

LOCAL NEWS

Shamrock Run welcomes Irish rovers



Photos by Joseph Cooke/Buffalo News

The 45th annual Shamrock Run rambled through the Old First Ward and Larkinville neighborhoods on Saturday, taking both the high roads and low roads near the bonnie, bonnie banks of the Buffalo River. Organized by the Old First Ward Community Association, the event is held annually near St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Below, left to right, Erik Sims with top hat and shamrock accessories; Eden Gibson shows off her new Gaelic-influenced hat; Sharon Pernick celebrates after completing the run.



THE NEWS IN BRIEF

Landmarks go orange, fundraiser set for Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

The Peace Bridge will be illuminated in orange on Monday night, the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens from Monday through Wednesday nights and the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences on Wednesday to mark Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month.

It's part of a larger effort to raise awareness and money for research of a chronic, life-threatening neurological disease that strikes those in the region at higher rates than in many other parts of the world.

This is why the Jacobs MS Center for Treatment and Research in Buffalo leads a CASA-MS Study, which explores the causes, progression and best ways to screen for multiple sclerosis.

Activists from Western New York this month will

visit U.S. senators and members of Congress who represent the region to discuss issues important to people with MS and their families, including the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act, which would help those with mobility issues more easily make their way through airports and on planes. They also seek support for nearly \$30 million for research through the Department of Defense and Veterans Administration MS Centers of Excellence.

The MS Society hosts a fundraiser, Strike & Sing Out for MS, from 3 to 6 p.m. March 19 at Classic Lanes, 1840 Military Road. The \$20 cost includes two hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza, pop, raffles and karaoke. Learn more and buy tickets at bit.ly/3k1Vi0D

— Scott Scanlon

Against the Storm Foundation bolsters mental health in Cheektowaga schools

The nonprofit Against the Storm Foundation – founded in 2019 to help fight blood cancers and support other causes that improve the health and quality of life for people in need – recently donated \$10,000 to Mental Health Advocates of WNY to help children in the Cheektowaga School District prepare for kindergarten.

The donation will help support the MHA Basic Emotional Skills Training (BEST) program, which helps pre-K and kindergarten students develop healthy social and emotional skills.

“We are in the midst of a national crisis in child and adolescent mental health, exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our kids, and the Against the Storm Foundation is proud to support this important effort,” Thomas Lillis, foundation president, said.

The BEST program helps young students understand feelings and interact with others in responsible ways that can approve academic performance while lowering the risks for social isolation, anxiety and other mental health challenges.

“The teachers love the lessons and look forward to working them into their own curriculum,” said Union East Elementary School social worker Maria Kocialski.

“They particularly love the classroom engagement and interaction with their students by the BEST staff. Parents also look forward to this program and enjoy the carryover with their children at home.”

The grant will help the district serve nearly 600 students through this school year. Learn more at mhawny.org/programs

— Scott Scanlon

Alzheimer's Association hosts program on early dementia Wednesday in Niagara Falls

The Western New York Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will host a free conference, “It's Memory Loss. Now What?” from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Niagara Falls Library Main Branch and online.

“This conference will provide incredibly valuable information for people with a loved one with mild cognitive impairment or the early stage of Alzheimer's disease or dementia,” said Andrea Koch, director of education and training for the chapter. “We know that making plans early on leads to significantly better outcomes later when a person's need for care increases.”

Guest speakers will

address topics that arise when a person is diagnosed with dementia, including understanding more about the disease, partnering with health care professionals, and related legal and financial planning.

Those who attend the conference in person at 1425 Main St., Niagara Falls, can visit a related resource fair featuring services and support. Register to watch online at bit.ly/AlzNiaFalls23 or by calling the free, confidential 24/7 Alzheimer's Association Helpline at 800-272-3900. Grants from the State Department of Health and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY support the program.

— Scott Scanlon

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