

Dive into free summer fun

June 15, 2013|By Kathy Lauer-Williams, Of The Morning Call

Everything seems to keep getting more expensive. But summer fun doesn't have to drain your pocketbook. There are free activities all over the Lehigh Valley, from theater performances to movies to bowling. Some activities are just for the kids, but there are plenty of things that are for all ages. To have a summer that will provide tons of fun for little to nothing, check our list of summer freebies.

CONCERTS AT LEVITT PAVILION STEELSTACKS

Bring a chair or blanket to sit on the lawn at ArtsQuest's cultural [campus](#) in Bethlehem and enjoy some great free acts for adults and children. Adult shows are at 7 p.m. Kids shows are part of the free Peas & Q's family series, which moves outside for the summer, with shows at 11:30 a.m. Saturdays.

Here are some highlights of the dozens of free summer concerts:

•ADULTS

Blackwater: A regional band that has been playing traditional Irish music for 25 years, June 28.

Alice Tan Ridley: The singer became famous in YouTube videos of her singing in the New York City subway, and was a finalist on "America's Got Talent," July 5.

Matuto: The band mixes the folkloric music of Brazil with North American swing, blues and rock incorporating traditional Brazilian percussion instruments, July 11.

Oliver Mtukudzi and the Black Spirits: The Zimbabwean group performs its own form of "Tuku" music, evolved from traditional music, and sings songs decrying violence and supporting world peace, July 18.

Ben Dumm & the Deviant: This western Pennsylvania garage band has performed with legendary punk bands such as The Misfits and Agent Orange as well as Los Straitjackets, July 25.

The Drifters: Featuring vocalist Rick Sheppard, the Drifters mix classic songs with hits from the 1970s and 1980s, Aug. 17.

Cedric Watson & Bijou Creole: Grammy-nominated Watson plays accordion in music influenced by French, Spanish, Native American and African music, Aug. 29.

•KIDS

Key Wilde and Mr. Clarke, June 29; StarFish, July 6; Kindermusik with Lena, July 13; Kira Willey, July 20; Miss Amy & her Big Kids Band, July 27; Alex and the Kaleidoscope Band, Aug. 17; Meg's Melodies, Aug. 24; Baze and His Silly Friends, Aug. 31 and 2+1 **Math** Rocks!, Sept. 7.

Info: <http://www.artsquest.org>.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

•**Sabor! Latin Festival:** This celebration of the region's Latin **culture** features live music by local, regional and national musical acts, and a variety of cultural programming presented by community organizations June 20-23 at SteelStacks in Bethlehem.

•**Freak Out:** The downtown Allentown event returns for its fourth year at 8 p.m. June 21 and 3 p.m. June 22 at various locations. Acts include fire performances, burlesque acts, bellydancing, experimental art, live music and the Miss Freak-Out pageant. <http://www.allentownfreakout.com>.

•**Lehigh Valley SportsFest:** Watch thousands of amateur athletes compete in more than 35 sports, from boxing to **basketball** to dog agility, July 18-21. Most events are at Cedar Beach in Allentown, but there are competitions in other venues. <http://www.sportsfest.org>.

•**Musikfest:** The 10-day **entertainment** extravaganza arrives Aug. 2-11 with hundreds of performances and activities for adults and children in downtown Bethlehem and at SteelStacks. It's the nation's largest free, non-gated music festival. Of course, you need to buy tickets to see the headlining such as Ke\$ha, Carly Rae Jepsen and OneRepublic. <http://www.musikfest.org>, 610-332-FEST.

•**The Allentown Fair:** The end-of-summer bash is Aug. 27 to Sept. 2. While there is an admission fee — and amusement rides are extra — admission is free for everyone on opening day 4-11 p.m.; noon-2 p.m. Aug. 28, 29 and 30, and for kids under 12 every day. <http://www.allentownfairpa.org>, 610-433-7541.

MOVIES

You can watch a summer's worth of second-run movies free on big screens at parks and in movie theaters. For outdoor movies, shows start at dusk.

•**Allentown:** "Thunderstruck," July 12, Roosevelt Park; "Madagascar 3," Aug. 2, Arts Park; "Hairspray," Aug. 17, West Park.

