

Buffalo Rocket

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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It's Cookie Time!



The Girl Scouts of WNY 2026 summer camp registration is opening Jan. 7.

Girl Scouts of Western New York kicks off the 2026 Girl Scout Cookie season as Girl Scouts explore more possibilities through the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world. The Girl Scouts of WNY 2026 summer camp registration is also officially underway with registration for day and overnight camps opening Jan. 7.



New this year, Explorermores are joining the Girl Scout Cookie lineup for the 2026 season. Inspired by rocky road ice cream and filled with chocolate, marshmallow, and toasted almond-flavored creme, this new cookie celebrates the spirit of exploration that defines Girl

Scouts.

In addition to the exciting new cookie, the 2026 cookie lineup will include fan favorites such as Thin Mints, Caramel deLites, Peanut Butter Patties and Trefoils.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program provides invaluable entrepreneurial skills for Girl Scouts across the country and funds experiences such as service projects, international travel, and summer camp. From a curious kindergartener amazed by jellyfish at the local aquarium, to a middle schooler finding the courage to go on her first overnight trip with her troop, Girl Scouts know the road to discovery starts

with exploration.

All proceeds from cookie sales stay with local councils and troops to power Girl Scouts' amazing experiences year-round.

How to purchase Girl Scout Cookies

- If you know a Girl Scout, reach out to her.
- If you don't know a Girl Scout, use the Girl Scout Cookie Finder by entering your ZIP code. There, you can find a troop selling at a nearby booth, or you can purchase cookies to be shipped directly to you from troops nationwide. This link can also be used to find a local booth, purchase cookies, and/or to donate cookies for local community causes.

• You can also text COOKIES to 59618 to stay informed about Girl Scout Cookies. *Continued on page five.*

Botanical Gardens Announces Brand-New Wedding And Event Venue—The Canopy

The Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens announced the name of their brand-new event space, The Canopy. This addition to the Botanical Gardens event venue creates new offerings, benefits, and highly-requested amenities for newly engaged couples



and those looking to celebrate any special occasion in one of Buffalo's most historic and unique places. The Canopy is available for booking now and is anticipated to open early 2027.

Nestled within the beauty of the Buffalo and Erie County *Continued on page six.*



The Canopy - Events Center.

Memories

From the Buffalo Rocket archives



January, 1994. UNBELIEVABLE...The Occupational Training Center, 1695 Elmwood Avenue, was the subject of an inquiry by the Mayor's Office because of serious allegations involving fire safety and falsified records. Shock and disbelief were the common reactions to a school plan that would evacuate the handicapped by throwing them out windows.

Local Weather

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15TH



Partly Cloudy
High 42°
Low 40°

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16TH



Rain/Snow
High 55°
Low 34°

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17TH



Rain
High 45°
Low 29°

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18TH



Rain/Snow
High 32°
Low 26°

MONDAY, JANUARY 19TH



Mostly Cloudy
High 33°
Low 31°

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20TH



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SPORTS
By Bill Snyder

Good Bye Highmark Stadium

This week, we're stepping away from the friendly confines of Shoshone Park to write about our football team, the Buffalo Bills. The Wild Card team with a 12-5 record after the regular season on January 4th went on the road for the first time in several years to face the AFC South Division winning Jacksonville Jaguars in the First round of the Playoffs.

Our quarterback, Josh Allen, put his magic cape on, over his shoulders in the second half and rescued our beloved Bills from the bowl of EverBank Stadium, despite the fact there were plenty of Bills Mafia on hand in support of the Red, white and blue uniforms. With just over a minute left in regulation, Allen took the snap at the one yard line and put the Bills back up on top to stay in a 27-24 victory.

The win gave the Bills their first victory on the road in their post season since 1993, when the team was first an AFC powerhouse during the Super Bowl Years with quarterback Jim Kelly. The 66 yard drive in ten plays took 2:59 minutes off the clock and was highlighted by a 36 yard pass to newly acquired receiver Brandin Cooks deep into the red zone of the Jaguars.

"You go into every season, and you're hoping and praying that there's no adversity, but we've all been around this long enough to know there's going to be adversity," said McDermott Sunday. "It's just a matter in what form it comes and how big it is."

McDermott certainly has been dealing with adversity this season with the tremendous amount of injuries the Bills have suffered this season thus far. Sunday, wide receiver Gabe Davis went down with a left leg inju-

ry and could be lost for the season. You add that to the injury suffered by Joshua Palmer against the Jets and you're down two starters on offense now.

