

A black and white photograph of a person running on a dirt path through a wooded area. The path is lined with large trees, and the scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path. The person is in the center of the frame, running away from the camera. The background shows more trees and a building in the distance.

project
best life
BY ROSWELL PARK

NEWSLETTER

September 2023

A person is riding a mountain bike on a trail through a forest. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, and the trees are filled with autumn foliage. The scene is captured in a dark, moody style with a green tint.

01

Buffalo's Best Fall Bike Trails:

Where Fitness Meets Foliage

BY EMMA HARTMAN

Not only are the vibrant colors of autumn a breathtaking form of beauty, but also a symbolic reminder of how quickly time passes. Make the most of this rapidly changing season by enjoying scenic bike rides throughout Western New York. As an excellent form of exercise that duals as a practical mode of transportation, there's no better way to fully immerse yourself in your surroundings than biking.

The leaves will soon be changing, so check out this list of bike paths (categorized by surrounding landscape) that will have you falling deeper in love with riding.

CITYSIDE

Thanks in large part to the transformative designs of Frederick Olmsted, Buffalonians can be surrounded by nature while still enjoying the liveliness that comes with city living. Experience this duality by riding along these urban paths.

Delaware Park: Hoyt Lake Loop Buffalo, Erie County

Distance: 1 mile

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Full-view of Hoyt Lake and its wide array of water activities

Delaware Park: Meadow Loop Buffalo, Erie County

Distance: 1.8 miles

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Close proximity to post-ride activities and refreshments (the Buffalo Zoo, The Juicery, recreational fields, etc.)

Jesse Kregal Pathway Buffalo, Erie County

Distance: 4 miles

Trail Ends: Several access points, including the Buffalo History Museum parking lot by the Japanese Gardens & Niagara St. near Army Corp of Engineers

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: "The Vision of Olmsted" Mural at McKinley High School; iconic landmark signs and statues along the path

RAILS TO TRAILS

Experience neighborhood revitalization firsthand by taking your bike on a rail to trail adventure.

Cheektowaga Historic

Rails to Trails

Cheektowaga, Erie County

Distance: 2.3 miles (1.5 miles of which run next to an active rail line)

Trail Ends: Union Rd. & Hurd St./ Medina St. intersection

Path Type(s): Asphalt & concrete | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Access to Raymond Park for additional recreational activities; restrooms available along the path

Lancaster Heritage Trail | Lancaster, Erie County

Distance: 4 miles

Trail Ends: Walter Winter Dr. & Town Line Rd.

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Informational kiosk; views of farm fields; wildlife sightings

**There are no bathrooms or drinking fountains along this path.*

Peanut Line Trail

Amherst & Clarence, Erie County

Distance: 6.1 miles

Trail Ends: Transit Rd. (Amherst) & Salt Rd. (Clarence)

Path Type(s): Dirt & grass | Intermediate level

Noteworthy Features: Connects to Meadowlakes Park & Memorial Park

Tonawanda Rails to Trails Tonawanda, Erie County

Distance: 4.7 miles

Trail Ends: Kenmore Ave. & State St.

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Connects to North Buffalo Rails to Trails; runs through commercial & residential areas

WATERFRONT

From lakes to rivers to canals, Western New York has no shortage of waterfront views, tying together various aspects of nature during your fall foliage quest.

Erie Canalway Trail: Amherst to Lockport

Distance: 7 miles

Trail Ends: Buffalo Niagara Heritage Village (Amherst) & "Flight of Five" Combined Locks (city of Lockport)

Path Type(s): Asphalt, concrete, crushed stone | Intermediate level

Noteworthy Features: Multi-environment route (woods, fields, waterviews); access to historical Lockport locks and Erie Canal Discovery Center

Kiwanis Park Trail Lewiston, Niagara County

Distance: 8 miles

Trail Ends: Joseph Davis State Park & Fort Niagara State Park

Path Type(s): Asphalt & concrete | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Views of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario

Niagara Scenic Parkway Trail Niagara Falls, Niagara County

Distance: 3.9 miles

Trail Ends: Main St. & Devil's Hole State Park

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner level

Noteworthy Features: Views of the Niagara River; extended ride option through Niagara Gorge Rim Trail

