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Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

April is National Child Abuse Awareness Month

Each year, National Child Abuse Awareness Month is acknowledged during the month of April, recognizing the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. Child abuse is a horrific experience with potentially lasting effects and, unfortunately, a common experience both in America and around the world.

According to the National Children's Alliance, an estimated 558,899 children were victims of abuse and/or neglect in the United States in 2022, the most recent national data. That is 8 children out of every thousand. Child abuse affects 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 13 boys. U.S. child welfare authorities look into the safety of more than 7.5 million kids annually, a daunting task.

The trauma of child abuse causes children to lose their sense of safety and trust in the world, harms relationships, and can lead to mental and behavioral health problems, including depression, anxiety, PTSD and substance abuse. It can also lead to physical problems like infection, injuries or even heart disease in later years.

Children are our most valuable, and most vulnerable, asset. The adage of "See Something, Say Something" still holds true. This month, support the area agencies who help address this national crisis.



During the month of April, the lights outside of City Hall will be turned to blue as part of the [Light Up Blue Initiative](#) of Family Services, Inc. You can display blue ribbons, or a "garden" of blue pinwheels, the symbol for child abuse awareness, at your business or home. For information on child abuse, go to www.childwelfare.gov/preventionmonth. For more information on the work of Family Services, Inc. visit www.familyservicesinc.net.

Spring Active Living Challenge

The Healthy Blair County Coalition reports that, in the most recent County Health Rankings, Blair County was ranked 44 out of 67 counties for being unhealthy. This is a statistic we need to change. So, once again this year, the Get Active Blair County Committee and its partners are inviting businesses, organizations and individuals to the 2025 Spring Active Living Challenge. The Challenge, which runs from March 29th through May 10th, 2025, will have four categories based on team size. Teams can be a group of friends, family, coworkers, church members or you can sign up as an individual. Then simply log on to add dates, activity and minutes for each day.

Activity includes any active or fitness minutes, such as sports, walking your dog, dancing, biking, gardening, etc. At the end of the challenge, trophies will be awarded to the top teams in each category with the most active minutes logged. Winners will be announced at the Summer Olympic Games at Lakemont Park on July 12th, 2025.

For questions or information, contact billie@unitedwaysa.org. Form a team and help create a healthier Blair County by registering at www.healthyblaircountycoalition.org/active-living



“Toss Out Child Abuse” Cornhole Tournament

Child abuse is a pervasive issue that affects children worldwide, as mentioned earlier. Blair County's Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), a program of Family Services, Inc. since 2017, is an area agency addressing this need. The CAC has served hundreds of children and families, not only in Blair County, but in surrounding counties as well, by providing a child-friendly, neutral place for the forensic interview and forensic medical evaluation of child victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation.



The CAC is hosting the Second Annual “Toss Out Child Abuse” Cornhole Tournament on Saturday, April 12th at the Bavarian Aid Society in Altoona, from 1:00 PM – 8:00 PM, benefiting the Center For Child Justice, a program of the CAC. The event will include a basket raffle, 50/50, rip tickets, and food and beverages on-site.

Intermediate and competitive brackets are available, with cash prizes for the winners. Registration is \$50 per two-person team, and spectator admission is \$5. You can pre-register using your mobile device on the Scoreholio App. Otherwise, registration and admission is cash only at the door on event day. Bring the family for some fun and support this worthy cause.

“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see. “– John F. Kennedy

Altoona Curve 2025 Season



Baseball season is here! The 2025 Altoona Curve Season will kick off its opening night at Peoples Natural Gas Field on Friday, April 4th at 6:00 PM., in the first of a three-game series with the Chesapeake Baysox. The night will include DJ Swiftie kicking off the season with a high-energy set, leading into a sparkling fireworks show! Get ready to “shake it off” and sing along!

The Pirates have been affiliated with the Double-A Altoona Curve of the Eastern League since 1999, making it the longest affiliation in the team's history. This year's 69-home game season will include bobble head giveaways, guest appearances, theme nights and, of course, 19 fabulous fireworks displays!

Come out and show your support for our Altoona Curve baseball team! For the full schedule, to purchase tickets, or for more information, go to www.milb.com/altoona and GO CURVE!

National Library Week

The week of April 6 through April 12, 2025 is National Library Week. We are extremely proud of the beautiful Altoona Area Public Library and its many facilities and programs. If you have not been to the library in a while, or have never been to our local library, stop by during this week.

The Altoona Area Public Library is more than just a place to borrow books. They also have programs like Super Saturday, held monthly during the school year, where kids can enjoy fun, educational activities around a different theme or content. They host a Lego Club for children ages 5–12 (sorry all you adult Lego lovers!), that meets monthly during the school year on Mondays or Thursdays at 6:00 PM. The library has a Tool Lending Program, a weekly Chess Club, a weekly Teen Gaming Club, One-on-One Tech Help and PA Career Link services, among others.

It is important to note that only 67% of the library's annual budget comes from state and local sources. The remaining 33% comes from donations, gifts and fundraising events like the Used Book Sale. You can help in this effort by giving a one-time donation, or by becoming a Friends of the Library member. There are different membership levels, beginning at only \$10 annually.

The Altoona Area Public Library is currently accepting donations of books, LP's, CD's, audiobooks and puzzles in good condition for the upcoming Friends of the Library Used Book Sale. There will be a Preview evening for Friends members only on Thursday, April 24th from 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM. The general sale begins Friday, April 25th from 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, Saturday, April 26th from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM and Monday, April 28th (\$5 bag day) from 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM. To learn more about the Altoona Area Public Library hours, programs, special events, or to donate, visit www.altoonalibrary.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/altoonalibrary/



PA CareerLink® Job Fair at the Jaffa Shrine

PA CareerLink® Blair County will host their next Job Fair on Thursday, April 17th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Jaffa Shrine, located at 2200 Broad Avenue, Altoona. The event is open to the public.

