

SUPERHERO FUN RUN

CREAM OF WHEATON

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

INDEPENDENCE DAY

WHEATON BREW & SELTZER FEST

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

LIGHT THE TORCH NIGHT RUN

REINDEER RUN

2023



Photo Credit: City of Wheaton



SPECIAL EVENT
ANNUAL REPORT

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Thank you to the DuPage Camera Club for their volunteer efforts in 2023 capturing amazing moments at our special events.

Photos in this report are a combination of staff photography as well as those from our wonderful community volunteers.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2023

Traditions were honored, family favorites were enjoyed and memories were made when the Wheaton Park District presented a full calendar of special events in 2023.

The event season kicked-off in spring with the introduction of the Superhero Fun Run in April, a new take on an annual run that benefits the Sensory Garden and Playground. Kids and adults donned their superhero capes and costumes for the occasion.

The events flowed right into summer with the Cream of Wheaton festival held in June in Memorial Park. From June through September, the Summer Entertainment Series entertained crowds gathered in Memorial Park for a variety of musical performances. The schedule featured 10 concerts and 17

bands, including 3 concerts with free admission. Independence Day was observed with fireworks, a parade through the streets of Wheaton, and the Field of Honor at Seven Gables Park. In August, the Wheaton Brew and Seltzer Fest as well as Shakespeare in the Park drew thousands to Memorial Park.

The Central Athletic Complex was the scene for the Light the Torch Run and October Fest, two events that highlighted the fall season. Event participants ran into the holiday season at the Lions Club Reindeer Run 5K in December, a festive family favorite.

LIONS CLUB REINDEER RUN 2023



2023 SOCIAL MEDIA AT A GLANCE

Event success is due to robust marketing efforts, which include social media.

170+ social media posts promoted special event content on the Park District's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Best performing posts: *Light the Torch Home Decoration Contest Thank You*, *Reindeer Run Costumes*, *Memorial Park Concert Series Thank You*.

Posts on the Memorial Park Facebook page reached **87,000+ people**. Page visits increased by **182.3%** compared to 2022, and the Jay Allen Concert Facebook Event reached **4,000+** people.

The Facebook event page for Cream of Wheaton reached **33,600+** accounts.

Posts on the Wheaton Brew and Seltzer Facebook page reached **29,300+** people.

Link clicks increased by **418.3%** and Facebook page visits increased by **177.9%** compared to 2022.

The marketing strategy for race promotion changed in 2023, to highlight registration price changes and encourage early-bird registration. Each race received boosted content on Facebook and Instagram prior to the early-bird price change to give people the sense of urgency to sign up early instead of waiting for the week of the race. Ads reached a total of **78, 827** people.



MEET THE TEAM

MARKETING



Margie Wilhelmi,
Director of Marketing



Carolyn Wilkin,
Special Event Manager



Sammi Catanzaro,
Special Event Coordinator



Lauren Cali,
Marketing and Social Media Manager



Trish Whelan,
Creative Services Manager



Julia Meade,
Graphic Design Manager



Caitlin Chekytis,
Graphic Arts Assistant

PARK SERVICES



Rob Sperl,
Director of Planning



Nic Novak,
Superintendent of Projects & Events

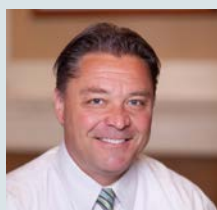


Grant Fair,
Event Specialist

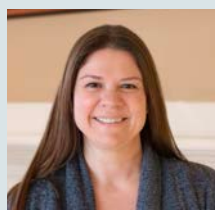
SPECIAL FACILITIES



Dan Novak,
Director of Athletics & Special Facilities



Andy Bendy,
Director of Special Facilities



Kim Prazak,
Assistant to Director of Special Facilities

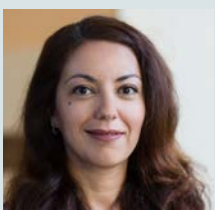
FINANCE



Mary Janik,
Finance Assistant



Randy Tucker,
Accounting Supervisor



Martha Hernandez,
Finance Manager

Special acknowledgment to all of the full time and part time staff members who volunteered their time to assist with special events and concerts in Memorial Park in 2023. Thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who are essential in ensuring the safety and coordination of our annual events.

