

End of Summer? No Worries

September has plenty of fun events for your family. Just because school has started doesn't mean the fun has stopped.

by Claire Fogarty
Community contributor

The problem with summer is every year it goes too quickly. One minute it's early June, and the next summer is over and it's the 1st of September. The good news, though, is that this September doesn't have to be the traditional stressful scramble of desperately trying to get re-adjusted to hectic work and school schedules without any fun in sight.

Instead of starting a nine-month countdown to summer 2014, why not mark your calendar for all the fun activities this September has to offer? Take time to check out all that Carroll County has to offer. From the Westminster Fall Fest to the 30th Annual Maryland Wine Festival, there's something for everyone to get excited about.

Family Fun Events

Westminster Fall Fest

One of the largest annual events in Carroll County is the Westminster Fall Fest. The community event begins Sept. 26, and goes through Sept. 29, featuring a parade, amusement rides and lots of food. Local entertainment includes performances from a country band, a high school boy band and a classic rock group.

There are over 80 different craft vendors and eight free demonstrations from groups like a yoga studio, a police dog trainer, a juggler and karate group. Also, Midnight Madness is a special shopping event that takes place on Sept. 27, from 6 p.m. to midnight. Local shops in downtown Westminster stay open for an exclusive shopping and dining experience.

But what's really special about Fall Fest is that all their profits go to local charities. This year, Fall Fest is supporting four new nonprofit organizations: the Special Olympics - Mary-



Westminster Fall Fest is a special event, because profits from the event go to local charities.

Photo courtesy of Claire Fogarty



The Maryland Microbrewery Festival features more than 30 different varieties of beer.

Photo courtesy of Maryland Microbrewery Festival

land, Carroll County, the Stacey Davis Breast Cancer Fund, the Westminster Lions Club and the Good News Jail & Prison Ministry.

Robin Cherney, city representative of Westminster and a member of the 2013 Fall Fest Board, describes the event as a festival that includes craft vendors, local vendors and has a carnival attached to it. She believes there really is something fun to do for all ages, and especially recommends checking out the bands and attending Midnight Madness.

"Because it's at the end of September, people have had a month of being back into their routine," says Cherney. "This weekend gives folks an opportunity to meet up with friends at a festival that has a carnival feel to it. It's a last hooray for summer that welcomes fall."

To donate to the event and see more information about the activities, visit westminsterfallfest.com.

Farmers Markets

Instead of stopping by a fast food joint on your way home from work, consider buying fresh, local produce from one of



Get out and explore the parks! The parks in Carroll County provide many different recreation opportunities for residents.

Photo courtesy of Claire Fogarty

Carroll County's 24 local farmers markets. For all locations and hours, visit carrollag.org.

Eating fresh fruits, vegetables and meats is a great way to stay healthy and active this September. Even though summer favorites like watermelon and corn on the cob might be going out of season, there's no shortage of other delicious options that are available at your local farmers market. Apples, grapes, melons, pears, plums, lima beans, snap beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, greens, onions, peppers, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes and turnips are all in season.

Not sure what to make out of those tasty foods? Turn dinner into a fun activity with your spouse, kids or friends by visiting realsimple.com/food-recipes/ingredients-guide/index.html to search recipes that incorporate the fresh, seasonal ingredients you just bought from the farmers market.

Parks

Exercising outside is not only stress relieving and good for you, it's also free. With September's milder version of summer weather, it really is the perfect month to get outside and soak up some Vitamin D. With 27 parks all located in and around Carroll County, and open every day from sunrise to sunset, there's really no excuse for you to not grab your iPod and tennis shoes or bike and hit the park.

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14 FUN SEPTEMBER HOLIDAYS

- **Sept 2:** Labor Day First Monday of month
- **Sept 5:** Be Late for Something Day
- **Sept 6:** Read a Book Day
- **Sept 8:** Grandparent's Day
- **Sept 11:** 911 Remembrance Day
- **Sept 13:** Uncle Sam Day
- **Sept 15:** National Women's Friendship Day -
- **Sept 17:** Constitution Day
- **Sept 20:** POW/MIA Recognition Day
- **Sept 21:** International Peace Day
- **Sept 23:** Checkers Day
- **Sept 26:** Johnny Appleseed Day
- **Sept 27:** Native American Day
- **Sept 28:** National Good Neighbor Day

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Make it a fun family outing, or cheap date, by packing a picnic and choosing a park that has a basketball court or swing set.

For all park locations and information on activities and programs, visit ccgovernment.carr.org/recreation.

Taneytown Family Fun Days

One of the best parts of summer is going to carnivals. The smell of hot dogs and funnel cakes, the sparkling fireworks, exciting rides and the bustling of a happy crowd are what summer is all about: having fun. Luckily, the Taneytown Lions Club is hosting its very own carnival Sept. 12 to 15.

