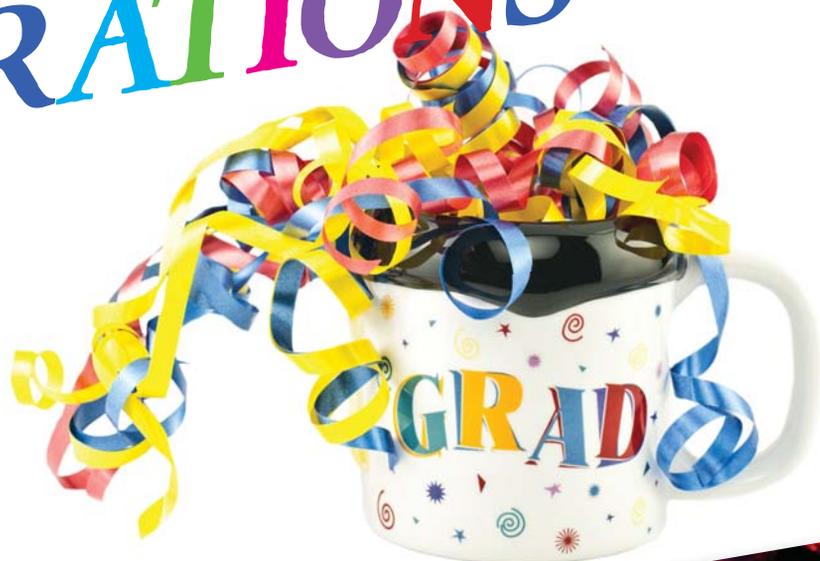


SUMMER CELEBRATIONS

By Amanda Lloyd

We are all rejoicing that the sunny skies are back in Northeast Ohio, and this summer will bring many more reasons to throw a party — like birthdays and graduations.



Here are some ways to have fun throughout this season.

Moving On Up — Celebrate Your Graduate

Infuse your graduation party with a flavor of fun that everyone can enjoy. From pre-school to post-secondary, celebrate your child's educational milestones with these unique party ideas.

Have your guests enjoy a dinner-and-movie experience. Cater the event with a summertime picnic from Ivan's Diner and Deli in Fairlawn, which has a wide selection of sandwiches, or try a gourmet food truck like Fired Up Taco Truck or Sweet! The Mobile Cupcakery to enjoy favorite foods on wheels.

Then, rent an inflatable big screen from FunFlicks and you've got your own backyard movie theater. Let the guest of honor choose his/her favorite movie to watch outside with friends and family.

Enhance the entire movie theater experience by renting a popcorn machine and provide individual bags of popcorn and boxes of candy like Junior Mints and Twizzlers. Top it off with movie ticket-inspired invitations and a red carpet entry for the graduate and guests.

For your artistically inclined student, consider renting out a coffee shop or gallery like 78th Street Studios in Cleveland where graduates can display their artwork or school projects, which they probably pulled a few all-nighters to finish.

If you're looking for an action-packed party, venues such as the Federated Family Life Center in Chagrin Falls offer plenty of space for your guests. Enjoy the large gym for basketball, volleyball, games and crafts. Additional rooms are available for serving food, cake and celebrating.

A Birthday Blast to Remember

If you don't have the time or budget to make it look like Pinterest exploded in your backyard, here are some unique ideas for your child's next birthday celebration that will be sure to delight the guest of honor.



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One theme resonating across the birthday party circuit is Disney's movie "Frozen," according to Cleveland party planner Laura Broyles, co-owner of Tiaras and Treasures Parties.

"Everyone seems very excited about all things 'Frozen,'" she said. "It has been so popular



that we have added a new 'Frozen' Tea Party that includes a 'Frozen'-themed craft, 'Frozen' games and activities, and a coronation ceremony."

For something on the warmer side, your little hero will love C Town Fire Truck Adventures when they roll up to the party in an authentic fire engine. The refurbished 1983 fire engine served the City of Lakewood for 30 years and is now a favorite for birthday parties and event transportation.

For the sports fan, Northeast Ohio has plenty of sports facilities that offer birthday parties for your little athlete. The Akron RubberDucks, Lake County Captains (Eastlake) and the Lake Erie Crushers (Avon) offer party spaces, along with special treats and surprises such as mascot appearances and having the crowd sing "Happy Birthday!" to them.



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Memory Makers

Here are a few ideas to implement early on in your child's academic career that will leave you with memories to last a lifetime.

Plant a Tree. Plant a tree with your child on the day of his/her pre-school/kindergarten graduation. Take a photo of him/her standing next to it, and then every year thereafter until high school and/or college graduation day. Frame the photos for display at his/her graduation celebration to show how they, and the tree, have grown.

Write a Letter. Write a letter to your child at the end of every school year. Insert a small amount of money into each envelope, or \$1 for first grade to \$12 their senior year, and present it to them at their graduation party. They will end up with more than \$250, plus 12 letters to get them through any homesick moments once they are on campus. ♡

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Look for us:

May 3

March for Babies - Lock 3/Akron

May 25

Akron RubberDucks game

May 31

Medina Farmer's Market -
Medina square 10 a.m.-5 p.m.



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