AUXILIARY PARTNERS



The City of Wheaton

The special event team works closely with many departments within the City of Wheaton, including Police, Fire, Public Works, Planning, Communications, City Council and the City's Liquor Commission to ensure all proper permitting and safety measures are followed. The team would like to thank the City of Wheaton for its partnership in permitting and approval, operational planning and event support.



Milton Township DuPage County C.E.R.T.

The Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.) provides assistance with security and emergency management at our larger events. This partnership has been vital in keeping our events successful and safe for our attendees, vendors and volunteers. C.E.R.T. educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact the area and trains them in basic emergency response skills.



DuPage County Fairgrounds

The DuPage County Fairgrounds has been a great partner, offering the district use of its parking lots for Go Fly a Kite and the Fireworks on the 3rd of July. The staff at the Fairgrounds is amenable to cleaning before our events, which assists with the large volume of residents parking in the area and ensures safety during firework setup and launch taking place on its property.

First Trust

2023 Community Event Partner

SUPERHERO FUN RUN

APRIL 15 | MEMORIAL PARK

Event Summary

A superhero theme was introduced for this run that benefited the Play for All Playground and Garden Foundation, replacing the Fun Run in Color. Hosted in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wheaton A.M., the race took runners and walkers through a course that wound through downtown Wheaton, Northside Park and finished at Memorial Park. Participants showed off their creative superhero costumes and were able to meet and greet with their favorite superheroes at the after-party!

Highlights

- As the first race of the year, Superhero Fun Run kicked-off the Race Wheaton race bundle in 2023.
- Wheaton Park District partnered with the art and graphic design classes from Wheaton-Warrenville South and Wheaton North High Schools to create an event logo that was used on marketing and promotional materials.
- Culver's sponsored the race and was on-site with their mascot, Scoopie, handing out lemon ice samples after the race, which was very popular with the participants.
- The Hulk, Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, and Captain America characters were on-site to cheer participants on throughout the course and meet and greet after the race.
- The Rotary Club of Wheaton A.M. had a booth to distribute information to participants and spectators.

361 RUNNERS

\$30,452
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2019
Revenue	\$43,335.11	\$57,681.95	\$57,452.16
Expenses	\$19,715.92	\$25,349.54	\$20,061.37
Net Revenue*	\$23,619.19	\$32,332.41	\$37,390.79

**shared 50% with partner Rotary Club of Wheaton A.M.*



Photo Credit: Kasey Mueller



Photo Credit: Kasey Mueller



Liam Treleven/Graphic Design Studio at Wheaton North High School

CREAM OF WHEATON

JUNE 1-4 | MEMORIAL PARK

35,000+
estimated attendance

\$31,500
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2019
Revenue	\$231,894.24	\$204,895.69	\$197,985.15
Expenses	\$134,301.77	\$109,964.99	\$99,413.59
Net Revenue*	\$97,592.47	\$94,930.70	\$98,571.56

*shared 50% with partner Wheaton Chamber of Commerce

Event Summary

Cream of Wheaton returned to Memorial Park in early June with beautifully warm weather and great attendance. With live performances from 13 bands, a beer garden, food vendors, Arts and Craft Fair, Business Expo, kids' activities, a 5K/10K run, and a carnival, there was plenty of fun all weekend long!

Highlights

- In partnership with the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce, over 60 volunteers helped sell tickets, manage the beer garden tent, and welcome guests to the event.
- 35 arts and crafts vendors were in attendance, an increase from 15 vendors in 2022.
- 14 local elementary and middle schools participated in our carnival wristband pre-sale.
- Concessions revenue increased by 20% from 2022.
- Radio Flyer was a sponsor of the event and was on-site allowing guests to test out their new electric bikes.
- Wheaton College Artist Series sponsored the kids activities on Saturday and Sunday.
- The bands were a mix of local band and headliners, including 7th heaven and Hi Infidelity.



SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS | JUNE-SEPTEMBER | MEMORIAL PARK

Event Summary

A variety of musical genres were featured at 10 evening concerts throughout the Summer Entertainment Series at Memorial Park. Seven concerts were ticketed and three concerts featured free admission. Headliners included American English, Radio Gaga, The PettyBreakers, the Trippin Billies, and a unique co-headlining set from The Chicago Experience and Billy Elton. Jay Allen, talent from The Voice!, headlined at a special fundraising concert to benefit the Alzheimer's Association in July. Strong ticket and concessions sales helped to increase the net revenue over 2022.

