

ECASB & Erie County

Collaborating For Stronger Public Schools in Erie County

May 2024



Lisa Chimera
Deputy County Executive

As we near the end of the school year, I recall as a former educator how exciting the final few weeks of school could be. For our little ones moving up to a new classroom or even a new school, this can bring both excitement and nerves. Our older students will also enjoy major life milestones, including prom and graduation. It is important to remember the importance of checking in on our students and their mental health during these transitional times. This is a great time to celebrate our students and their accomplishments, whether they be academic, athletic or artistic. In this newsletter we also highlight some fun summer activities and how to stay safe. Thank you to our school administrators, teachers, faculty and staff for all you have done this past school year!

Resources:

Live Well Erie: <https://www.erie.gov/livewellerie>

Erie County Department of Social Services: <https://www.erie.gov/socialservices>

Erie County Department of Health: <https://www.erie.gov/health>

Erie County Office of Health Equity: <https://www.erie.gov/health-equity>

News from Erie County:

BECPPL VIP Pass

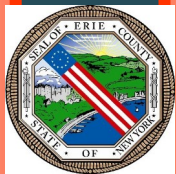
Not only can a library card provide access to adventure and a way to explore the world, it is also a ticket to discounts and specials at destinations across Erie County. Individuals and families can use their library card VIP (Very Important Perks Pass) to receive free general admission for up to four people at the Buffalo History Museum, or for two dollars off general admission at Explore & More Children's Museum. Other VIP partners include the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Penn Dixie Fossil Park & Nature Reserve plus many more!

Library cards are free for residents of New York State. Visit a branch to apply or go to www.buffalolib.org/library-cards. Happy reading!

Parks

There's no better way to spend a few hours than to visit one of Erie County's Parks or Forestry areas. (www.erie.gov/parks). Experience miles of trails for hiking and biking, tennis courts, and picnic





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areas, with four adaptive playgrounds open at Chestnut Ridge Park in Orchard Park, Como Lake Park in Lancaster, Ellicott Creek Park in the Town of Tonawanda and Emery Park in South Wales.

Safety tips:

- *Dress for the weather: sunscreen, hats, loose/light-colored clothing*
- *Safety first: Bring plenty of water and know the physical limits for you and your group, especially in hot weather*
- *Watch for wildlife: reduce your risk of tick-borne illnesses like Lyme disease by checking for ticks on humans and pets after spending time outside; and, leave wild animals alone and undisturbed, for your health and for theirs.*

When visiting our parks, please be mindful to leave the area or shelter as you found it and to take everything with you. This goes for our entire parks system. It is so important to keep these natural areas beautiful and litter-free! The plants and animals who call our parks home will thank you! On that note, we also ask that if you enjoy the park with your dog, that you clean up after them and always keep them safely on a leash.

We have wonderful events that our Rangers work very hard to put on each month. From bird watching to searching for fossils, there is truly something for all ages! To learn more about Ranger-led events, or to make a reservation, visit erie.gov/parks.

May is Adolescent Health Month

Everyone has a role in supporting the health of adolescents and teens. For ideas of what schools can do to support students' mental health:

- Help students cope with emergencies and their aftermath.
- Provide safe and supportive environments—whether in person or virtually.
- Link students to mental health services.
- Integrate social emotional learning.
- Train staff.
- Support staff mental health.
- Review discipline policies to ensure equity.
- Build safe and supportive environments.

Adapted from the CDC Adolescent and School Health web site

Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental health is more than just a state of mind. It affects how we see ourselves, interact with others, and make decisions, and it plays a role in our physical health as well. During Mental Health Awareness Month, we'd like to highlight the comprehensive newsletter, "Let's Talk about Mental Health," produced by the Erie County Office of Health Equity (ECOHE). Available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali/Bangla, Swahili and Burmese, this publication includes resources, facts and ideas that all of us can put to good use.

Access this and other ECOHE newsletters at www.erie.gov/health-equity.



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ECOHE offers Mental Health First Aid trainings. These sessions give adults the tools they need to provide immediate, practical support to someone experiencing a mental health challenge. Classes for adults who work with adults and adults who work with teenagers are available to be scheduled. See www.erie.gov/mhfa to learn more.

Healthy and Safe Swimming this Summer

Many families enjoy relaxing in swimming pools, hot tubs, lakes, ponds, especially in warmer weather. These recreational spaces are synonymous with fun – but it only takes seconds for a fun day to turn tragic.

More children ages 1-4 years old die in the United States from drowning than from any other cause. And while children are at the highest risk, anyone can drown. Combine that with the dangers of slipping and falling on slick surfaces, head injuries from dives and jumps, and other drowning-related injuries for people who survive drowning, and it underscores the importance of a safety-first mindset when spending time around water.

Tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Make sure everyone has basic swimming and water safety skills.
- Use U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets as directed.
- Designate a responsible adult to closely and constantly supervise swimmers.
- Know how to recognize and respond to a swimmer in distress and how to perform CPR.

Help keep backyard pools safe:

- Prevent access to water when pool is not in use.
- Install and maintain barriers that fully enclose the pool and separate it from the house, like four-sided fencing.
- Use locks and alarms for windows and doors.

Important Dates

- May 2, School Principals Day
- May 6-10, Teacher Appreciation Week