

Whitney celebrates with End of Summer Festival



By Michael Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The End of Summer Festival in Whitney on Aug. 24 did a great job of ushering in the imminent winds of autumn with this "ultimate summer sendoff." It included a farmers' market, petting zoo, bouncy castles, face painting and temporary tattoos, water fun, kids' yoga, and arts and crafts. To cater to attendees' taste buds, there were candy apples, cotton candy, freezies, popcorn, snow cones and a barbecue featuring hot dogs, hamburgers and drinks. Kimberly Gorman with the Whitney Recreation Committee comments on this end of season fun. Gorman told Bancroft This Week on Aug. 20 that the festival was coming together wonderfully, and that they were at the finish line with small details and coordination of volunteers. "We have been planning this event since just after the Canada Day event," she says. The vendors for the farmer's market, according to Gorman include but are not limited to; Jake's Bakes, South of Algonquin, Anything Wood, The Crows' Curio, The South Algonquin Business Alliance, Lyla's Homemade Cards and she says there may be some woodworking vendors. Zoo to You will also be participating, bringing 12 to 15 animals for the kids and kids of all ages to see. "[They] include a sugar glider, caiman, skinny pig, and hedgehog to name a few," she says. For the water fun, Gorman says they'll have a slip and slide and sprinkler set up for the kids to enjoy. There will also be kids' yoga. "[It] is being done by Shelly of Inspired by Nature, a local who teaches yoga and offers a wide range of classes and times, something for everyone. The arts and crafts are being supervised/done by volunteers," she says. They will also be offering up a barbecue, with hot dogs for \$4, hamburgers for \$4 and cheeseburgers for \$5. Drinks on hand will be pop and water for \$1 and Gatorade for \$2. Gorman says they are hoping the event will have a great turnout and that it will be fun for the entire family. "This is but the first annual End of Summer Festival. We are hoping to make it an annual tradition with new activities and vendors each coming year. I would also like to thank our event sponsors; Algonquin Accomodations, K Fuller Creations, Little Bear Bakes in the Woods, Algonquin Freedom, SABA, Four Corners Algonquin, and Inspired by Nature. As well, as all of those who have volunteered their time at the event. We could not make this event happen without them," she says. The day of the festival on Aug. 24, Gorman thought there were a lot more people there than she'd anticipated but it was a good problem to have. "The kids are loving it. Everybody's stepped up to help so it's a real team effort. It's been lots of fun and it turned out the weather is great. We're hoping to make this an annual thing, so the second last Saturday every August and just build on it, get more vendors to come out, different activities and make sure everything is inclusive for everybody," she says. Andrew, Mario and Ola were there, and Ola said it was going really well. "It's great to have a last hurrah for the kids before school starts," she says. Beverly, who was there with her nephew John, also thought it was good. "It's nice when small communities come together and make stuff happen, especially for the kids. There's not a lot that really goes on for them anymore.

When we were kids, there was a lot more to do," she says. Kelli Nicholas was there with her grandchildren, and thought the event was fantastic. She's the manager of the LCBO in Whitney. "So, it's nice to see an event like this where people come out for the community. This is the first time they've had this type of event at the end of the year. It's a lot of work and those volunteers did a fantastic job," she says. The Whitney Recreation Committee posted the following message on their Facebook page on Aug. 26, giving a heartfelt thanks to everyone for making the festival shine. "We are thrilled to extend our deepest thanks to each of you for your incredible support and involvement in this year's End of Summer Festival! Your contributions were absolutely vital in creating such a memorable and successful event," they said. The rec committee thanked their generous sponsors, whose support and commitment helped bring their vision to life. They said they were immensely grateful for their investment in the South Algonquin community and the festival's success. They also thanked their dedicated volunteers, whose hard work, enthusiasm, and countless hours made the event run smoothly and joyously. They said their efforts truly made a difference and are deeply appreciated. And lastly, they thanked their wonderful community participants, whose presence, excitement, and engagement were the highlight of the festival. Seeing their community come together and enjoy the festivities, said the committee, was a testament to the strength and spirit of our neighborhood. "Thank you once again for your incredible support. The End of Summer Festival was a fantastic celebration because of you, and we look forward to creating more wonderful memories together in the future!" Gorman told Bancroft This Week on Aug. 26 that overall, the event was a huge success. "It was a larger turnout than anticipated," she says. "I look forward to planning more events for the community in the future."