•**Bethlehem:** "Madagascar 3," June 25, Elmwood Park; "Rise of the Guardians," July 9, Higbee Park; "Back To The Future," July 16, Clearview Park; "Wreck-It Ralph," July 25, Fritz Park; "Jurassic Park," July 30, Friendship Park.

•**Easton:** "Rise of the Guardians," July 9, Boys and Girls Club; "The Lorax," July 16, Nevin Park; "Monsters, Inc." July 23, Easton Area Community Center; "Despicable Me," Aug. 8, Boys and Girls Club; "Madagascar 3," Aug. 15, Nevin Park; "The Pirates! Band of Misfits," Aug. 22, Easton Area Community Center.

•**SteelStacks:** Free family movies under the stars at Levitt Pavilion in south Bethlehem. (8 p.m.) "Mary Poppins," June 19; "The Muppets," June 26; "Rise of the Guardians," July 3; "Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs," July 10; "Paranorman," July 17; "The Lion King," July 24; "The Pirates! Band of Misfits," July 31; "An American Tail," Aug. 14; "Madagascar 3," Aug. 21; "Shrek," Aug. 28. <http://www.artsquest.org>.

•**Summer Kids Series at Carmike:** No longer free but still a [good deal](#), the series offers a movie, drink, snack and popcorn for \$4. Carmike 16, 1700 Catasauqua Road, Allentown, shows movies at 10 a.m. Thursdays. Promenade 16 at Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley shows the movies at 10 a.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays. Movies include: "Hotel Transylvania," June 19 and 20; "Ice Age Continental Drift," June 26-27; "Rio," July 3-4; "Horton Hears a Who," July 10-11; "Madagascar 3," July 17-18; "Happy Feet II," July 24-25; "Yogi Bear," July 31-Aug. 1; "Disney's Chimpanzee," Aug. 7-8.

MUSIC SERIES

•**Lively Lunches in the Parks:** Live acoustic music in Allentown's [Arts](#) Park, Sixth and Linden streets, noon-1:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Jay Lapp, June 18 and Aug. 20; Kendal Conrad, June 25; Steve Brosky, July 2 and Aug. 6; Billy Bauer Band, July 9 and Aug. 13; Paulie Knakk, July 16 and 30.

•**Summer in the City:** Lunchtime concerts, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Thursdays at PPL Plaza, Ninth and Hamilton streets, Allentown. Tiffany Grochowski/Dan DeChellis Duo, June 20; James Supra Band, June 27; April Mae & the June Bugs, July 3; Randy McAllister, July 11; Yancarlos Sanchez, July 18; Tavern Tan, July 25; Steve Brosky & Jimmy Meyer, Aug. 1; Real West, Aug. 8; [School](#) of Rock, Aug. 15; Fusion Jazz Trio, Aug. 22; Todd Wolfe Band, Aug. 29; Dynamic Duo, Sept. 5; The Large Flowerheads, Sept. 12; Billy Patrick, Sept. 19; The BC Combo, Sept. 26.

•**Noches de Ritmo:** [Concerts](#) 6-9 p.m. the second Thursday at several Allentown parks. Caribbean Night, with reggae music and The Burning Hearts Fire & Light Theatre, Joseph S. Daddona Terrace and Park, July 11; Latin

International Night, Joseph S. Daddona Terrace and Park; Aug. 8; Interactive dance lesson at Tango Night, West Park, Sept. 12.

•**Saturday Music Showcase:** Concerts take place 6:30-8:30 p.m. Saturdays in the summer lounge at the Outdoor Shops in the Lehigh Valley Mall's Lifestyle Center. She Said Sunday, June 22; Mike Dugan and the Blues Mission, June 29.

•**Bethlehem Sculpture Garden Concerts:** Performances are 6-8 p.m. in the garden, 10 E. Church St. Lehigh Valley Soul Project, June 21; Eric Mintel Quartet, June 28; The Large Flowerheads, July 12; Dina Hall, July 19. <http://www.bfac-lv.org>.

•**Municipal band concerts:** The esteemed Allentown Band, the oldest civilian concert band in the United States, and many other fine municipal bands perform free outdoor concerts throughout the summer. Find a full schedule at themorningcall.com/concerts.