Saturday, the Bills travel to Denver to take on the Broncos in the mile-high City. The AFC West winner finished with a 14-3 record and became the #1 seed in the postseason. Bo Nix is the new, young QB for the Broncos and the Bills are hoping to test the rookie signal caller with a pass rush from any angle at the line of scrimmage.

Despite five losses in the Regular season, the Bills got off to a good start, winning their first four games in a row, including three AFC teams. A 41-40 win in week one at home over the Baltimore Ravens. The victory started this final season at Highmark Stadium with

one of the most memorable games against a team that could have been a threat to the #1 seed for the Playoffs. A fumble by Derrick Henry in the fourth quarter recovered by linebacker Terrel Bernard helped seal the win. Josh Allen scored on a one yard run to close the gap before a winning field goal.

Game Five was circled on the Calendar for the Patriots since the season started. Wide Receiver Stefon Diggs came back to Buffalo and played a part in Buffalo's first loss of the season and the end of a 14 game home winning streak. A 52 yard field goal with 15 seconds remaining gave New England a 23-20 win and a former Patriots linebacker got a bigger win.

We could go on and on and write about each game but here's some truth. The Bills have given this City much to be happy about over the past seven or eight years.

Sean McDermott and Brandon Beane have turned this franchise around beginning with the draft that brought Josh Allen to town. While the Bills have yet to get into the Championship round of the playoffs like they did under former coach Marv Levy, it could be this season. With everything that has happened outside of Highmark Stadium from July of last year with the Training Camp episodes on National cable, the relationships between the O'Shei Children's Hospital, New Era Cap Company, Bills Mafia, "Holiday Touchdown" in East Aurora and the marriage of Josh Allen to Hailee Steinfield, we are witnessing some great things in this City and it sure would make someone like our former owner, Ralph C. Wilson happy that he took a chance to bring the AFL to Buffalo, NY in 1960.



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David Gallagher Publisher
Dennis Gallagher Managing Editor
Joe Bortz Columnist
John Raymond Graphic Artist

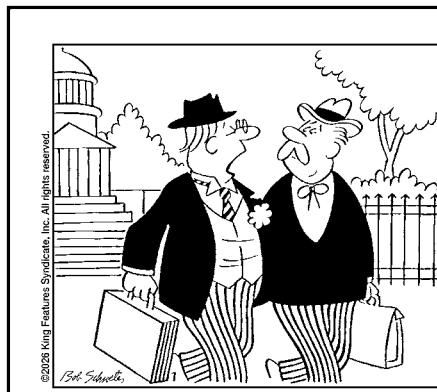
Daryl Gallagher Production Director
Bill Snyder Sports
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"Frankly, I'm against aid to education — we've got too many educated on hand as it is."

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Discuss

ENFORC

Inherent

ANTENI

Classic

GIANTEV

Plod

MCHEES

TODAY'S WORD

Answers on page five.



Seniority

I'm Divorced; Can I Get Benefits from my Ex-husband? - Ask Rusty

Dear Rusty: After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

Signed: A Divorced Spouse

Dear Divorced Spouse: The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects

benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his – if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for

over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse benefits reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled benefits as an ex-spouse. If your own SS retirement benefit at your FRA is less than half of your ex's FRA entitlement, you will be. To apply for those benefits you will need a copy of your divorce decree (and perhaps your marriage certificate), and your ex-husband's Social Security number (if you do not have his SSN, you can provide his date and place of birth and his parents' names, and SSA will likely be able to locate your ex's SS record).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

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Pop Quiz

Test your knowledge!

1) What is the Code of Hammurabi?

2. Which letters in the English version of Scrabble are worth 10 points each?

3) What is the name of Dr. Evil's cat in "Austin Powers"?

4) What is the common name for somnambulating?

5) What is the name of the town where "Veronica Mars" is set?

6) What is the first play written by an African American woman to be produced on Broadway?

7) What is the official language of Austria?

8) What is the smallest prime number?

9) What is the only U.S. state with a one-syllable name?

10) What is the home of the Norse gods?

Answers on page seven.

ADOPT A PET

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Buffalo Rocket

This Week's Featured Friend: **CRANBERRY**

OUR SHELTER IS

OVERFLOWING WITH DOGS!

Meet Cranberry! Honestly, this name is quite cute for this smaller breed gal that has a love for life, and would surely be a "life of the party gal" if she were a person. She has awesome coloring, a little stockier physique, but don't let that fool you..... she is packed with energy and determination. Cranberry does not present well in her kennel. She is itching to get out, do some laps in the yard, play some tug, and find ways to keep herself engaged and in check. She recently went on a run with a shelter volunteer, and he stated, she could easily do a 5K. Cranberry does know sit, and she will excel with further training to keep her little mind working.



