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Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

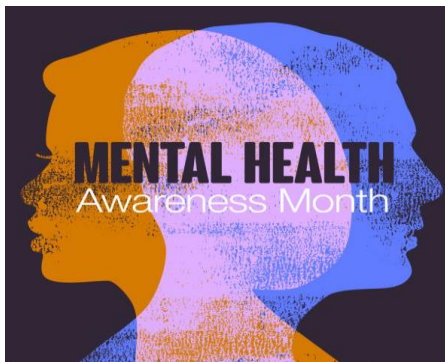
Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in May in the United States since 1949. It was created to educate the public about mental illness, raise awareness about research and treatment, reduce the stigma and celebrate recovery. People still hesitate to seek help or even talk about it with loved ones for fear of being judged or facing backlash. Physically, we know that if we hurt anywhere, we need to seek treatment to get better. The same is true for our mental well-being and, while attitudes are changing around mental illness, we have a long way to go.

The National Institute of Mental Health states that 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. are living with a mental health disorder, with anxiety disorder being the most common. Other disorders include PTSD, depression, bipolar disorder, and many others.

One issue affecting people receiving treatment is the lack of access to services. It is estimated that most states, including Pennsylvania, have fewer than 40% of the mental health professionals needed to address the problem. Rural, low income and minority areas are most affected by these shortages.

What can we do?

- Help with volunteering, fundraising or awareness raising events in the community.
- Stay aware of your loved ones and those around you. If you think someone is struggling, reach out and don't be afraid to discuss the subject.
- Access help, such as the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline, available by dialing or texting **988**.
- Take care of your own mental health and don't be afraid to ask for help, if you think you need it.



****This month, Altoona City Hall's exterior will be lit in green, in support of Mental Health Awareness Month.**

Children's Mental Health Awareness Day

Founded in 2005, May 7th, 2025 marks the 20th anniversary of Children's Mental Health Awareness Day. This is a day to highlight the issue of mental health specifically among children and teens. It is estimated that 8% of all teens today suffer from some sort of anxiety disorder. As we hear more and more about bullying and violence in the schools, this is not a surprising statistic. With these added stressors, teens are especially vulnerable today.



What may be surprising is that, according to the CDC, the percentage of high school students who experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness is 42% and suicide has become the third leading cause of death for ages 15-24. Children in foster care are especially vulnerable, with a reported 80% of these children showing signs of significant mental health issues.

Physical, emotional and social changes, including increased exposure to poverty, abuse or violence, has also contributed to the vulnerability of adolescents developing mental health problems. Awareness and self-care are crucial to helping teens deal with these issues. Self-care can include getting enough quality sleep, taking breaks from homework and screen time, getting adequate nutrition and hydration and taking time for activities they enjoy.

Parents can provide help and support by checking in with their teen, encouraging them to share their feelings and being aware of changes in their teen's behavior, attitudes or moods. Parents also need to care for themselves and not be afraid to seek help if needed.

SAMA Art For Your Heart 5K Run / Walk



The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA) invites everyone to join in the 2025 Art For Your Heart Run / Walk on Saturday, May 24th, 2025, at 9:00 AM. The Race begins at SAMA Altoona, located at 1210 11th Avenue in downtown Altoona, with a scenic route, ending at Heritage Plaza on 11th Avenue & 14th Street.

The 5K Run / Walk will be divided into age groups: 14 and under, 15-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59 and 60+. Pre-registration is open now through May 23, 2025 at \$25 per person for the run or walk. T-shirts are guaranteed to all who register by May 3rd. Registration will also be available the day of the Race, beginning at 7:00 AM for \$35 per person. All proceeds benefit the work of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art.

The awards ceremony will take place at 10:00 AM at Heritage Plaza. Medals will be awarded for the top three winners for male and female in each age group and for the top three winners overall.

Race information is available at www.sama-art.org/race. You can register online at www.runsignup.com/Race/Register/ or on race day. Run with a purpose and support SAMA's commitment to enriching lives through art. Lace up, and let your heart beat for the arts!

Altoona Farmers Market

We welcome back our weekly Altoona Farmers Market at Heritage Plaza in downtown Altoona! Opening Thursday, May 15th, 2025, the market will be open every Thursday from 11 AM – 2 PM through October 16th, 2025. The market will feature local vegetables, fruits, meats, flowers, honey, soaps, syrups, coffees and more. You can also order online by visiting <http://blairmarkets.com>

The market continues to grow every year, with more vendors and more visitors, which is a great thing to see. Help support our local farmers and craftsmen by making a trip to the market a weekly activity!!