•**Tunes at Noon:** Live music in Easton's Centre Square at noon Fridays in June. Maria Woodford with June Thomas, June 21; Pour Man's Band, June 28.

•**Live in the Square:** Live music in Easton's Centre Square at 7:30 p.m. on selected Fridays. Dave Leonhardt Jazz Trio, June 28; Hot Bijouxx, July 26; Mike Mettalia and Midnight Shift, Aug. 30; Christopher Dean Band with special guest, Maria Woodford, Sept. 27.

•**Live at Riverside:** Local bands play 7:30-9:30 p.m. the first Friday of each month at Riverside Park Amphitheatre, Easton. Sarah Ayers Band, July 5; Joyous, with opening by School of Rock Bank Street Band at 7 p.m.; Aug. 2; Zydeco a Go Go, Sept. 6. <http://www.eastonmainstreet.org>.

•**At The Promenade:** Concerts Fridays at 7 p.m. at Town Square, Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley. Triage, June 21; Gesture Without Motion, June 28; Modern Romance, July 5; Tim Harakal Music, July 12; Eighteenth Hour, July 19, Erin Kelly, July 26. <http://www.thepromenadeshopsatsauconvalley.com>.

•**Music Under The Stars:** Bear Creek Mountain Resort presents live music 7-10 p.m. the fourth Thursday of the month. Girls, Guns & Glory, June 27; The Billy Bauer Band, July 25; Frog Holler, Aug. 22; Start Making Sense, Sept. 26.

THEATER

•**Shakespeare In The Park: "Twelfth Night":** Shakespeare in the Park returns to the amphitheater at Allentown's Joseph S. Daddona Lake & Terrace, South Elmo and Union streets, with a production of the Bard's comedy of mistaken identity. An hour of live music precedes the show scheduled for 8 p.m. Aug. 9, and 2 and 8 p.m. Aug. 10 and 11. Bring blankets, chairs, picnics.

•**Allentown Public Theatre: "Pinocchio"**: The company presents a modern adaptation of the classic story about a wooden puppet who comes to life, Aug. 16-25 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 417 N. 17th St., Allentown. The show is free for children 13 and under and pay as you will for adults. The group also is holding free theater workshops for children July 20, 27, Aug. 3 and 10 at the church. <http://www.allentownpublictheatre.com>.

ART, SCIENCE AND HISTORY

•**First Friday**: On the first Friday of each month, artists at the Banana Factory in south Bethlehem open their studios, and stores and galleries in the neighboring streets feature live music, refreshments and exhibits. 6-10 p.m. Info: <http://www.firstfridaybethlehem.com>.

•**Historic District ArtWalk and Kids' Corner**: From 4-8 p.m. June 29, July 27 and Aug. 31, artists and musicians will line the sidewalks of Bethlehem's Main and Broad streets. Free art activities for kids on the outdoor patio at 60 W. Broad St. include a tie-dye activity, dough sculpting and a coloring contest. Info: <http://www.downtownbethlehemassociation.com>.

•**Sundays at Allentown Art Museum**: Every Sunday year-around, the museum opens its doors free to the public, noon-5 p.m. It also offers Artventures on Sundays, a free drop-in workshop in its Crayola Learning Center with monthly themed art projects for children, in-gallery art activities and more. Info: <http://www.allentownartmuseum.org>.

•**Heritage Walks**: Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums sponsors free ranger-led public walks Sundays at 1:30 p.m. once a month. They begin at the Emrick Technology Center, 2750 Hugh Moore Park Road, Easton. Walks are scheduled June 16, July 21, Aug. 18 and Sept. 15. Info: <http://www.canals.org>.

•**Familiarity Tours**: Walking tour to discover historic sites in downtown Easton depart from Easton Farmers Market at 11 a.m. on July 6; Aug. 24 and Sept. 21. <http://www.eastonmainstreet.org>.

•**Back to Your Roots**: Kids can learn about the history of farming in the Historic Bethlehem Partnership program 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. the third Saturday of the month at Burnside Plantation, 1461 Schoenersville Road, Bethlehem. Free for children with adult admission of \$7. Programs are: Red, White and Blueberry, July 20; Stream Science, Aug. 17; Barn Raising, Sept. 21 and All About Apples, Oct. 19. <http://www.historicbethlehem.org>.