If you would like to meet any of the adoptable dogs, please fill out an application online (if you are not already pre-approved), call the shelter, and leave a message with your name and phone number and the dog you're interested in. Have patience, and they will call you back when they can. From there, a time will be scheduled for you to come and meet the dog. Please be patient, and remember they are very short staffed at the moment. Applications can be found at <https://friendsofcbas.org/adopt>

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To see more great pets, visit: <http://www.petfinder.com/pet-search?shelterid=NY341>

FREE NORTH PARK PASSES: Jeremy Lee, 119 Russell St., 14214

It's Cookie Time!

Continued from page one. ie news. Learn more about the terms and conditions and the privacy policy.

•Community Cookie booth locations start Feb. 28.

Girl Scouts of WNY opens registration for 2026 summer camp season

Your adventure begins now! Registration for the 2026 Girl Scouts of WNY summer camp season is officially open. From day camps to overnight adventures and group camping experiences, this year's camp offerings provide girls with opportunities to explore the outdoors, try new activities, and build lifelong skills in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Girl Scout camp is designed to help girls grow in confidence, independence and leadership while having fun and making lasting friendships. Campers participate in hands-on experiences such

as hiking, outdoor exploration, creative activities, boating, ropes courses, and classic camp traditions that foster resilience, curiosity, and a sense of adventure. Through these experiences, campers are encouraged to step outside their comfort zones, discover new interests, and build skills they can carry with them beyond the summer.

Camp programs take place at Girl Scouts of WNY's scenic camp properties and are led by trained staff who prioritize safety, inclusion, and positive youth development. Each program is thoughtfully designed to meet girls where they are while empowering them to grow in courage, confidence and character.

Families are encouraged to visit gswny.org to learn more about the 2026 cookie and camp season, explore program options, and register for an unforgettable year of adventure

and discovery.

More about Girl Scouts of Western New York: Girl Scouts of Western New York serves girls and adult volunteers across the GSWNY jurisdiction, including Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming counties. The council's administrative service centers are located in Buffalo, Jamestown, Lockport and Rochester.

Girl Scouts bring their dreams to life and work together to build a better world. Through programs from coast to coast, Girl Scouts of all backgrounds and abilities can be unapologetically themselves as they discover their strengths and rise to meet new challenges whether they want to climb to the top of a tree or the top of their class, lace up their boots for a hike or advocate for cli-

mate justice, or make their first best friends. Backed by trusted adult volunteers, mentors, and millions of alums, Girl Scouts lead the way as they find their voice.

es and make changes that affect the issues most important to them.

To volunteer, reconnect, donate or join, visit www.gswny.org or call 1-888-837-6410.

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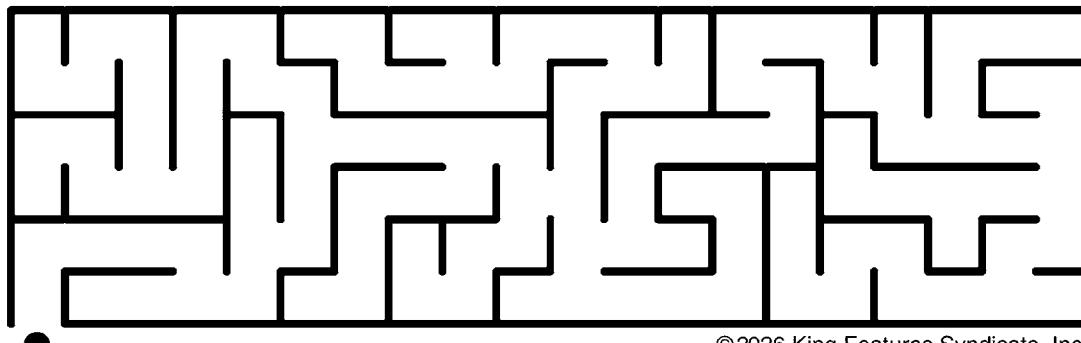
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Kids' Maze



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Answers on page seven.