Outer Harbor & Greenway Nature Trail

Buffalo, Erie County

Distance: 1.2 miles

Trail Ends: Fuhrmann Blvd. & Wilkeson Pointe Park

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner Level

Noteworthy Features: Bird & other wildlife spotting; map and historic signs; close proximity to Lakeside Bike Park & Tiff Nature Preserve; restroom access in Wilkeson Pointe Park

Shoreline Trail

Tonawanda, Erie County

Distance: 21.7 miles

Trail Ends: Niawanda Park & Outer Harbor

Path Type(s): Asphalt | Beginner Level

Noteworthy Features: Scenic ride along Lake Erie; access to Two Mile Creek Greenway and Tonawanda Rails to Trails; restrooms, drinking water, and picnic area amenities

Note: Levels were determined based upon path type, with asphalt being more beginner-friendly and crushed stone/gravel paths being geared more towards intermediate level.

For more information on these and other bike paths, visit: [TrailLink.com](https://www.traillink.com)





02

Wellness Benefits of Expressive Arts

BY DANIEL LENDZIAN

In a fast-paced world filled with daily stressors and demands, finding ways to nourish our mental and emotional well-being is crucial. One avenue that has gained significant recognition for its therapeutic benefits is the expressive arts. This diverse category encompasses various creative outlets like painting, writing, drawing, pottery, and more, and offers individuals a unique means of self-expression and healing.

These art forms can provide a safe space for individuals to release pent-up emotions and experiences. Painting, for instance, allows for the transfer of feelings onto the canvas, enabling a cathartic experience. Similarly, writing can serve as a therapeutic outlet, giving voice to thoughts and emotions that may be difficult to express verbally. Engaging in creative activities like drawing, pottery, or sculpting allows individuals to enter a state of flow, where they become fully absorbed in the process. This meditative state promotes relaxation, reduces stress levels, and fosters a sense of calmness. The rhythmic motions involved in these activities have been likened to mindfulness practices, helping to ground individuals in the present moment.

Expressive arts can help facilitate self-exploration, allowing individuals to gain deeper insights into their thoughts, feelings, and inner world. Through the act of creation, individuals often develop hidden talents, uncover new perspectives, and obtain a greater sense of self-awareness. This process of self-discovery can lead to personal growth and a stronger sense of identity. Engaging in expressive arts can also improve one's ability to communicate emotions and ideas effectively. This is particularly beneficial for individuals who may find it challenging to articulate their feelings and may help bolster self-confidence.

If someone were looking for a place to start, taking a group class at a local studio might be a great way to begin. Participating in group art classes, such as painting or pottery classes, can help one find a sense of belonging and community. Classes provide a shared experience and a platform for people to connect with like-minded individuals, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The wellness benefits of expressive arts are vast and far-reaching. Whether through painting, writing, drawing, pottery, or other creative outlets, individuals can experience profound emotional, psychological, and even physical healing. Below are four local studios that offer classes and experiences for Buffalonians, and can help them live their best "expressive" lives!

Terra Clay Studio
2954 Delaware Ave
Kenmore, NY 14217
(716) 332-0233
info@terraclaystudio.com
Terra Clay Studio

There is something for everyone at Terra Clay Studio. From beginning classes, to open studio time for advanced practitioners, this is the perfect place to try the art of pottery. Get your hands dirty, relieve some stress, and create something beautiful and lasting here.

Gleam & Glimmer Stained Glass Studio
34 Webster Street
North Tonawanda, NY 14120
(716) 213-0472
suzanne@gleamglimmer.com
Gleam & Glimmer Stained Glass Studio

Gleam & Glimmer is a beautiful showplace for the art of stained glass. Their monthly calendar, published on their website, has single project classes that are affordable and fun. Make eye-catching pieces of stained glass that will add cheer and whimsy to your home.

Have Ewe Any Wool Yarn Shop
4551 Main Street
Amherst, NY 14226
(716) 839-7800
info@haveeweanywoolyarn-shop.com
Have Ewe Any Wool

Like a great cup of tea, there is something meditative and relaxing about knitting and crocheting, but also so stimulating. Offerings include beginner knitting, beginner crochet. "toe up socks," and how to read a chart. Classes are in person, and kept small, so book them early to ensure a spot.

Western New York Book Arts Center
468 Washington Street
Buffalo, NY 14203
(716) 348-1430
curious@wnybookarts.org
Western New York Book Arts Center

There are so many classes to ignite your creativity at The Western New York Book Arts Center. Screen printing, letter press, block printing, origami, and book binding are just some of the classes offered here. Become a member of the organization to take even more advantage of their offerings and classes.



