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Lawn Chair Theatre brings the fun outdoors

Free events offer family enjoyment that's easy on the wallet

Terence Leung
for the Federation of
Calgary Communities

Calgary summers are jam packed with family events and locales with the usual suspects such as the Stampede, Calgary Zoo and other fairs scattered around town.

For families, however, the cost can add up and it's where the City of Calgary's Lawn Chair Theatre free events through the summer can make things a little easier on the wallet while providing lots of activity for the audience.

"Basically, bring your lawn chair, enjoy great snacks and live entertainment for the entire family at a variety of locations throughout the summer," says Heather Gibbons, community recreation coordinator with the City of Calgary.

"In the past, we have had everything from show dogs, magicians, storytellers, musical acts and something different for each event."

Beginning July, until the end of August, Lawn Chair Theatre will be held every Thursday between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. in communities such as Bowness, Citadel, Bridgeland and Temple.

"The Lawn Chair Theatre is basically

like the entertainment you would see at a park busker show. You bring your chair, your kids, and your dog and we'll provide the entertainment and some snacks," says Gibbons.

"It's nice to be able to do free events like this. We already do a lot of things for children and youth, so it's always nice add more fun-focused atmosphere type events."

Lawn Chair Theatre started about seven years ago in the north part of Calgary and extended to some of the communities in the eastern quadrant last year.

"Although it's highly weather dependent [the event] has proven to be fairly popular where some days we can have 300 to 400 people. We do have people who will follow all the shows as each one is different and unique."

Gibbons sees the events as the city giving back to the communities. but also as an opportunity for community members to interact.

"It's a great evening to relax and unwind. On top of meeting your neighbours, you might also run into people from other communities, and that's always a good thing to know others outside of your area," she says.

"Also this year, Prairie Winds Park is being utilized throughout the day with a skatepark, and events during the day and Lawn Chair Theatre in the evening. It will be a major place to go and do something fun outside."

Although Lawn Chair Theatre is a City of Calgary-directed event, some community associations are working in tandem with the city.

The Temple Community Associa-



Giving families the chance to enjoy a little entertainment for a price that can't be beat, Lawn Chair Theatre is a good bet for all members of the family.

tion says it will be holding an outdoor movie night on July 29, but they echo the need for these events to encourage community members to mingle.

"There's not a lot of time for families to sit down and meet people. This is why we have programming within our own community association and with the city," says Jayne Fontaine, office administrator for the Temple Community Association.

"You go meet neighbours, kids meet new friends. people move in and don't know anyone. We're right in the

middle of the community in a wide open area and people will walk by and ask what's going on. It's how it starts."

For more scheduling information on Lawn Chair Theatre, go to www.calgary.ca or call 311.



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