

# Summer Guide

Rare Reminder, Inc.

June 2024

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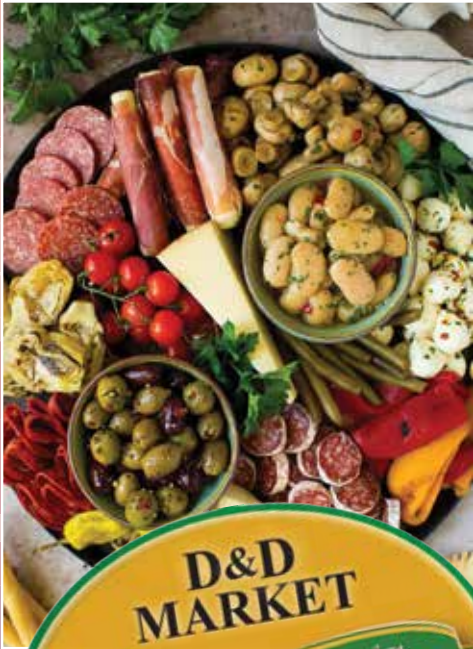
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# Farms In The Region Provide Lots Of Healthy Food Options

By **Cailen Fienemann**  
Freelance Writer

With summer off to a healthy start and the harvesting season for some fruits and vegetables already beginning, now is the perfect time to be visiting local farm stands to peruse their selection of produce, dairy, flowers, and other products. Family-owned farm stands dot Connecticut, offering their own unique flavors and atmospheres and supporting other local businesses in the area.

Fair Weather Growers in Rocky Hill offers a little bit of everything. A fifth-generation farm, they have weathered the changes of many decades, passing the land down through the family. Though originally a dairy farm, over the past 60 years they have moved toward more of a produce-based practice, though many animals are still housed on the land. Among the available products are a wide range of fruits and vegetables (everything from pineapples to bok choy and garlic), local honey and syrup, dairy products, pies, flowers, and even decor and trinkets.

In the fall season, they offer a corn maze and fall festival that is reportedly quite popular. With friendly staff and a cozy, welcoming atmosphere, Fair Weather Growers is a great place to do a bit of grocery shopping or indulge in a sweet treat.

Gilbert Farm is also located in Rocky Hill, with a wide



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# Farms In The Region Provide Lots Of Healthy Food Options

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selection of flowers and produce. They also offer holiday-specific items, with a list of Easter and Christmas flowers and decorations that they cultivate, as well as cemetery planters. Like many of the farms in this article, Gilbert Farm is a fifth-generation farm as well, shifting its focus from dairy to produce a few decades ago. Their website offers insight into their cultivating and harvesting process as well as offering gardening tips to those who might buy seeds or flowers from them.

Hayes Farm is another family-owned farm in Rocky Hill, founded in 1868. Their selections seem to be skewed toward dairy and meat products, with a lovely herd of cows and goats and products like cheese, milk, and yogurt heavily promoted on their Facebook page. For those who are into summer barbeque, Hayes Farm boasts locally raised meat that does not contain hormones or antibodies.

Heirloom Market in Wethersfield is a more recent business, but one that offers the same amount of home-grown quality as the other heritage farms. With both a selection of produce and a cafe with a wide menu of pastries, soups, sandwiches, and hot drinks, the market has something appealing for everyone. Their online

selection of products.

In Newington is Eddy Farm, another farm with a rich history. On land that has since been preserved purely for farming, the market offers a wide range of flower and produce selections. Though their farm stand does not open until July 1, it is well worth the wait, especially for the freshly-baked bread offered every morning.

These days, it is more important than ever to support local farmers. Nothing tastes better than fresh, home-grown produce, and with local farms, you know you are getting a quality product. And it is vital to come together as a community and shore up the shrinking business of farming.



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# It's a Camp-extravaganza!!

## Towns Provide Lots To Do for Kids Over the Summer

**By Laurie Mazzamurro**  
*Freelance Writer*

While students celebrate the end of the school year, this annual event throws many parents into a panic. Finding affordable childcare becomes the utmost concern for moms and dads who need to work during the week. Fortunately, the Parks and Recreation departments in Newington, Cromwell and Wethersfield have created programs for children that provide safe, fun, educational, and creative camps where they can spend the dog days of summer.

In Wethersfield, Rachael Mattioli, assistant director of Parks and Recreation, said parents are offered a wide variety of camps to choose from for their kiddos. The most popular program is through the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center, which hosts nine weeks of camps that have a nature/science-based theme. In the mornings, there are lessons based on a particular topic for the week, followed by nature hikes and visits with all of the animals in the Nature Center. In the afternoons, children participate in swim lessons at Mill Woods.

"This camp is usually is the first one that is sold out," said Mattioli.

Meanwhile, at the Community Center on Greenfield Street, there are two separate programs - "Camp Stuff To Do" for elementary students, ages 4 to 6, and "Camp WannaDo" for ages 7-10. Mattioli explained that events that come to or are on the site of the center, including swim lessons, are a part of camp registration. "The kids participate in mini-golf, arts and crafts, and the kind of sports and games that come to mind when you think of summer camp," she added.

