018 to host events, and Geffen hopes other organizations follow suit.

"Right now, I'm still doing a lot of the legwork for this, hoping to build the collaboration in such a way that other groups will do what Meadville Neighborhood Center does," she said.

Zackary Johnson, an Arc employee, has been working with local restaurants to find ways to get them involved in the events and stimulate business as opposed to bringing in food trucks.

This year, the summer solstice event will return due to popular demand along with food from Julian's Bar and Grille and Taco Factory Mexican Cuisine.

Geffen based this year's programming on feedback, including that received through surveys about last year's events. Attendees expressed a desire for a Fourth of July event, so this year, there will be a community celebration that afternoon and evening. Respondents also wanted events with a variety of things to do rather than one singular activity, which informed events like the kickoff on Thursday.

In case of inclement weather, the event will be moved indoors to the community room at The Arc.

The Greenspace is an outdoor space that incorporates native landscaping, streetscape improvements, a performance stage, benches, colorful shade umbrellas, solar-powered umbrella tables that provide free WiFi and evening lighting, and an Americans with Disabilities Act-accessible walkway.

The full calendar of events is:

- June 14 — Second Saturday Night Live: Vinyl DJ Nights with Stephen Maynard from 6:30 p.m. to dusk
- June 20 — Summer Solstice Celebration from 3 to 9:45 p.m.
- July 4 — July 4 Community Celebration from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

- July 12 — Meadville Community Theatre: An Encore with Carol Burnett (11 a.m. to noon)
- July 24 — Lunchtime Magic with Jim Fitch from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
- Aug. 5 — Lunchtime Lift: Tree Family Pigs Therapy from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
- Aug. 9 — Meadville Neighborhood Center's Second Saturday Live from 6:30 p.m. to dusk
- Aug. 21 — Lunchtime Lift: Storytelling with Josh Searle White and friends from noon to 1 p.m.
- Sept. 13 — Annual Family Movie Night with activities beginning at 5:30 p.m. and the movie at dusk
- Sept. 25 — Lunchtime event from noon to 1 p.m.

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