

http://www.thevillagesdailysun.com/news/villages/july-offers-villagers-introduction-to-fun/article_63dca2cc-9d4a-11e9-ad0c-e714314eea37.html

July offers Villagers introduction to fun

By ANDREA DAVIS, Daily Sun Staff Writer 6 hrs ago



Deb Hamlin, of the Village of Pinellas, returns a serve during a water volleyball match at Eisenhower Recreation Center.

Cindy Skop, Daily Sun

Neil Holmgren makes an effort to get out and play horseshoes at least five days a week. The Village of Country Club Hills resident started playing the game when he was 6 years old, took a break when he went to college and picked it back up about 40 years later when he retired to The Villages. When he isn't pitching horseshoes, he can be found playing golf, darts, pickleball or pentanque, many of

which he learned after moving to the community. July is Park and Recreation Month. Created in 1985 by the National Recreation and Park Association, the month highlights the important role parks and recreation opportunities play in American communities. This year's theme is "Game On!"

"From protecting open space and natural resources, to encouraging wellness by providing activities and resources for all, Park and Recreation Month encourages everyone to reflect on the value parks and recreation bring to their communities and beyond," said Cort Jones, communications manager for the NPRA, in a press release.

To celebrate, The Villages Recreation and Parks Department is hosting 21 events throughout July, giving residents the opportunity to learn new activities while enjoying the many recreation spaces available in The Villages.

The first event, Intro to Horseshoes, was Tuesday at Fish Hawk Recreation Center, and about 10 Villagers came out to play.

Instructors started by giving new players a brief lesson, then the group played a few practice rounds with members of The Villages Horseshoe Club.

"Start with your feet together and aim at the peg," Holmgren, a member of the Horseshoe Club, told new players. "Move your arm back and step forward while releasing the shoe. Think of it like throwing a bowling ball."

The clang of metal could be heard as horseshoes met the stake.

Jim Strain, of the Village of Woodbury, has been playing horseshoes for about 60 years. As president of The Villages Horseshoe Club, he loves getting new players involved with the game.

"Horseshoes is one of those games you can play anytime of the year," he said. "We have a great time, and it's a lot of fun."

Intro to Horseshoes is just one of more than 20 events taking place this month that Villagers can take advantage of to get outside and get active.

Recreation in The Villages

There are about 90 recreation centers in The Villages, said Pam Henry, recreation manager of resident lifestyles, parks and public relations with the recreation department.

Eleven are regional recreation centers, offering pools, courts for multiple sports and a number of meeting rooms. About 30 village recreation center also provide pools, billiards rooms and outdoor facilities.

“The recreation centers provide opportunities for active living and recreation within a safe, inclusive environment,” Henry said. “They help to create a positive atmosphere and are therefore essential to personal health and wellness. They are gathering places for Villagers and social groups and encourage social interaction, which also improves the quality of life.”

Sheryl Greiner, who enjoys riding her bike and playing pickleball weekly, said she enjoys having daily access to the recreation centers because there is something for everyone.

“Being at the recreation centers is really great because there is always something to do, regardless of your activity level,” the Village of Calumet Grove resident said. “It’s like your parents dropped you off at summer camp but you don’t mind because you are having so much fun.”

In addition to recreation centers, there also are about 90 pools available to residents as well as 11 softball fields, more than 40 golf courses, 16 fishing locations and a variety of parks and pathways, including Hogeye Preserve Pathway, a 2.5-mile path that opened in April.

“Whether it be a recreation center, a natural park or a ball field, we want to encourage all residents to get their ‘Game On!’,” said Mike Burleson, recreation facilities manager at Lake Miona Recreation Center. “(This month) is a great reminder to residents of all the activities they can participate in.”

Recreation in Florida

Florida is home to 175 state parks, trails and historic sites, spanning about 800,000 acres and 100 miles of beach, according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

For Park and Recreation Month, the DEP encourages residents and visitors to get outside and enjoy the many recreation opportunities offered throughout Florida State Parks.

“From the rustic pine forests and rivers of North Florida, to refreshing natural springs and white-sand beaches, all the way down to the tropical paradise of the Florida Keys, the state’s naturally diverse landscape is an outdoor playground for all ages,” according to a press release from the DEP.

Some recreation-themed events being held nearby are Patriotic Family Fun Day from 4 to 8 p.m. Friday at Dade Battlefield Historic State Park in Bushnell; Family Yoga on the Prairie from 6 to 7 p.m. July 10 at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park in Micanopy, just outside of Gainesville; and Discovery Hour from 4 to 5 p.m. July 21 at Wekiwa Springs State Park in Apopka.

Andrea Davis is a staff writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5374, or andrea.davis@thevillagesmedia.com.

July events

The Villages Recreation and Parks Department is hosting a variety of events throughout the month in honor of Park and Recreation Month. Those wishing to participate in an event can sign up at any regional recreation center or online at www.districtgov.org.

Today:

Intro to Table Shuffleboard— 1 p.m. at Tierra Del Sol Recreation Center

Monday:

Intro to Platform Tennis — 8:30 a.m. at Eisenhower Recreation Center

Bocce Golf — 9 a.m. at Chatham Recreation Center

Tuesday:

Trail to Trail: 7-mile Bike Ride — 7:30 a.m. at Riverbend Recreation Center

Trail to Trail: 2-mile walk — 7:30 a.m. at Riverbend Recreation Center

Bocce Tournament — 8 a.m. at Pimlico Recreation Center

Shuffleboard Tournament — 8 a.m. at Pimlico Recreation Center

Jumbo Beach Ball Water Volleyball — 8 a.m. at SeaBreeze Recreation Center

July 10:

Kickball Tournament — 8 a.m. at Lake Miona Recreation Center

July 15:

Basketball Shooting Competition — 8 a.m. at Lake Miona Recreation Center

Golf Tips and Putt Putt — 1 p.m. at Colony Cottage Recreation Center

July 16:

Shufflepin — 9 a.m. at Savannah Recreation Center

July 22:

Intro to Beach Tennis — 8 a.m. at Chula Vista Recreation Center

Intro to Quoits — 9 a.m. at Saddlebrook Recreation Center

Chair Volleyball Round Robin — Noon at Rohan Recreation Center

July 24:

Water Balloon Corn Toss — 9 a.m. at Moyer Recreation Center

Golf Cart Scavenger Sports Challenge — 9 a.m. at Colony Cottage Recreation Center

Corn Toss — 9 a.m. at Chatham Recreation Center

July 26:

Intro to Pentanque — 10:30 a.m. at Paradise Recreation Center

July 29:

Billiards Golf — 10 a.m. at Eisenhower Recreation Center