For pre-teen and teenagers, ages 11 to 15, there is the X-treme Adventures camp, that includes field trips to Lake Compounce, bowling, movies, and the Adventure Park in Storrs. While these are the main camps, the town also

partners with outside organizations to create programs with more of a focus. The Skyhawks group offers sports-focused camps along with coaches from Wethersfield High School, who take the opportunity to introduce themselves to the children in town.

If a child has an artistic bent, they can participate in a single week art camp at the Community Center hosted by the Abrakadoodle organization in August. One unique program the town offers is the Therapeutic Recreation program for children with Special Needs, that starts as young as 3 years old and goes through age 21. The general hours are 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., said Mattioli, to accommodate those students who attend summer enrichment programs in the mornings. However, for those who don't attend summer school, an extended morning program at the camp is available.

In Cromwell, Dante Ucello of the Department of Parks and Recreation, noted that although his town is a smaller one, it "has a ton of camps for different age groups and different interests". The main camp is Camp Cromwell for children in kindergarten to 8th grade, held for seven consecutive weeks from June 24 to Aug. 5. "Each week has a different theme, including activities catered to that theme, and there are movies and field trips," explained Ucello. He added that there are some specialty camps are offered using outside organizations contracted through the town.



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## It's a Camp-extravaganza!!

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One set of camps are sports-based ones through the Skyhawks company. Children ages 7 to 12 can learn skills associated with track and field, flag football, volleyball, and beginner golf, said Ucello. For those who would rather explore their artsy side, Abrakadoodle offers an art camp for ages 6 to 12, and for future scientists, Circuit Lab has different curriculum for each camp that includes hands-on electronics sections as a introduction to software. These are grades 1 through 7, which are broken up into two different groups. "We try to have a good mix of sports, STEM, and art," said Ucello. "We are trying to branch out as much as possible for different areas of interests." He added that families can still register because there are available spaces.

In Newington, Bill DeMaio, the superintendent of Parks and Recreation, said that his town offers a plethora of programs for children, including a comprehensive preschool called Summer Sunshine. "It's a unique and very popular program that is already full," he said. For kindergarten through 8th grade, there's Camp ReCreate held at the Mortensen Community Center. Days are filled with various activities, including field trips to the Science Center, Dinosaur State Park and Flamig Farm, and "special guests", including animals from the Beardsley Zoo and Magician Matt Matthews.

"The UConn Jazz band will be coming to play of the kids," said DeMaio. "We're excited about that." While this program is from June to Aug. 2, Camp S'More takes place from Aug. 5 through Aug. 16 for students in Kindergarten to 5th grade at Mill Pond Park. This camp also boasts field trips and special guests. Both camps include various outdoor activities, including Gaga ball, and mandatory swimming lessons for 45 minutes daily in the morning, followed by a recreational swim in the afternoon. "Knowing how to swim is a safety skill and something every child should learn," DeMaio explained.

Along with these offerings, there are 25 differ-

ent sports-related camps, including lacrosse, soccer, basketball and baseball. One unique program the town has for 9th and 10th grades is called "Leaders-in-Training." Throughout their time at this camp, teens learn to write resumes, participate in mock interviews, and sharpen their communication skills. To ensure that some fun is had, campers will also go on field trips to an escape room and Quassy Amusement Park, as well as attend cookouts.

In their respective towns, Mattioli, Ucello, and DeMaio all said that making sure programs for children were available and affordable for families is a priority. In Wethersfield, Mattioli said that the Parks and Recreation department partners with Social and Youth Services so families can apply for scholarships for the camps. "We do work with families because the reality is that camps are child-care," she noted.

In Cromwell, Ucello said his department recognizes the importance of keeping things within reach for residents. "We try to keep the prices down to help our families," Ucello noted.

Mattioli, Ucello, and DeMaio all feel that their departments' job is to provide programs for working parents to have a safe and enjoyable place for their children to make new friends and have great experiences. From Mattioli's perspective, "Most of us who work here participated in the programs back in the day, then worked as counselors. We want to create those enjoyable and positive experiences for the next generations."



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# Escape Rooms In Area Offer Fun For Teens And Families

**By Cailen Fienemann**  
Freelance Writer

It can be hard to find activities to do over the summer, especially as a family or with bored teenagers. With schools finally out for the summer and kids itching to find something to do, escape rooms might be the perfect cure.

Puzzle Theory, located in Middletown, is an escape room company with two exciting locked rooms to be solved. In one, battle the threat of nuclear destruction as your team races to take back control of a weapons base. In the other, hurry to find a backup power source for your galactic vehicle in order to escape the villains who are on their way to stop you.

Puzzle Theory, at 909 Newfield Street in Middletown, is open for booking now. Visit their website to watch their exciting escape room trailers and find out more information.

