

Summer is Right Around the Corner — Let's Get Up, Get Out & Get Active!

By Breanna Benevenga

While summer is considered the off-season in many Florida communities, Charlotte County stays as active as ever. Charlotte County Community Services is ready to help residents and visitors make the most of the season. From swimming in local pools and playing on playgrounds to enjoying pickleball in the parks, there are countless opportunities to Get Up, Get Out, and Get Active.

Summer camp is one of the highlights of the season, offering children a well-rounded experience filled with adventure. Campers will enjoy field trips, pool days, participation in the World's Largest Swim Lesson, guest speakers, and activities designed to create lasting memories.

For young athletes, the summer youth co-ed basketball league is about to begin, with the first official week of practices starting May 26. This fun and energetic season brings families together to enjoy the sport. Those interested in serving as head or assistant coaches are encouraged to get involved.

May is Water Safety Month, making it the perfect time for families to ensure they have the skills needed to stay safe around water. Charlotte County pools offer American Red Cross swimming lessons for all ages, from six months to adult. Summer sessions run from May 6 through August 8, with a cost of \$45 per session. For more information, contact Centennial Park Pool at 941-623-4100 or Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park Pool at 941-681-3760.

As temperatures rise, local pools provide a refreshing escape. Whether residents are looking for lap swimming, water aerobics, or a place to relax in the sun, the pools offer a cool retreat. Don't forget to take your little ones to splash around at the Ann and Chuck Dever Regional Park activity pool in Englewood.

Summer is also a great time to take advantage of the parks throughout Charlotte County. Warm mornings provide an ideal setting for outdoor exercise, whether through walking or running on scenic trails, utilizing fitness stations, or simply enjoying the natural beauty of the area. These parks offer a chance to stay active while experiencing the wildlife and fresh air of Charlotte County. McGuire Park is a family favorite with shaded picnic areas and a splash pad for the kids.

A classic summer day in Charlotte County often includes a visit to Englewood Beach. After last fall's hurricanes, progress continues on beach restoration, and Phase I of Englewood Beach Park has now reopened. This includes pedestrian access via the southern entrance to the Englewood Beach parking lot. Due to limited parking, Charlotte County Transit is offering a new shuttle service. The pilot program will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

The shuttle will depart from Tringali Park at the top of each hour and from Chadwick Park at Englewood Beach at the bottom of the hour.

Charlotte County Libraries are also gearing up for a summer of learning and creativity with the 2025 Summer Reading Program. This year's theme, "Color Our World," encourages young readers to explore and engage with stories in fun and interactive ways. The annual Summer Reading Kickoff event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, May 31 at the Punta Gorda Charlotte Library, Englewood Charlotte Library, and Port Charlotte Public Library. Families are invited to pick up reading logs and participate in special activities.

Beyond the summer reading program, the libraries offer a variety of classes and workshops, including nutrition classes, meditation sessions, arts and crafts workshops and more. A full list of programs is available at CharlotteCountyFL.gov/libraries.

Gardening enthusiasts can take part in the "Grow with Us! Gardening Series," held on the first Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. at the Englewood Charlotte Library. These sessions will cover topics such as growing colorful caladiums, Florida-friendly landscaping, and butterfly gardening. Registration is available online at CharlotteCountyFL.gov/libraries.

With so many opportunities for recreation, education, and outdoor fun, there is no shortage of ways to enjoy the season. Whether a longtime resident or a visitor passing through, summer in Charlotte County is the perfect time to explore, stay active, and create lasting memories.

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