•**Hunt for History Club**: Also offered by Historic Bethlehem, noon-4 p.m. the first Saturday of the month, kids learn about history through games, stories and crafts at one of Bethlehem's historic sites. Free for children with adult admission of \$7.

Programs are Plein Air Painting, July 6; Sounds of Summer; Aug. 3; Magnificent Marbleizing, Sept. 7; Fall Fest, Oct. 5. <http://www.historicbethlehem.org>.

•**The Lehigh Valley Amateur Astronomical Society** hosts free star parties once a month at its South Mountain observatory at 620B E. Rock Road, Allentown. No admission; donations are requested. Parties include a talk at 7 p.m. followed by planetarium shows at 8 and 9 p.m. Upcoming parties are July 27; Aug. 17; Sept. 14 and Oct. 12. Info: <http://www.lvaas.org>.

•**Liberty Bell Shrine:** The museum in the basement of Zion's UCC Church in Allentown houses a full-size cast replica of the Liberty Bell that commemorates the time when the bell was brought from Philadelphia to be hidden in Allentown in 1777. No admission charge; donations are appreciated. Info: <http://www.libertybellmuseum.org>.

•**Museums on Us:** More than 150 museums nationwide offer free admission the first weekend of each month for Bank of America debit or credit card members. Upcoming dates are July 6 and 7, Aug. 3 and 4 and Sept. 7 and 8. Museums include Allentown Art Museum; Everhart Museum, Scranton; Philadelphia Museum of Art, National Constitution Center, African-American Museum and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, all in Philadelphia, Garden State Discovery Museum, Cherry Hill, N.J. and Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, N.J. Many more. Details at museums.bankofamerica.com.

SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

•**Kids Run:** The Lehigh Valley Road Runners sponsors a running series for ages 3-14 on June 22, July 6 and 20 and Aug. 3 in Allentown's Lehigh Parkway. Races start at 10 a.m., warm-ups at 9:40 a.m. Register at <http://www.lvrr.org>.

•**Bike rides:** Genesis Bicycle, 126 Bushkill St., Easton, offers free guided bike rides including its popular Ice Cream Ride at 6 p.m. every Thursday during the summer. It is open to all ages, skill levels and bikes and includes free ice cream at Bank Street Creamery. Other rides also available. Info: <http://www.genesisbicycles.com>

•**Air Products Developmental Cycling Program** offers free bicycle training for ages 5-18 at the Valley Preferred Cycling Center in Trexlertown. Sessions designed to teach track cycling for three age groups are at various times through Aug. 22.

•**Pee Wee Pedalers:** A separate Air Products program for ages 5-8 teaches basic skills at 9 and 10 a.m. Saturday mornings through Aug. 31. Register at <http://www.thevelodrome.com>.

•**Walking and riding trails:** There are many trails around the Lehigh Valley for biking and walking and running such as the Rodale Fitness Park in Trexlertown; the Ironton Rail Trail in Whitehall, Coplay and North Whitehall, and the Lehigh Canal Towpath from Allentown to Bethlehem.

•**Spray parks:** In Allentown, you can cool off on a hot day for free at spray parks at Buck Boyle Park and the Fifth and Allen streets park, noon-7 p.m. daily.

•**Family Water Safety Day:** Learn how to stay safe in and around water at Allentown's Cedar Beach pool 10 a.m. June 28. All who attend the two-hour program can swim free at the pool for the rest of the day. <http://www.allentownpa.gov>.

•**Skateaway Roller Rink,** 3860 Lehigh St., Whitehall: It's free 6-9 p.m. during Wacky Wednesdays in exchange for items listed at <http://www.skateaway.biz> such as paper towels or dish soap. The rink also admits scouts and their families free the first Wednesday of the month.

•**Kids Bowl Free:** Children ages 15 and under can bowl two free games a day through mid-September. Area lanes include Playdrome Rose Bowl, 801 N. 15th St., Allentown; Town N Country Bowling Lanes, 1770 Stefko Blvd., Bethlehem; Hampton Lanes, 326 Main St., Northampton. Register at <http://www.kidsbowlfree.com> and receive vouchers by email.