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Evans Bank.....2670 Delaware Avenue
Fig Tree Patissiere.....3062 Delaware Avenue
Finishing Touches.....2820 Delaware Avenue
Ginnane Funeral Home.....3215 Delaware Avenue
Gloria J. Parks Community Ctr.....3242 Main Street
Gramma Mora's.....1465 Hertel Avenue
Great Clips.....2678 Delaware Avenue
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Hertel Park Senior Apartments.....1631 Hertel Avenue
Hertel Parker Liquors.....1859 Hertel Avenue
Home Taste (Chinese Cuisine).....3106 Delaware Avenue
Imagine Salon.....1527 Hertel Avenue
Macy's Place.....3100 Delaware Avenue
Joey's Place.....83 Niagara Street
Johnny's Meats.....1191 Hertel Avenue
Knights of Columbus.....1530 Kenmore Avenue
Korona Jewelers.....1588 Hertel Avenue
North Buffalo Community Ctr.....203 Sanders Road
North Buffalo Dental.....1600 Hertel Avenue
North Park Library.....975 Hertel Avenue

Parkside Community Center.....2318 Main Street
Paul Wolf Agency.....2890 Delaware Avenue
Plaka Restaurant.....2904 Delaware Avenue
Price Rite Market.....1716 Kenmore Avenue
Salon Avanti.....3086 Delaware Avenue
Salon Coronado.....2870 Delaware Avenue
Salon D Capelli.....3104 Delaware Avenue
Scissors.....1497 Hertel Avenue
Studio Sophia.....1094 Hertel Avenue
Sunoco Gas Station.....4505 Main Street
Theater Apts.....1065 Kenmore Avenue
Terrie's Workout Center.....1481 Hertel Avenue
Vince's Pizza.....1803 Kenmore Avenue
Wesselman's Inc.....564 Colvin Boulevard
Wellington Pub.....1541 Hertel Avenue

WEST SIDE

Baptist Manor.....276 Linwood Avenue
Buffalo Public Library.....Niagara at Porter
BMHA Housing.....245 Elmwood Avenue
CWJ Lock & Key.....183 Forest Avenue
Corner Store.....Forest & Grant
Delaware Apartments.....1217 Delaware Avenue
Dibble Hardware.....262 West Ferry Street
Elmwood Square Apts.....505 Elmwood Avenue
Fast Stop Food Mart.....326 Military Road
Frontier Liquor & Beverage Ctr.....121 Grant Street
First Niagara Bank.....Elmwood at West Utica
M&T Bank.....130 Grant Street
Military Coin Laundry.....1134 Military Road
Santasier's Restaurant.....1329 Niagara Street
Timon Towers.....1015 Delaware Avenue
Trinity Tower Apartments.....33 Linwood Avenue

West Market.....1032 West Avenue
West Side Community Center.....Vermont at Fargo

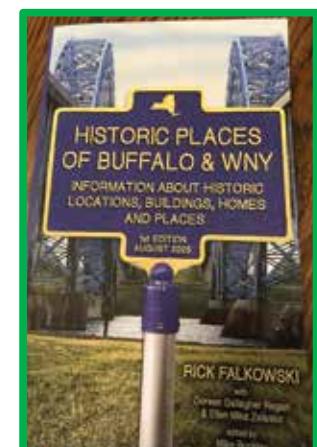
RIVERSIDE

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Fast Stop Food Mart.....236 Military Road
First Niagara Bank.....2141 Elmwood Avenue
First Niagara.....201 Amherst Street
Hearts Thrift Shop.....890 Tonawanda Street
House of Sandwich.....800 Tonawanda Street
M&T Bank.....788 Tonawanda Street
Niagara Deli Pizzeria.....2043 Niagara Street
Nickel City Bottle Return.....2209 Niagara Street
Northwest Buffalo Community Ctr.....155 Lawn Avenue
Pat's Pizzeria.....544 Ontario Street
Pizza Bella.....1133 Tonawanda Street
Riverside Market.....740 Tonawanda Street
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Tickets can be reserved at mtb.com/ThirdThursdays. There will be a limit of 10 tickets per group, with timed ticket entry still available between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. While tickets are honored all day, visitors are asked to arrive at the time they signed up for. Special programming on November 20 will feature several Zookeeper Talks including: 11 a.m. – Snow Leopard Keeper Talk at the Vanishing Animals North Exhibit 12 p.m. – Tawny Frogmouth & Wallaby Keeper Talk at the EcoStation Exhibit 2 p.m. – Bison Keeper Talk at the Bison Exhibit Current members of the Zoo are always admitted, even in the event of a "Third Thursday" sellout. Please note that rides, concessions and parking are not included in the free admission. As the Buffalo Zoo marks its 150th anniversary this year, the M&T Bank Presents Third Thursdays at the Buffalo Zoo program adds to the Zoo's ongoing celebrations, which are taking place through December 2025. M&T is a longtime partner of the Buffalo Zoo and remains the lead sponsor of the M&T Bank Rainforest Falls exhibit. To learn more about the Buffalo Zoo and its latest special events, visit buffalozoo.org.

