

# TheDoingsOakBrook

## Oak Brook welcomes fall with outdoor events

It's called Autumn Fest, but Oak Brook's annual celebration has been known to feel more like summer than fall.

"Last year, I think it was 87 degrees," said Mary Meranda, the Sports Core employee who helps the Autumn Fest Committee put all the pieces together for the yearly end-of-summer event.

Whether it feels like a hot summer day or a chilly fall afternoon, this year's Autumn Fest will be held, rain or shine, from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 20.

The four volunteer members of this year's Autumn Fest Committee have worked hard all year to put this day together. As always, it's a free day of fun for families and a chance to get together with neighbors and friends.

Meranda said the late-summer get-together has been an Oak Brook tradition for as long as she can remember, but it hasn't always been known as Autumn Fest. The tradition began as Ethnic Fest, which was a celebration of the village's diverse population.

Eventually, it evolved into Autumn Fest, a day that's highlighted with clowns, games, food and lots of things for families to do.

Returning to the festival this year are favorites Rudi Kazoodi and Pockets the Clown, who will entertain guests with face painting and balloon sculptures all

afternoon.

"He's here every year," Meranda said of Rudi.

She said he and Pockets always draw a crowd.

Magician Bob James of Elmhurst will put on a pair of shows for the audience.

"He has a great performance," Meranda said.

Although the times of the shows have yet to be announced, they will be available the day of the festival. In fact, every guest will be handed a guide to the day's activities as they enter the Sports Core.

The map will show the way to the pony rides, to the moon jump and to the tennis and golf demonstrations by Oak Brook's local pros.

Tennis drills will be offered by Greg Spencer of Sports Core, and Oak Brook Golf Club director Trey VanDyke will offer golfing tips to players of all ages.

"He'll pick them up on a golf cart," Meranda said.

All equipment, including racquets, balls and clubs, will be provided.

Weather permitting, many activities will take place outdoors, but planners also are making use of the Bath and Tennis Club, where guests can take part in a pumpkin walk, crafts and cupcake decorating.

Local pastry chef Mila Sebesta will help participants make the most of the frosting and sprinkles provided. Cupcake decorating will be offered while sup-

plies last.

Autumn Fest is offered free to everyone, thanks to the generosity and support of event sponsors, including Elkay Corp., Evergreen Bank Group, Costco, Baird and Warner Financial, James Bolin, MB Financial, Premier Chiro Inc., American Family Insurance (Anthony Chiarito Agency), Design Shield: Clear-Car-Bra Installation and Asif Yusuf.

The only cost for the day is food. Guests can buy burgers, hot dogs, soft pretzels, snacks, water, soft drinks and beer throughout the day.

"If the weather's cold, we'll add hot chocolate and coffee," Meranda said.

She said 500 to 1,000 people typically take advantage of this free day of fall fun, and not all of them are from Oak Brook. All are welcome, she said.

The Oak Brook Sports Core is at 800 Oak Brook Road, also known as 31st Street.

### Fore the family

Just up the road a stretch is another opportunity for families to spend time enjoying the last days of summer. Willow Crest Golf Club at the Oak Brook Hills Marriott Resort, 3500 Midwest Road, Oak Brook, will host the 2009 Family Golf Festival from 2 to 5 p.m. Sept. 20.

The afternoon is an invitation for families to take part in free golf activities.

Participants will have the chance to win prizes and enjoy complimentary snacks and beverages, too. The event is part of an ongoing effort by Marriott to promote golf as a healthy, enjoyable way for families to spend time together.

Registration is required. To sign up, or for more information, contact Randy Bolstad at [randy.bolstad@marriott.com](mailto:randy.bolstad@marriott.com) or call (630) 850-4118.

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