•**AMF Bowling Centers:** AMF Parkway Lanes, 1630 S. 12th St., Allentown, participates in a free program called Summer Unplugged. Register <http://www.freebowling.amf.com> and receive a membership card that entitles a child to two free games a day through Sept. 2.

•**Annual Model Sailboat Race:** The City of Allentown provides materials to build your own model sailboat and race it at the Rose Garden at 11 a.m. July 6. <http://www.allentownpa.gov>.

FREE SUMMER PROGRAMS

•**Camp Imagine:** Muhlenberg Summer Music Theatre hosts the arts camp for grades 6-8, which is free for Allentown School District students July 1-26. The camp is 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. daily and exposes kids to acting, music, and dance with a performance showcase on July 27. Lunch is provided as is bus transportation from all four Allentown School District middle schools. For students not enrolled in the ASD, tuition is \$395. <http://www.muhlenberg.edu/camp>, 484-664-3693.

•**Allentown Summer Playground Program:** Certified instructors lead children ages 7-15 in activities, including [basketball](#), soccer, tennis, swimming and crafts. The program is daily 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. through Aug. 8. Lunch is

provided. Includes the 100th annual Romper Day at 7 p.m. Aug. 5 at J. Birney Crum Stadium. Register at Allentown schools or parks. 610-437-7581.

READING ACTIVITIES

•**Moravian Book Shop:** America's oldest bookstore, on Main Street in Bethlehem, is holding Super Kids' Summer Reading Adventure. Kids can sign up before July 31 to get a scorecard to track their reading progress, and then turn it in by Aug. 31. Participants get prizes and discounts on books. 610-866-5481 <http://www.moravianbookshop.com>.

•**Libraries:** Most area libraries have a free summer reading program, and many are participating in the national Collaborative Summer Library Program "Dig Into Reading," for younger children and "Beneath the Surface" for teens, which offers incentives for students to read.

•**Pennsylvania One Book, Every Young Child program:** The statewide program focuses on preschool children and provides free copies of the [book](#) "The Bus For Us" and related programming through participating libraries. Contact your library.

•**Cops 'n' Kids Reading Room:** The reading room on the fourth floor of the Northampton [Community College](#) Fowler Family Center, 511 E. Third St., Bethlehem, is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Enjoy Summer Story Time with stories and activities at 10 a.m. through Aug. 14, when there will be a garden tea party. Kids also can take home up to five books for free. 610-861-5526, <http://www.copsnkidslv.org> Cops 'n' Kids also has a reading room at the Easton Area Community Center, 901 Washington St. It's open 2-5 p.m. Thursdays through Aug. 22. <http://www.copsnkidseaston.org>.

•**Barnes & Noble:** The summer reading program gives children in grades 1-6 a chance to earn a free book by reading eight books and turning in a completed journal sheet through Sept. 3. Go to stores or <http://www.bn.com/summerreading>.

CRAFTS

•**Home Depot:** On the first Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-noon, kids 5-12 can create toy [trucks](#), bird houses and planters in woodworking workshops. Kids also get an apron and pin. The next project July 6 is themed to the movie "Despicable Me 2." <http://www.homedepot.com>.

•**Lowe's:** A Build and Grow workshop is offered 10 a.m. every other Saturday and 2 p.m. every other Sunday. Kids can make woodworking projects such as trucks or a spinning toy. The next project, June 22 and 23, is a chest themed on the movie "Monsters [University](#)." <http://www.lowesbuildandgrow.com>.

MUSIC JAMS

•**Godfrey Daniels:** The area's ultimate traditional listening room at 7 E. Fourth St., Bethlehem, hosts jam sessions that are free and open to any and all instruments. There's one for every style of music — blues jam hosted by Dana Gaynor and Friends 8 p.m. June 25, July 23 and Aug. 27; improv comedy with The Flighty Ducks 7:30 p.m. Wednesday and July 17; swing jam hosted by Jeff Biro, 8 p.m. Tuesday and July 16; old-time jam hosted by Tom and Betty Druckenmiller 7 p.m. July 2; Irish seisiun, hosted by Ed Saultz, Fred Gilmartin and Terry Hartzell, 7:30 p.m. July 3. <http://www.godfreydaniels.org>.

•**Restaurants, clubs and coffeehouses:** The region is rich in jams. Check our club listings Thursdays in Go Guide.

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