For information about becoming a vendor, or for general information, contact chersmear@gmail.com. You can also stay up-to-date on what's happening at the market by visiting their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/altoonafarmersmarket



Deb Stitt Memorial Golf Outing

It is not too late to register for the Deb Stitt Memorial Golf Outing, sponsored by the Blair Emergency Service Chaplain Platoon (BESCP). The event remembers Deb Stitt, a Penn State police lieutenant who died unexpectedly in 2020 at the age of 55, after spending 23 years serving Penn State.

The outing, scheduled for May 26, 2025 at the King Valley Golf course in Imler, PA, begins at 8:00 AM and includes prizes in many categories, great food, and a chance to have fun while supporting our volunteer BESCP Chaplains. You needn't be a good golfer to come out for a fun day and a great cause.

Our emergency services work with far fewer staff than needed, and still manage to respond quickly to all emergencies, fires, accidents and other community safety concerns. As a result of what they see each and every day, these vital members of our community can experience high levels of anxiety, stress, depression, mental health issues and thoughts of self-harm.

The men and women of BESCP support our local heroes through counseling, pastoring, suicide awareness programs and many other services. Their funding comes entirely from local gifts and fund-raising events. They need the community's help to continue to offer these life-saving services to those who, in turn, work to save the lives of our community.

Advance registration is \$400 per team or \$100 per golfer, which includes 18 rounds of golf, a golf cart, and lunch after the round. Same day registration is \$125 per golfer. Registration information, including how and where to pay, is available on the BESCP Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/BESCP



COME OUT AND SUPPORT THE BLAIR EMERGENCY SERVICES CHAPLAIN PLATOON!

Memorial Day Parade



The 2025 Memorial Day Parade in Altoona will be held on Monday, May 26th, beginning at 10:30 AM. Sponsored by the Blair County War Veterans Council, the parade will form at 8th Avenue and 17th Street and follow a route to 12th Street to 11th Avenue to 15th Street.

Immediately following the parade, there will be a service at the Robert E. Laws Veterans Mall on 11th Avenue and 14th Street. There is also a Memorial Day parade in Juniata on May 26th, beginning at 9:30 AM. Sponsored by the VFW

Unit 8685, the Juniata parade will commence from North 8th Street and North 4th Avenue. Come out for one (or both!) of the parades to honor and support the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect and defend our Country, as well as surviving veterans and those continuing to serve.

On Sunday evening, May 25th, Levity Brewing Co. will host a Memorial Day Eve concert outdoors in the lot behind Levity Plaza in downtown Altoona, featuring Shallow 9. The concert begins at 6:00 PM and ends at 9:00 PM.

Center City Market in Downtown Altoona

Center City Market, located in the old McCrory's Building, is now open! This historical building has been part of Altoona's downtown for 125 years. Now, nearly 35 years after its closing, the building has been brought back to life, thanks to funding provided by Kish Bank and Altoona Blair County Redevelopment Authority. The Market includes seven different and unique restaurants, food and drink retailers, and displays some beautiful restored stained glass rescued from a local church. For updates on openings, hours and other information, visit www.centercitymarketaltoona.com

April 15, 2025 marked the ribbon cutting for the Market (photo courtesy of Sarah Garber). Over the past decade, Mayor Pacifico, along with Altoona City Council, community leaders and investors, have been working hard to revitalize the downtown area. Today it is home to many local businesses, including doughnut shops, breweries, eateries, boutiques and pizzerias. We invite the community to visit our downtown, especially if you have not been there in a while. Support these local businesses and, together, we can continue to make downtown Altoona a great place to live, visit, shop and explore!



May is...

Of course, May brings us Mother's Day, Memorial Day, the Kentucky Derby and, if your birthday is in May, you could be sharing it with the likes of Sigmund Freud, John F. Kennedy, George Clooney or Cher! But check out a few of these fun days!

May 1 – National School Principal's Day

May 3 – National Two Different Colored Shoes Day

May 4 – National Star Wars Day (May the 4th Be With You!)

May 5 – Cinco de Mayo

May 6 – National Nurses Day AND National Teacher Appreciation Day (BIG thanks!)

May 10 – National Train Day (Visit The Railroaders or Model Trains Museums in Altoona!)

May 11 – National Twilight Zone Day

May 13 – National Apple Pie Day

May 15 – National Peace Officer Memorial Day

May 16 – National Do Something Good For your Neighbor Day

May 18 – National HIV Vaccine Awareness Day

May 24 – National Brother's Day

May 25 – Geek Pride Day

May 20 – National Rescue Dog Day

May 22 – National Vanilla Pudding Day

May 25 – National Wine Day

May 28 – National Hamburger Day

May 31 – National Macaroon Day

ENJOY!



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