

Friends of Grandmothers' Garden to host Family Day at Chauncey Allen Park July 11

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Participants learn about wetland critters at the new education pavilion at Chauncey Allen Park (submitted)The Westfield News

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WESTFIELD - Families of all ages are invited to Family Day at Grandmothers' Garden on Saturday, July 11, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. According to organizers, the event will feature a free, fun-filled day of family, learning and community designed to inspire an appreciation of the natural environment in the 10-acre Chauncey Allen Park on Smith Avenue.

Volunteers Cecilia Florence and Maureen Kane said families are encouraged to bring lunch and enjoy the beautiful garden setting with a picnic around the new education pavilion, where a clarinet trio will perform throughout the morning. For those wishing to purchase food, a hot dog truck and an ice cream truck will be on-site throughout the event.

Among the activities planned throughout the day will be nature discovery with Tom and Nancy Condon of the Naturalist Club of Western Massachusetts, who will use field guides to have the kids go out and search for critters and plants in the park and pond area.

There will also be story time with a grandmother under the magnolia tree with comfortable cushions for listeners, an arts & crafts table, and games set up around the park, including croquet, badminton and jenga.

The day also offers a chance to check out the flowers in bloom and the expanded herb garden in Grandmothers' Garden, where volunteers spend hours every week keeping the garden at its best.

"It's an opportunity to invite children, parents, family members, and the entire community to the new pavilion, Chauncey Allen Park and the garden itself," said education coordinator Jacqueline McDowell.

Admission to Family Day is free, all ages are welcome, and no registration is required, thanks to generous donations by Peoples Bank, Columbia Manufacturing and the Polish National Credit Union. "We're hoping people will come to visit nature, see what's here and have a lovely day together," McDowell said.



Spotting frogs in the pond. (AMY PORTER / THE WESTFIELD NEWS)

Since the ribbon-cutting of the new education pavilion and newly-planted arboretum on May 12, the volunteers and board of the Friends of the Grandmothers' Garden have opened Chauncey Allen Park to many community groups and activities, including field trips from area schools, a group studying wetland critters and a preschool playgroup meeting on Wednesday mornings throughout the summer.

The pavilion is also available for private rentals, and there are already weddings and other events scheduled. Information on rentals and on other upcoming community activities may be found at www.grandmothersgarden.org.