Highlights

- 13 part-time seasonal employees joined the team to work the Summer Entertainment Series concerts and other summer events.
- The most attended concert was Billy Elton and The Chicago Experience on September 8 with 1357 attendees.
- 971 day-of concert tickets were sold.
- Concessions revenue was over \$60,000.
- The partnership with the DuPage Symphony Orchestra continued in 2023, who performed a 60's themed performance.
- The June 24 concert with Bostyx and The PettyBreakers was a fundraiser for the Milton Township Food Pantry. Concessions tips benefited the food pantry and concertgoers could donate directly at the Milton Township booth.
- In partnership with the Vivoda Family, the July 15 concert featuring Jay Allen raised funds for the Alzheimer's Association. Ticket sales proceeds and concessions tips generated \$30,250.71.

9,500+
concert attendees

8,916 TICKETS SOLD

\$41,750
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$222,025.22	\$179,532.78	\$162,757.35
Expenses	\$172,943.74	\$168,330.25	\$153,990.70
Net Revenue	\$49,081.48	\$11,202.53	\$8,766.60



Photo Credit: Armando Prieto

INDEPENDENCE DAY

JULY 3 & 4 | GRAF PARK & DOWNTOWN WHEATON

10,000+
estimated attendance

\$1,500
sponsorship revenue

Event Summary

The Independence Day fireworks show was presented in Graf Park on July 3. Activities began at 5:30 p.m. and featured lawn games, food trucks, small carnival rides, face painting, plus DJ music and giveaways.

The July 4 parade stepped-off at 10 a.m. on July 4 and ended in downtown Wheaton. The late Bernard Hurley served as the grand marshal. Hurley was a World War II veteran who served under the command of General George S. Patton, Jr. He was accompanied by his grandson, Jon Ryan Hurley, a Marine who served in Afghanistan. Marching units included marching bands from Wheaton North and Wheaton-Warrenville South High Schools, the Medinah Mini Choppers, entertainment from Acrodazzle, the Midwest Model T Cars, and the Four Star Brass Band.

Highlights

- The theme for this year's Independence Day activities was "Star-Spangled Summer!"
- The 25-minute fireworks display was very popular with attendees.
- Over 50 parade entries participated in the July 4 parade.
- Boy Scout Troop #575 was at the July 3 festivities for the Presentation of the Colors ceremony.

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$39,140.00	\$39,510.00	\$36,460.00
Expenses	\$48,213.93	\$43,119.65	\$38,519.57
Net Revenue	[\$9,073.93]	[\$3,609.65]	[\$2,059.57]



Photo Credit: City of Wheaton



WHEATON BREW & SELTZER FEST

AUGUST 5 | MEMORIAL PARK

Event Summary

Attendees were offered more than 60 brews and seltzers to sample from at the 12th annual Wheaton Brew and Seltzer Fest at Memorial Park. Tickets included 32 two-ounce samples along with a commemorative glass. Despite inclement weather, over 800 attendees braved the rain to try new brews and rock out to live music from the Four Star Brass Band and The Breakfast Club. Lower ticket sales due to forecasted rain and higher rental costs impacted the budget significantly in 2023. Proceeds benefited CASA of DuPage County and the DuPage County Historical Museum.

