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Altoona Proud

A Monthly Insight into all that is Altoona

June is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month



Since 1992, June has been celebrated as National Men's Mental Health Awareness Month. It is the time to be aware and open about a subject that many men would rather not talk about. Yet, that's precisely why there is a silent epidemic in this country, and it may be impacting your family, co-workers, teachers, community members or friends.

Rates of male depression and suicide have risen dramatically in recent years. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, men are almost four times more likely to die by suicide than women, and more than 6 million men in the U.S. experience symptoms of depression every year.

Despite these alarming statistics, a recent survey revealed that 49% of men felt more depressed than they admit to the people in their lives. Perceptions of weakness about requiring therapy, fears of social disapproval and cultural factors are some of the barriers preventing men from seeking mental health assistance. Whether it is the result of failure to recognize depression and other mental health issues, downplaying the signs and symptoms, reluctance to discuss the issue or resistance to treatment, it is vital for all of us to fight against the stigma for the men in our lives, and to be willing to offer help and support without judgment.

Organizations like [Heads Up Guys](#) offer self-help tools and information. You can also find information on men's mental health at www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/men-and-mental-health. Staying informed and aware of signs and symptoms can help someone you love.

June 27th is National PTSD Awareness Day – Reach out to someone you know who may be struggling with this condition.

Women Veterans Recognition Day 2025

June 12, 2025 marks the third year of celebrating Women Veterans Day in the State of Pennsylvania. Even though women have served in the military since the beginning of our Country's history, they were not recognized as military members or veterans until President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act on June 12, 1948.

Since that signing, each state is able to decide whether or not they will celebrate that day. New York was the first to do so in 2008 and, in 2023, the State of Pennsylvania became the 23rd State to recognize and celebrate Women Veterans Day.



The VA is hosting a Women Veterans Day event on Thursday, June 12th at the James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center, at 2907 Pleasant Valley Boulevard. The event, from 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM, will be on the front lawn of the Medical Center near "The Wall That Heals" and will include guest speakers, light refreshments and information on both VA and non-VA programs. If you would like to attend, please contact VAMC Women's Health at 814-943-8164, ext. 17186.

National Flag Week



The week of June 8th is National Flag Week in 2025, with Flag Day falling on June 14th. The day commemorates the adoption of the Stars and Stripes as our United States Flag on June 14, 1777. Flag Day was first proposed in 1861 to rally Union support during the American Civil War, but Congress did not approve the national observance until 1949, when President Harry Truman signed it into law. Interestingly, June 14th also marks the birthday of the United States Army, celebrating its 250th birthday in 2025.

Gospel Hill was actually part of a farm purchased by the City of Altoona in 1871 and later dedicated as a public park in 1907.

The Gospel Hill Flag has been a landmark in the City of Altoona since 1990, when the first 30 ft x 60 ft American Flag was placed there. It can be seen for miles, greeting all who enter the City of Altoona. The flag is replaced 3-4 times each year and our amazing Altoona Fire Department provides the manpower to monitor, repair and replace the flag as needed.

This year, the City of Altoona and the Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation will honor the Gospel Hill Flag at Heritage Plaza on June 14th, beginning at 12:00 PM. The ceremony will include a guest speaker, a Proclamation from Mayor Matt Pacifico, the Altoona Community Band and the Altoona Police and Fire Honor Guard. Our Altoona Police and Fire Department will be serving a hot dog lunch for all in attendance. We encourage the public to come out and show their support for this important City landmark, our Gospel Hill Stars and Stripes.

St. Pölten, Austria - Sister City Update

The Sister City Committee is preparing for two very special events in celebration of our 25 years of cultural and educational partnership with our Sister City, St. Pölten, Austria.

In October of this year, Altoona will welcome a high school student from St. Pölten, Austria. The student, who is the winner of their Youth Unlimited competition, will visit for 2-3 weeks, staying with a host family. While here, the student will attend the Altoona Area High School for one week and also experience educational, cultural and historical parts of our City and the surrounding area.



In April of 2026, a group of 23 students will visit Altoona for eight days, along with a delegation of 6-8 adults. The students will be staying with host families and attending the high school for 4-5 days. The Sister City Committee is planning some exciting experiences for this group as well.

We are grateful to Superintendent Brad Hatch and the Altoona Area School District, who are supporting this effort. Stay tuned for information on how you can be a part of this great inter-cultural exchange!