There will be a 30-minute time slot before general admission, from 9:30 AM to 10:00 AM, reserved for veterans who are seeking employment.

The day will include on-site interviews, workshops and over 85 employers who are currently hiring. There is no cost to attend this event and pre-registration is suggested, but not required. This is a great opportunity for those looking to join Altoona's workforce!

For questions, a list of employers, or further information about registration, call 814-940-6201 or visit the website at www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline



Salvation Army Community Easter Egg Hunt



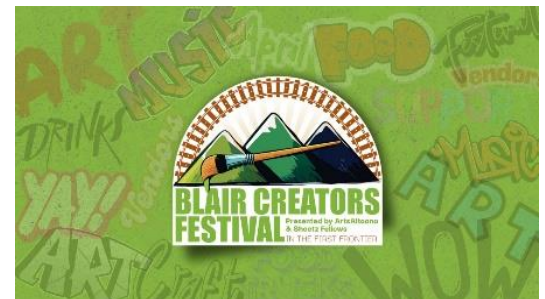
Families with children ages 15 and younger are invited to the Salvation Army's Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 12th from 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM at the Cherry Grove Baseball Field (Hamilton Park), located at 301 E. Cherry Avenue, Altoona. There is no cost or pre-registration necessary to attend the event and it is open to the public.

Lunch will be served at noon, followed by Easter egg hunts in different age categories, beginning at 1:00 PM. There will be over 7,500 eggs stuffed with surprises, games, interactive opportunities with some of your favorite characters and a visit by both the Altoona Fire Department and the Altoona Police Department! If your church, business, or organization would like to donate items for the eggs, or if you need more information, please contact **Avery** at **814-667-5790**.

Blair Creators Festival 2025

The 4th Annual Blair Creators Festival is scheduled for Saturday, April 26th, 2025 at Heritage Plaza and 11th Avenue in downtown Altoona. The festival will bring a day of live music, art vendors, food trucks and fun activities. The festival, sponsored by Arts Altoona and the Penn State Altoona Sheetz Fellows, will begin at 11:00 AM and run until 7:00 pm.

This celebration of local artists and creators in our community is an opportunity to collectively see their work, shop and support local artisans on what is hoped to be a beautiful spring Saturday. Visit www.facebook.com/starthereblaircounty to get the latest details as they become available!



Deb Stitt BESCP Memorial Golf Outing

BLAIR EMERGENCY SERVICES CHAPLAIN PLATOON



Calling all golf enthusiasts! Its time for the Deb Stitt Memorial Golf Outing, hosted by Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon (BESCP). This year's outing will take place on May 15th, 2025 at the King Valley Golf Course, located at 132 King Valley Lane, Imler, PA 16655. The event is held in honor of Deb Stitt, who served as a police officer for 28 years, in part at Penn State Altoona, and who passed away suddenly in 2010.

BESCP is an all-volunteer group of counselors and chaplains who work to assist area first responders and emergency personnel, and community support is critical to this effort. Their programs are vital to the men and women of our area's emergency services, who witness trauma every day, affecting their physical, emotional and mental health.

The outing will include 18 holes of golf, a golf cart and lunch after the round. There will be contest winners for longest drive, longest putt and more. You can help sponsor the event at various levels from \$50 to \$500, with all proceeds benefiting the suicide awareness programs of BESCP.

Advance registration is available now. Pre-registration fees are \$400 per team or \$100 per golfer. Checks should be made payable to BESCP – CPCF. Information about the event, including the registration form, is available at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083145620470

Hoopsfest 2025



Hoopsfest is Pennsylvania's largest outdoor 3-on-3 basketball tournament. Streets and parking lots in downtown Altoona are transformed into a basketball festival! Started in 2001, this is a day of competitive basketball, good food and family-friendly activities. With both youth and adult divisions, the event has attracted up to 300 teams with 1,000 players. Last year's event saw 6,000 attendees from six states.

Hoopsfest benefits youth and community organizations that are working to impact the next generation. Even if you don't play basketball, the event has additional opportunities for volunteers and sponsors, who help make the event possible. If you would like to help sponsor the event, or assist as a volunteer, visit www.hoopsfest.net/get-involved for information on how to do that.

Registration is now open for the 2025 event! The registration fee is \$150 per team. From now until April 7th, your team can take advantage of the March Madness Deal, where team registration is only \$135. Go to www.hoopsfest.net to register your team. Come to play, or to cheer, and enjoy a day of downtown Altoona basketball fun at the 2025 Hoopsfest!

April Is...

April is the month for, of course, April Fool's Day and both Easter and Passover. If you have a birthday in April, you might share it with the likes of William Shakespeare, Barbara Streisand or Al Pacino. And, since it is Income Tax time, find some stress relief and fun in these days:

April 1 – April Fool's Day and National Sourdough Bread Day

April 2 – National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day

April 4 – National School Librarian Day and National Jeep 4X4 Day

April 7 – National No Housework Day and National Coffee Cake Day

April 10 – National Siblings Day

April 12 – National Only Child Day and National Grilled Cheese Day

April 14 – National Gardening Day

April 16 – National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day

April 18 – National Exercise Day

April 20 – National Volunteer Recognition Day

April 22 – National Girl Scout Leaders Day and National Earth Day

April 25 - National Arbor Day and National Zucchini Bread Day

April 27 – National Gummi Bear Day

April 30 – National Bugs Bunny Day and National Oatmeal Cookie Day



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