Lara's Labyrinth boasts even more variety of locked rooms, with a main location on the Silas Deane in Wethersfield and an additional location opening on June 28 in Middletown. The Wethersfield location houses rooms themed



**PUZZLE  
THEORY**

*continued on page 14*

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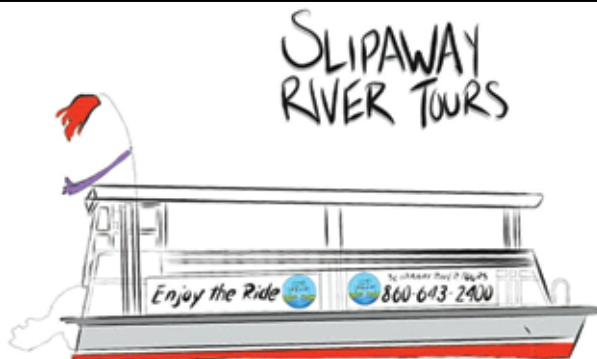
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**John Tornatore with daughter Jennifer, and granddaughter, Halei.**

## Escape Rooms In Area Offer Fun For Teens And Families

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around prison cells, ancient Egyptian mysteries, and a witch's cottage in the middle of the forest. The coming-soon Middletown location only offers two rooms so far, but it also offers a virtual reality gaming center with popular titles such as Beatsaber and Myst.

Its website provides additional details on the difficulty level of each room (rated out of five keys) as well as glowing reviews from previous patrons.

Lastly, but certainly not least, is Codeword Escape, located on the Silas Deane in Rocky Hill. Its three rooms are completely opposite in theme, with one focused on a mystery at a movie theater, one on a King Midas-sounding "Curse of the Golden Touch," and the last on so-called "Gangster Gnomes." All sessions are private, so there are no chances of being placed with random strangers, and larger events like

birthday parties, or even work team-building exercises can easily be booked through them.

All three companies have additional locations outside of the Greater Hartford area as well, with many mysterious adventures waiting to be solved. Though escape rooms can seem a bit intimidating, with the right group of people, it becomes a fun bonding activity that facilitates communication and teamwork to work toward a larger goal – escape!



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# Take A Hike - Nature's Healthy Stress Reliever

**By Catherine Geoghegan**

*Freelance Writer*

*"Nature itself is the best physician" Hippocrates*

*Held captive by a screen, eyes strained and brain frazzled. Survival instincts snap into action – stand up, put the hikers on, walk out the door!*

*Over stressed mind screaming at the world – take a hike!*

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The natural environment acts as a restorative space, replenishing mental resources that are depleted by the demands of modern life. Research consistently shows that natural environments can significantly reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Nature provides a respite from the over stimulation of life, allowing the mind to rest and rejuvenate.

The allure of hiking lies in its simplicity and accessibility, requiring minimal equipment while providing a profound connection with nature. The connection to the natural world encourages a mindful approach to living, emphasizing the importance of preserving our beautiful landscapes for future generations.

Data from AllTrails, a popular hiking app, indicated a 171% increase in trail usage in 2020 – driven by the COVID-19 pandemic as people sought outdoor activities to enhance both physical and mental well-being.

Hiking trails offer a unique and compelling appeal, attracting enthusiasts of all ages and fitness levels. It is an excellent cardiovascular workout that improves heart health, strengthens muscles, and enhances balance and flex-

ibility. The varying terrains and elevations challenge the body in different ways, offering a full body workout that is both enjoyable and effective.

Take advantage of the diverse landscapes, lush forests, rolling hills, rugged mountains and serene lakeshores providing breathtaking vistas and hidden natural treasures for your next refreshing adventure.

I encourage you to place the exploration of our area hiking trails on the top of your to do list and make hiking a regular part of your health and fitness regime. Allow yourself to experience first-hand, the healing power of nature. The increase in physical, mental, and emotional strength will lend to the development of a confidence improving your ability to overcome life's many challenges.

Go ahead stress – take a hike!



*continued on page 18*





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- Cedar Mountain – short trail (less than 1 mile) with scenic views

**Wethersfield:**

- Cove Park Trail - .8 Miles / Family friendly trail

**Rocky Hill:**

- Dividend Pond Trails – 3 Miles / Archaeological District

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- Wear comfortable footwear suitable for all terrains.
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Tortilla chips dipped in a tangy salsa often make the perfect opener to a meal. Salsa traditionally is made with tomatoes, but people often can find different fruits filling in for tomatoes or complementing them in various salsa recipes.

During the height of the summer entertaining season, salsa can be transformed by watermelon, a popular summertime fruit. Watermelon's high water content and subtle, sweet flavor contribute to its refreshing, some might say addictive, nature. However, this recipe for "Watermelon Fire and Ice Salsa," courtesy of the The National Watermelon Promotion Board, adds jalapeño peppers to the mix to bring a little heat to those cool watermelon pieces.

### Watermelon Fire and Ice Salsa

Makes 3 cups

3 cups chopped watermelon  
1/2 cup green peppers

2 tablespoons lime juice  
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro  
1 tablespoon green onions  
2 tablespoons jalapeño peppers

Combine ingredients. Mix well and cover. Refrigerate for 1 hour or more.





# MICHAEL KLINGER

## FINANCIAL REPRESENTATIVE

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