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— Robin Cherney, Westminster representative a Fall Fest board member

Traditional carnival rides are open Thursday and Friday night from 6 p.m. to close, Saturday 1 p.m. to close and Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Fireworks are on Thursday and Friday night at 9 p.m. Plus, hot air balloon rides will be offered at 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Saturday and Sunday there will be arts and crafts, a flea market, petting zoo and kids' play area.

Also on Saturday, take part in a 5K Run at 8 a.m. and watch a car show at 9 a.m. And don't forget to come back on Sunday for the K-9 show.

So come out and support Taneytown Lions Club by getting your fill of carnival food and rides.

Visit taneytownlion.org for more information and a detailed listing of events and activities.

Adult Activities

The Maryland Wine Festival

If you're looking for a good way to relax after a long week

Farmers markets

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There are 24 farmers markets throughout Carroll County.



Face painting and other fun things are available at the Hampstead Farmers Market, which runs until the end of September.

Photo courtesy of Danette Camponeschi

of work, the Maryland Wine Festival is the place to go. Whether your refrigerator is stacked with Franzia, or you have a bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild Pauillac in your wine cellar, the world-famous festival is sure to be a good time.

Taking place on Saturday, September 21 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday, September 22, noon to 6 p.m. at the Carroll County Farm Museum, the Maryland Wine Festival's 30th anniversary celebration is a great place to kick back and enjoy. Bonnie Hood, events and marketing coordinator, said it's a perfect September event because it "introduces fall" and is a great place to learn about wine.

While sampling a variety of Maryland's wines, check out some local artists' crafts for purchase, and learn how to sip and savor wine at one of the seminars. Hood cautions, "It's not about guzzling, it's about learning." But she says not to be intimidated – the atmosphere is very laidback and friendly.

So purchase a ticket ahead of time online at www.marylandwine.org, grab a friend and come out to the festival for a relaxing day at the Farm Museum.

8th Annual Maryland Microbrewery Festival

If wine isn't your drink of choice, Maryland's Microbrewery Festival at the Unions Mills Homestead could be for you.

On Sept. 28 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. the fun-filled event will celebrate and promote Maryland's very own microbrews. With



11 breweries and more than 30 different brands of beer, this festival is a great way to enhance your knowledge about beer and brewing while enjoying all-day entertainment and live music.

Plus, don't forget to check out the craft vendors and the wide selection of food, ranging from hot dogs, pit beef and turkey to funnel cakes and snow cones that will be available to purchase from vendors all day.

Also, attend 20-minute basic homebrewing seminars at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., or advanced homebrewing seminars at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to learn more about the brewing process. Although you don't need to attend a seminar to see brewing in action, active brewing takes place throughout the day.

For adults 21 and over, tickets may be purchased online at marylandmicrobreweryfestival.com in advance for \$18, or \$20 at the door. Non-beer samplers 12 and older can buy a ticket for \$5 in advance and at the door.

So this September, make a pact with yourself to take time every day to relax and do something fun. Whether it's simply going for a run in one of Carroll County's beautiful parks or taking the family to Taneytown's Family Fun Days, make each day a continuation of the happy, carefree summer spirit.

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what you

THINK

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At the Parks

The parks throughout Carroll County offer many opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Bennett Cerf Dog Park

Bennett Cerf Dog Park is a large fenced in area where dogs are permitted to be taken off-leash to exercise and socialize with other dogs in a safe environment. This is the only area in any Carroll County park where dogs are permitted off leash. Many backyards do not give dogs enough room to run. Veterinarians agree exercise and socialization contributes to a well-adjusted dog. Dog parks provide excellent opportunities for dog owners to socialize as well. The dog park is open to paid members only. To become a member, visit www.bennettcerfdogpark.org or call 410-386-2103.

The Sports Complex

The Sports Complex is the home of numerous adult recreational sports leagues in Carroll County. The Complex hosts weekend softball tournaments from mid-March through early November with sanctioned softball tournaments being held by Maryland USSSA, Maryland ISA, Maryland USSSA Youth, Maryland NSA Youth, and the Maryland Stars.

Trails

The Carroll County Trail maps show public recreational trails that are located in Carroll County. There are a total of 12 trails that run through the parks. Go to the Recreation website for trail maps.

Bear Branch Nature Center

Hashawha and Bear Branch Nature Center at John Owings Rd. The Nature Center is open year round. Hashawha's trails are open to the public from dawn until dusk 365 days a year. Parking is only available at Lake Hashawha or Bear Branch Nature Center. There is no entrance fee for the park.

Piney Run Park & Nature Center

"Open Season" for the Center is April 1 through Oct. 31; park gates are open 7 days a week from 7 a.m. until sunset. "Off season" is considered Nov. 1 through March 31; park gates are open weekdays 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and are closed on the weekend.

—For more information, go to ccgovernment.carr.org/ccg/recpark.