Highlights

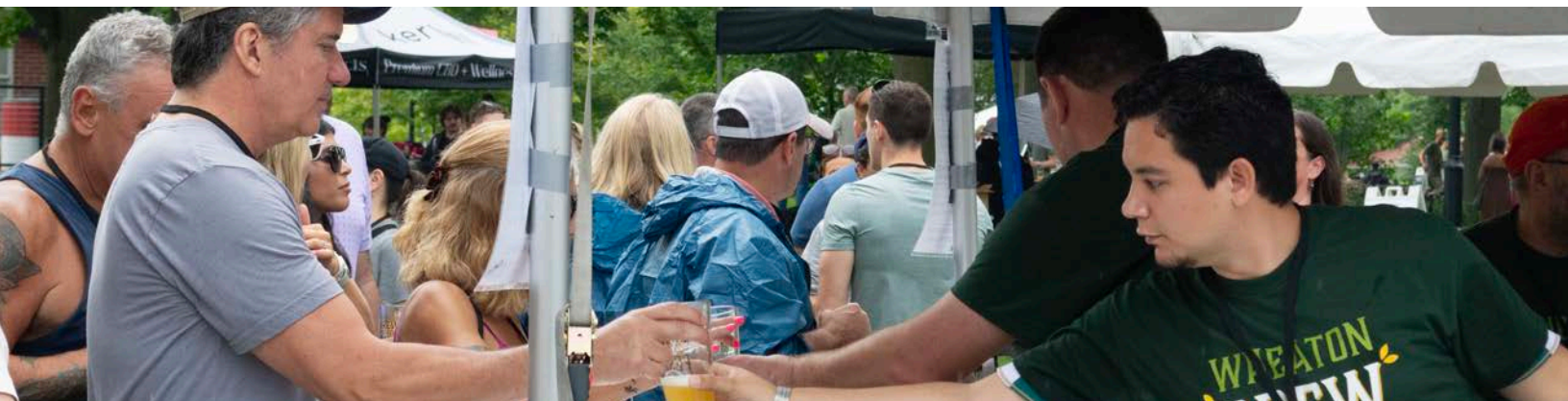
- A volunteer force of over 80 people from both the Park District and CASA of DuPage County helped at the event.
- Attendees stopped at 11 different stations to sample the different brews and seltzers.
- The Breakfast Club, singing 80's rock and pop songs, was a big hit with attendees.

838 TICKETS SOLD

\$3,500
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$54,549.64	\$78,114.46	\$57,852.29
Expenses	\$45,159.89	\$43,796.84	\$51,780.90
Net Revenue*	\$9,389.75	\$34,317.62	\$6,071.39

**shared 50% with partner CASA of DuPage*



SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

AUGUST 24-26 | MEMORIAL PARK

2,000+
estimated attendance

\$15,000
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$15,639.72	\$9,164.45	\$12,977.32
Expenses	\$19,560.37	\$18,981.37	\$17,661.03
Net Revenue	[\$3,920.65]	[\$9,816.92]	[\$4,683.71]

Event Summary

A free production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" was presented in partnership with Wheaton College's Arena Theater. Concessions proceeds from the show benefited the DuPage County Historical Museum Foundation. A pre-show puppet show (synopsis) kicked off each performance and concessions were available for purchase. Extreme heat (over 100°) forced the cancellation of the Thursday performance. The Friday and Saturday performances were very well-attended.

Highlights

- The concessions offerings were changed this year and pizza was offered instead of hot dogs. The pizza was very popular with attendees.
- Popcorn, ice cream, and snacks were also sold in Concessions, generating \$1,061.21 for the DuPage County Historical Museum Foundation.
- An additional \$1,074.92 was donated in Concessions tips, donation box, and online donations.



Photo Credit: Tom Snyder



LIGHT THE TORCH NIGHT RUN

SEPTEMBER 30 | CENTRAL ATHLETIC COMPLEX

Event Summary

The Light the Torch 5K Night Run was coupled with the October Fest one-night celebration at the Central Athletic Complex again in 2023. The race route took runners through the southern part of Wheaton, where homeowners enthusiastically watched from their porches and lit up their houses to enhance the illumination effects. Runners wore glow-in-the-dark accessories, reflective clothing, and bright costumes as they navigated illuminated lanes. Runners enjoyed food, beverages, carnival rides, and live music at the October Fest after-party.

Highlights

- 2023 marked the 10th anniversary of Light the Torch as well as the final year of the event.
- Race participation increased by over 15% from 2022.
- 16 homeowners along the route registered to participate in the Home Decoration Contest, an increase from 6 registrations in 2022.
- The winners of the home decoration contest included a Ghostbusters display, a Gatorade/water station, and a multi-colored lights display.

