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Weed Beach Fest on June 17, a New Offering from Darien Parks & Recreation Dept

Author : David Gurliacci

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Darien Parks & Recreation Department is hosting a party for the town, "Weed Beach Fest," on Saturday, June 17, with music, some free food, games for kids, paddleboarding and kayak rentals and sailboat rides.

The 3 to 8 p.m. event on the first day of Darien Public Schools' summer vacation is the first of what the department is hoping will be an annual party for the town.

Darienite "We are really looking forward to creating an awesome event for families to start off the summer," said Patrick Rossiter, recreation supervisor and event coordinator for Darien Parks & Rec.

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<http://darienite.com> "I think this is a great opportunity for Darien to build on its terrific community spirit and we at the Parks & Recreation Department are proud to be working to make that happen."

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[Weed Beach Fest web page](#) *on the town government website*

The event will include three bands: the-up-and-coming young musicians of Wally (starting at 3 p.m.); perennial local favorite, [Gunsmoke](#) (4:30 p.m.); and party band [Freeplay](#) (6:30 p.m.).

For the kids, there will be three big inflatable slides, crafts, games and activities in the Kids Cove, along with other games and prizes on the beach. Contests and games will be scheduled throughout the event.

The Darien Junior Sailing Team will offer sailboat rides.

Look for kayak and paddleboard rentals (for the discounted price of \$30) from [Downunder](#), which will also have:

- Paddleboard Yoga class 4 to 4:30 p.m.; 5 to 6 p.m. (up to six participants) discounted price of \$40
- Paddleboard mini lessons 3:30 to 4 p.m.; 4:30 to 5 p.m. — discounted price of \$40

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Thanks to the generosity of sponsor Ring's End, the event will be free. Uncle's Deli of Darien and Stamford will provide a picnic barbecue on the beach. Grilled food will be on sale and food trucks will be selling food.

The mixture of free features and things you have to pay for is a bit confusing. Here's a breakdown:

- While the event itself is free, there is a \$20 charge for parking at the Weed Beach parking lot (parking at the Hindley School lot and taking a shuttle to the beach is free; you can park as early as 2 p.m. at the school). Parking at the 130 Weed Beach spaces is first-come, first-served. You won't need a beach sticker to park.
- There's a free barbecue, but other food will be sold, and if you donate a backpack for school kids in need, you get a meal pass (see below for details).
- A "Kids Cove" with water slides and activities will be available for a nominal fee
- Numerous vendors will be on site selling everything from jewelry to summer wares
- Weed Beach Fest T-shirts will be available for sale at the event
- Kayaks and paddleboards will be available to rent.
- Credit cards or cash will be accepted.

Donate a Book Bag, Get a Meal Ticket

The Weed Beach Fest is also pleased to help OPUS in collecting book bags for kids in need from Darien and surrounding communities. Look for the OPUS table at the Weed Beach Fest. For each new book bag donated, Halstead Property will fill it with school supplies. As an added bonus you will receive a free meal from the picnic BBQ at the festival.

A beer tasting tent had been planned, but the department decided to drop that idea, town Parks & Recreation Director Pamela Gery said.

The Parks and Rec Department is looking for volunteers for the event, which it plans to make annual.

Sponsors to date are Rings End, Uncles Deli, Opus, Halstead and Weston & Sampson. Additional sponsorship opportunities also are available; email Patrick Rossiter for more information at prossiter@darienct.gov.

Keep in Mind

- Plan to bring beach chairs, bathing suits and towels (water slides and possible water games). This event takes place directly on the beach — music, vendors and food.

- No coolers please
- The Weed Beach parking lot will be closed for the day in order to reserve these spaces for the Weed Beach Fest paid parking.
- Walkers, runner, strollers, bikers are welcomed at the beach, but organizers will be setting up for the event from 9 to 2 p.m. The gate will officially open at 2 p.m., and the event starts at 3 p.m.
- No pets allowed
- The rain date is Sunday, June 18