Submit Your Community Event to
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M&T Bank Presents Third Thursdays at the Buffalo Zoo will continue for three Thursdays in 2026 – January 15, February 19 and March 19. To participate, guests will need to reserve their free tickets online before arriving at the Zoo.

Botanical Gardens Announces Brand-New Wedding And Event Venue— The Canopy

Continued from page one. Botanical Gardens campus comes its brand-new event space, The Canopy. With soaring ceilings and tree-top views, this new addition to the living museum and event venue guarantees that party guests will feel the lush embrace of nature. With its wall-to-wall windows and timbered frames, this nature-inspired event space will comfortably accommodate over 250 guests. The Canopy is made up of two rooms, the Palm Room and the Orchid Room, with customizable options that provide ease and comfort for any celebration.

This space will create unforgettable memories for newly engaged couples looking to host small or large weddings as well as those looking to host a bridal shower, baby shower, birthday party, corporate party, holiday celebration, team-building events and meetings, or any type of celebration or gathering.

With a growing demand for weddings, showers, special celebrations, and corporate gatherings, this historic transformation of the Botanical Gardens was intentionally designed to enhance comfort and functionality for event guests where current spaces in the living museum present limitations and challenges.

The Canopy is part of their larger expansion and renovation project that includes 16,000 square feet of new construction, and over 90,000 square feet of renovated and new outdoor gardens. Some of the features include:

Welcome Center — a brand new entrance/admission center.

The Canopy — made up of the Palm Room and the Orchid Room, a large, tropically-inspired, climate-controlled event space

Solarium — a reimagined greenhouse for special events

Terrace — an outdoor patio for events.

First-Look Garden — a private, secluded garden for first-looks and special moments

Central Courtyard — an

enclosed courtyard for protected plant collections and works of art

Additional guest parking lot — a North and South Parking Lot for daily visitors and event guests

Sustainability initiatives — solar panels, stormwater management and energy efficient designs

Accessibility initiatives — including a relocated entrance with a drop-off circle, all-gender and family-focused restrooms, a parents' room, visitor lockers, and many more guest-friendly amenities.

"The Botanical Gardens has long been a place where people have celebrated some of their most special and treasured days with us, and we are thrilled to bring even more exciting spaces and picture-perfect backdrops that will allow people to create beautiful life-long memories. Our community is lucky to have a place like The Canopy to celebrate and gather for any occasion in one of the most beautiful, whimsical, historic places in Buffalo," said President/CEO Erin Grajek.

"The Canopy has all of the charm of everything people love about the Botanical Gardens' conservatory with the modern amenities and luxe comfort needed to make any event absolutely perfect. I can't wait for our community to have the opportunity to be one of the first to have their wedding or special event in our new spaces," said Wedding and Event Manager, Asher Snell.

The Canopy is available for booking all event types now. Those interested in booking the brand-new event space should visit buffalogardens.com/the-canopy to inquire and book a tour. The Botanical Gardens team encourages inquiring well in advance for booking all event types as they expect dates and reservations to book quickly.

The community is encouraged to follow the Botanical Gardens and The Canopy on social media. For galleries, updates, and more, follow [@thecanopy](https://www.instagram.com/thecanopy)

buffalo and @buffalobotanicgardens on Instagram.

The Botanical Gardens' mission is to deepen the connection between people and plants through beautiful gardens and extraordinary experiences. This mission will be furthered by providing spaces where people can connect with both plants and each other. These new offerings and amenities are rooted in community connection and celebration. The establishment of these foundational programs and amenities will ensure that generations of families will continue to have a place for learning, gathering, celebrating, and connecting with nature for another 125 years and beyond.

About Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens

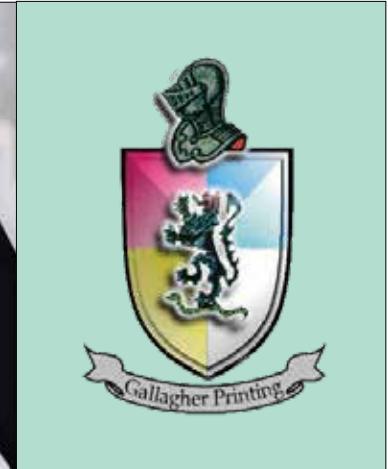
Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that welcomes all to enjoy its living plant collections, breathtaking conservatory, and educational programming. Opened in 1900, the Botanical Gardens is located within a park system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Support for the organization is provided by public funds from Erie County; the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; members; donors; and friends.



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