



“Small Town – Big World” multicultural event will celebrate our diverse community

April 20 2018 11:32 AM

ALTON - On April 21st 2018, Alton Main Street will present the second annual daylong cultural celebration called “Small Town – Big World”. The experience will feature a variety of activities from 9:00am until 9:00pm which represent our wonderfully diverse community in fourteen establishments across Alton. The event is a homegrown effort with members of the public contributing elements of ethnic cuisine, traditional clothing,

world music, folk art, dance performances, martial arts, sports, and information from faith communities.



“This will be a very exciting day for Alton to demonstrate that we are an inclusive community where people embrace and celebrate the heritage that makes each of us unique,” said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street, “An international event has been one of the biggest requests we’ve heard from the public, and Alton Main Street is happy to be able to provide the framework that brings everyone together.”

A passport will direct attendees on this self-guided exploration, and a schedule of events can be found on the Events page of www.DowntownAlton.com as well as www.facebook.com/AltonMainStreet.

Details of the activities at each venue are as follows:

At Little Mexico Restaurant, enjoy a wonderful authentic menu, sugar skull face painting, salsa dancing and singing with the Alton High School Spanish Club, and try your hand at a traditional folk art called metal tooling with the Marquette Catholic High

School art class. Learn about the Ancient Mayan culture of Mexico & Guatemala, see examples of traditional clothing, and color a Mayan mask with the Mustard Seed Peace Project.

At Jacoby Arts Center, Raw Earth will be performing a special sound and dance experience of Middle East meets Eastern European in the neighboring park. Inside the gallery, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) will provide the opportunity to "Meet a Muslim". Over conversation you will enjoy ethnic finger foods, and can have your name written in Arabic calligraphy. Females can check out a "hijab selfie" station, as well as a henna station to get their hands or feet decorated with henna, which is common at weddings.

River Bend Yoga will host Indian classical dancing by Soorya Performing Arts, an open discussion on religion in daily Indian life, and a presentation of traditional Indian garments.

Hayner Public Library Downtown will feature a display of books and other resources on the countries and cultures highlighted during "Small Town - Big World." If you would like additional resources, the Hayner staff is happy to assist you in your research anytime.

The Old Bakery Beer Company will host the Rogalsky family's native Canada inside the restaurant with a special menu of poutine, wild rice soup, ketchup chips, Nanaimo bars (from LuciAnna's Pastries), maple syrup beer, and maple syrup cocktails. Activities include Canada-themed coloring sheets, a broadcast of the NHL Network, and an appearance by the St. Louis Curling Club who will have real stones and brooms to show, and can instruct attendees on throwing form. In Old Bakery Beer's event space will be a melting pot of presentations by Piasa Martial Arts, traditional dancing and clothing of the Philippines, Capoeira - a Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music, and Panamanian dance group "Grupo Folklorico Panameño.

Outside It's Raining Zen at Mineral Springs Mall, sit around the tipi and listen to Native American drumming, history and stories told by Coyote Chris Sutton, member of the Red Cedar Circle of SW IL. Pose for a photo with the painted horse Cochise, and take home a free dream catcher with any purchase. Learn from a local historian while viewing his extensive collection of authentic Native American artifacts. Zen will also host an activity station from the Center for American Archaeology where you can learn about the way of life of the prehistoric people of our area. Plus, try your hand at spear throwing with atlatls and flintknapping.

At Lucianna's Pastries, listen to live French and Celtic music played on a hammered dulcimer and learn a French phrase with Alton High School French students. Traditional pastries frangiepane and filled croissants are on the menu.

New venues to this year's celebration include the YWCA of Alton, where Alton's Black history will be shared through spoken word and art displays. Guests will also enjoy folk songs and dancing, praise and worship dancing, and learn about the Art of Universal Language youth mentoring program.

Maeva's Coffee has jumped aboard, offering a variety of Argentinian street food on their outdoor grill, served on the patio weather permitting, which will be complimented by a South American cocktail bar. In addition, their pastry case will be filled with colaciones, pionono, alfajores, and other delicious South American desserts. This brunch experience will be complimented by the sounds of live finger-style guitar music and dancing from the Colombian Folkloric group.

Morrison's Irish Pub will present Mila Raye Duffy performing traditional Irish tunes. The special of the day is corned beef hash with an over easy egg on top, and don't forget that they can pour you a perfect pint of Guinness.

The Childrens' Museum at Haskell House will open their doors for the day to present activities for families with elementary school children, including projects, artifacts, props, and special visitors to celebrate cultures from around the world. At this venue you can also pick up information about hosting an exchange student.

Olive Oil Marketplace will be representing Italy, partnering with State Street Market to sample two Italian Wines (Monsalaia & Valamaca) from their collection paired with an Italian Pasta and Vegetable dish made with their Coratina Italian Extra Virgin Olive Oil. During the event, a special discount will be offered on 375ml Coratina bottles.

Germania Brew Haus will present traditional German appetizers, plus you can check out authentic dirndl and lederhosen clothing from the owners' time in Germany.

Argosy Casino will wrap up the evening in their Music Hall with music from the Leaky Tiki Band who specialize in Caribbean, Tropical, Salsa, and Reggae music.

Alton Main Street thanks our sponsors, without whom we could not present free community gatherings that enhance our quality of life: Simmons Hanly Conroy, Alton Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau, AdVantage News, The Telegraph, WBGZ, and Riverbender.com.