Blair Senior Services AmeriCorps



The Blair Senior Services is currently looking for volunteers interested in becoming a Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion as part of their AmeriCorps Senior Program. Volunteers receive a tax-free stipend, paid time off and paid holidays, mileage reimbursement and the ability to choose their own schedule.

The Foster Grandparent Program allows volunteers to serve children in a school or daycare setting. The Senior Companion Program uses volunteers to serve older adults in the community by providing them with much needed company and friendship.

All individuals age 55 and older are encouraged to apply. To learn more, or to get started in the Program, call 814-946-1235 and ask for the Volunteer Program. To learn more about the programs, and the other programs of Blair Senior Services, visit www.blairsenior.org

BESCP Deb Stitt Memorial Golf Outing-Rescheduled

The Blair Emergency Services Chaplain Platoon's Annual Deb Stitt Memorial Golf Outing has been rescheduled. This means you still have a chance to register and participate! As a reminder, this outing is done in memory of Deb Stitt, a dedicated officer at Penn State who passed away suddenly in 2020.

The proceeds from this outing benefit suicide awareness programs for our dedicated first responders, who witness so much and continue to serve our community, while dealing with the effects of seeing trauma on a daily basis.

The outing will be on July 25th, 2025 at the King's Valley Golf Course. For information, costs or to register, visit the BESCP Facebook page at www.facebook.com/p/Blair-Emergency-Services-Chaplain-Platoon.

Prospect Pool

Get ready to enjoy some summer fun as Prospect Pool opens for the season on May 31, 2025! The pool will be open from May 31 through August 10, 2025, from 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM, Tuesday through Sunday. The pool will be closed on Mondays.

Activities include:

Senior Swim (ages 55 and over): Tuesdays-Fridays, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Water Aerobics: Tuesdays - Fridays, 6:00 PM – 6:45 PM

Swimming Lessons: Tuesdays - Fridays, 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM / 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

(Register Altoona Children by calling Taylor Rickabaugh at 814-695-4467, ext. 225)

Pool passes are now available at the YMCA or at Prospect Pool. Daily passes (before 4:00 PM) are \$5.00 per person. Daily evening passes (daily after 4:00 PM) are \$3.00 per person. Kids under age 3 are admitted free of charge. Senior Swim is \$2.00 per person.



Season passes are also available, with the following rates:

Individual - \$60

Family of 2 - \$100 per family

Family of 3 - \$130 per family

Family of 4 - \$150 per family

Additional Family Members (after 4) - \$20 each

Senior Swim Hour - \$30

Pool Party Rentals (during Pool Hours) - \$75

Prospect Pool is also hiring lifeguards for the season. For information on Prospect Pool's 2025 season, visit www.prospectpoolaltoona.com/home. Great strides in the revitalization and upgrades of Prospect Pool have happened over the past two years. Check it out this summer and help support future improvements while enjoying the summer!

Associates for Training and Development (A4TD)

A4TD (Associates for Training and Development) is a non-profit organization that operates in five states, including Pennsylvania. The PA State office is housed within the First Frontier Blair County, PA office (formerly ABCD Corp) here in Altoona.

A4TD operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a federally funded program that provides paid, part-time, on-the-job training to individuals aged 55 and older who are unemployed and seeking work. The program provides skill-building and confidence restoration, helping participants to work with nonprofit and public organizations in the community, including Altoona and the greater Blair County region. Partnering with host agencies such as Blair County Community Action, participants receive real-world experience to match their goals and abilities.

If you are a local senior who would like free training to enter today's workforce, visit www.a4td.org to learn more or to apply for the program.



The Month of June

June brings us Flag Day, Father's Day, Juneteenth and the first official day of summer. If you have a June birthday, you might share it with Helen Keller, Johnny Depp, Paul McCartney or even The Dalai Lama. But if you are looking to do some silly celebrating in June, check out these days:

June 1 – National Olive Day & National Say Something Nice Day!

June 2 – National Leave The Office Early Day

June 4 – National Hug Your Cat Day

June 6 – D-Day (thank you Veterans!)

June 7-National Chocolate Ice Cream Day

June 9 – National Donald Duck Day (?)

June 11 – National Corn on the Cob Day

June 12 – Birthday of Anne Frank (June 12, 1929)

June 14 – Army Birthday (Happy Birthday, U. S. Army!)

June 17 – National Apple Strudel Day & National Eat Your Vegetables Day (Your choice!)

June 20 – National Take Your Dog To Work Day

June 23 – National **PINK** Day

June 30- National Social Media Day (Post a positive message on social media today!)



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