791 RUNNERS

\$57,104
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$85,888.08	\$76,407.23	\$71,847.66
Expenses	\$33,986.42	\$42,836.58	\$37,468.66
Net Revenue*	\$51,901.66	\$33,570.65	\$34,379.00

*shared 50% with partner FT Cares



LIONS CLUB REINDEER RUN

DECEMBER 2 | DOWNTOWN WHEATON

1,174 RUNNERS

\$43,550
sponsorship revenue

	2023	2022	2021
Revenue	\$86,203.41	\$86,040.54	\$76,494.12
Expenses	\$33,248.09	\$32,377.16	\$25,204.84
Net Revenue*	\$52,955.32	\$53,663.38	\$51,289.28

*shared 50% with partner Lions Club

Event Summary

Dressed in their finest ugly Christmas sweaters, Santa hats, and Grinch costumes, participants got into the holiday spirit early at the 2023 Reindeer Run on December 2. All participants received a long sleeve race t-shirt and reindeer antlers and could warm up in the DuPage County Historical Museum before the race. Hosted in partnership with the Wheaton Lions Club, 2023 marked the 12th anniversary of the festive 5K that took over 1,100 runners throughout downtown Wheaton.

Highlights

- Lions Club members were on-site at the French Market and the Wheaton Christmas Parade to help promote the run.
- \$1,065.00 was donated back to 18 local PTA organizations through registration fundraisers.
- Over 90 volunteers from Lions Club, Wheaton-Warrenville South HS and Wheaton North High School helped to keep Reindeer Run safe and fun.
- 2023 was the 3rd highest registration for Reindeer Run.



ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Field of Honor

JUNE 30-JULY 4 | SEVEN GABLES PARK

Hosted by the Wheaton Park District, the Warrenville American Legion Post 589 and the Wheaton United Soccer Club, this moving tribute to service members, hometown heroes and first responders featured a display of thousands of flags in Seven Gables Park. The 2023 chairman was Rudy Keller. Evening events throughout the five-day display included vocalist, bagpipers, drummers, Honor Guards, flyovers, and Taps.



Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 11 | MEMORIAL PARK

The public was invited to attend the American Legion Post 76's Veterans Day Ceremony at Memorial Park. The ceremony featured a flag presentation, "Taps," and a moment of silence.



Photo Credit: City of Wheaton

September 11 Remembrance Ceremony

SEPTEMBER 11 | MEMORIAL PARK

The City of Wheaton hosted the September 11 Remembrance Ceremony at Memorial Park again in 2023. The ceremony featured the Wheaton Police and Fire Department Honor Guard, Longfellow Elementary School Kindness Club, and representatives from Wheaton College, Wheaton Municipal Band, and the Wheaton Police and Fire Departments.



Photo Credit: City of Wheaton

ADDITIONAL REVENUE GENERATION

Wheaton Park District Foundations & Community Organizations 2023



DuPage County Historical Museum Foundation

received \$9,575.72 in proceeds from Shakespeare in the Park, Light the Torch Night Run, and Reindeer Run as well as concessions tips from select Summer Entertainment Series concerts.



Sensory Garden and Playground Foundation

received \$25,528.04 in proceeds from the Superhero Fun Run, Light the Torch Night Run, and Reindeer Run as well as concessions tips from select Summer Entertainment Series concerts.



Wheaton Brew and Seltzer Fest generated \$4,694.88 for **CASA of DuPage**.



Reindeer Run generated \$26,477.66 for **Wheaton Lions Club**.



Superhero Fun Run generated \$11,809.60 for **Rotary Club of Wheaton A.M.**



Cream of Wheaton generated \$48,796.23 for **Wheaton Chamber of Commerce**.



Light the Torch 5K generated \$25,950.83 for **FT Cares Foundation** and their nonprofit beneficiary organizations.



MARKETING MATERIALS



WHEATON PARK DISTRICT | ROTARY CLUB A.M.

SUPERHERO 5K FUN RUN 2023

**Saturday, April 15 | 8:30A
Memorial Park**

Race Highlights:

- All participants will receive a finisher medal and cape backpack
- Superhero meet & greets
- Proceeds support the Sensory Garden Playground



Scan the QR code to register or visit:
wheatonparkdistrict.com

Rotary Club of Wheaton A.M.



