

Wood River Parks & Rec releases statement after breastfeeding incident at Aquatic Center

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
June 16 2017 11:56 AM



WOOD RIVER - A mother's visit to the Wood River Aquatic Center with her 14-month-old daughter to beat the summer heat turned into an upsetting situation Thursday.

Brei Theisen, of Alton, was breastfeeding her child at the public pool when she said one of the facility's managers approached her.

"He said, 'Can you be more discrete and if I could go breastfeed elsewhere,' Theisen said.

Theisen, taken back by the comment, said she asked the manager if they tell other people eating in the food area to cover up, or if she was supposed to "starve her child because someone is uncomfortable with themselves."

The woman took to her Facebook page and shared her experience.

"I'm so unbelievably speechless about the whole situation," she said. "People wonder why moms are so scared to breastfeed in public."

[Read more of Theison's remarks about the incident here.](#)

The law the woman refers to is 740 ILCS 137, Section 10, known as the Right to Breastfeed Act. The law states, "a mother may breastfeed her baby in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be, irrespective of whether the nipple of the breast is uncovered or incidental to the breastfeeding."

On Friday, the Wood River Parks and Recreation Department released the following statement about the incident:

"The Wood River Aquatic Center prides itself on being a family-friendly environment. We regret any controversy that was caused by the occurrences yesterday.

"The Aquatic Center does not discriminate against breast feeding mothers, and allows breast feeding mothers to nurse their children at our facility in accordance with the law.

"Our manager and staff have been fully briefed on the law and will incorporate the law into our training for all employees immediately.

"We apologize to the mother and child for any inconvenience we may have caused them."

The enforcement provision of the Right to Breastfeed Act states that a woman could take private legal action after being denied this right, stating "a woman who has been denied the right to breastfeed by the owner or manager of a public or private location, other than a private residence or place of worship, may bring an action to enjoin future denials of the right to breastfeed."