Cream of WHEATON

Wheaton Chamber of Commerce | Wheaton Park District

June 1-4 Memorial Park

Entertainment | Carnival
Business Expo | Arts & Crafts
Food Vendors



Photo by Ron Szymczak

wheatonparkdistrict.com



July 3
FIREWORKS & FESTIVITIES
GRAF PARK | 5:30-9P

- ★ Food vendors
- ★ DJ, Games, Giveaways
- ★ Small carnival rides



July 4
PARADE
DOWNTOWN WHEATON | 10A

- ★ Announcements on Front Street




Scan for event details and parade route or visit:
wheatonparkdistrict.com/july4

Sponsored by **HAGGERTY**
GLEN ELLYNI • WHEATON

MARKETING MATERIALS

WHEATON PARK DISTRICT PRESENTS

SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

6/23 The Neverly Brothers & American English	6/24 Bostyx & The PettyBreakers	6/26 Rockin' Moxie FREE FAMILY CONCERT	7/14 Maggie Speaks & Radio Gaga
 7/15 Jay Allen Concert to Benefit the 	7/24 the StingRays FREE FAMILY CONCERT	8/11 Simple Men and Southern Nights & Gold Dust Dreams	
8/12 Without U2 & Trippin Billies	9/8 The Chicago Experience & Billy Elton	9/9 DuPage Symphony Orchestra FREE FAMILY CONCERT	 SCAN ME

 For more information or tickets, visit MEMORIALPARKWHEATON.COM

ENJOY GREAT BREWS & SELTZER AT MEMORIAL PARK



Saturday, August 5 | 12-4P

WHEATON BREW & SELTZER FEST 2023

wheatonbrewfest.com

21+ Event

12th annual
LIONS CLUB
2023
Reindeer
RUN 5K

Saturday, December 2
8:30A | Downtown Wheaton

wheatonparkdistrict.com/reindeerrun



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MARKETING MATERIALS

WHEATON COLLEGE ARENA THEATER AND THE WHEATON PARK DISTRICT PRESENT

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

TWELFTHNIGHT

By William Shakespeare



Thursday, Friday & Saturday

AUGUST 24-26

Free Event | Memorial Park | 6P Park Opens
6:45P Puppet Show | 7P Performance

Donations are encouraged. Event benefits the DuPage County Historical Museum Foundation and its efforts to preserve history and cultural arts in DuPage County.



Scan for event details or visit:
wheatonparkdistrict.com/shakespeare

Supported by



WHEATON COLLEGE
For Christ in the DuPage



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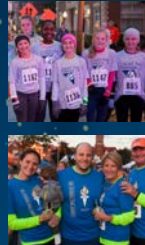
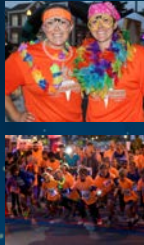
Fairhaven
wealth management

225 Karlskoga Ave, Wheaton, IL

LIGHT THE TORCH 5K Night Run

Saturday, September 30 | 7P

Central Athletic Complex



10th Year

A Decade of Light!

Long Sleeve Shirt | Finisher Medal
Light-up Giveaways



A portion of the proceeds benefit FT Cares Foundation and its mission of transforming lives.

Scan here to register or visit:
wheatonparkdistrict.com/lightthetorch



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10 SEVEN WORKS

TECHWORKS

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LOOKING TOWARD 2024

Superhero Fun Run 3K – Saturday, April 6 (NEW LOCATION-SENSORY GARDEN PLAYGROUND)

Cream of Wheaton – Thursday, May 30 – Sunday, June 2

Summer Entertainment Series – Friday, June 21 & Saturday, June 22

Free Concert at Memorial Park – Monday, June 24

July 3rd Fireworks & Parade – Wednesday, July 3 & Thursday, July 4

Summer Entertainment Series – Friday, July 19 & Saturday, June 20

Free Concert at Memorial Park – Sunday, July 21

Summer Entertainment Series – Friday, August 2 & Saturday, August 3

Summer Entertainment Series – Friday, August 16 & Saturday, August 17

Free Concert at Memorial Park – Monday, August 19

Shakespeare in the Park – Thursday, August 29 – Saturday, August 31

Summer Entertainment Series – Friday, September 13 & Saturday, September 14

HOPtober Fest – Saturday, September 28

Reindeer Run 5K – Saturday, December 7