03

Financial Wellness:

Budgeting and Planning for
a Stress-Free Future

BY JESSICA MARINELLI



Financial well-being is often a cornerstone of personal happiness and a critical element in living our best lives. From the euphoria of receiving our first paycheck to the complexities of buying a home or planning for retirement, our financial journeys deeply influence our quality of life. For millennials, this journey comes with unique challenges like burgeoning student debt, rising housing and rental costs, stagnant wage growth, the aftermath of the Great Recession, and changing living expenses over the past two decades. Amid these challenges, the importance of financial wellness, in the form of strategic budgeting and planning, becomes paramount.

Why Financial Well-being Matters

Financial wellness is not just about having money. It's about the peace of mind that comes from knowing you can handle economic challenges. People who maintain financial health:

- **Sleep Better at Night:** Money remains the top cause of stress, especially for millennials grappling with unprecedented financial hurdles.
- **Enjoy Better Physical Health:** Less stress often equates to better physical health, decreasing the risk of ailments like hypertension and heart diseases.
- **Have More Freedom:** Financial well-being provides the liberty to make choices that align with individual desires, whether it's traveling, pursuing higher education, or investing in passions.

Millennial Financial Facts: A Closer Look

- **Overwhelming Student Loan Debt:** Millennials face a student loan debt crisis with the U.S. total surpassing \$1.5 trillion.
- **Challenging Housing Market:** Skyrocketing home prices and rental costs in many urban areas have made both homeownership and renting more difficult.
- **Stagnant Wage Growth:** While living costs rise, wage growth hasn't kept pace, reducing purchasing power over the years.
- **The Great Recession's Aftermath:** Many millennials began their careers during a recession, impacting job opportunities and earning potential.
- **Evolving Living Expenses:** Over the past 20 years, costs such as healthcare, childcare, and education have surged, demanding more of millennials' incomes.

Strategies for Budgeting and Saving

Start with the Basics – The 50/30/20 Rule: This rule suggests you allocate:

- 50% of your income for necessities (rent, utilities, groceries).
- 30% for discretionary items (dining, entertainment).
- 20% into savings.

This framework is flexible and can be adjusted based on individual needs.

- Use Technology to Your Advantage: There are countless apps and online tools designed to help you track your spending, create a budget, and set savings goals.
- Prioritize an Emergency Fund: An unforeseen event can disrupt anyone's financial stability. Aim to save three to six months' worth of living expenses in an accessible account.
- Pay Yourself First: Treat savings as a non-negotiable monthly expense. Set up automatic transfers to ensure you're consistently putting money away.
- Understand Your Spending Triggers: Are you an emotional shopper? Recognizing what prompts you to spend unnecessarily is the first step to control impulse buying.
- Plan for Big Purchases: If you anticipate a major purchase in the near future, like a car or vacation, start saving in advance. This approach reduces reliance on credit.

For cash-strapped millennials looking to save, it can be daunting to find a starting point given the myriad of challenges they face. It's essential to remember that consistency is key. Even if you're saving small amounts, doing so consistently can lead to substantial savings over time. A mindset that centralizes financial discipline and awareness can set the stage for long-term financial wellness.

Living Your Best Life

By committing to financial wellness, you're investing in your future well-being. This isn't about sacrificing current joys, but rather about finding a balance that allows for today's pleasures without compromising tomorrow's peace.

Remember, everyone's financial journey is unique. With the right tools, mindset, and resources, financial wellness is within everyone's reach. Embrace the journey towards a well-balanced financial life, and in doing so, ensure that your future remains bright and full of possibilities.





04

Mindful Buffalo:

Fall Meditation and Yoga Retreats
for Inner Peace

BY DANIEL LENDZIAN

Buffalo, a city known for its vibrant culture and natural beauty, is increasingly becoming a hub for holistic wellness practices. Among the various methods that have gained popularity, meditation, yoga, and forest bathing stand out as powerful tools for nurturing mental, physical, and emotional well-being. The significance of these practices cannot be ignored, and many people have recognized how they contribute to a healthier, more balanced lifestyle.

Meditation, an ancient practice that has stood the test of time, offers a sanctuary of tranquility amidst our fast-paced lifestyles. Buffalo, with its array of parks, waterfronts, and green spaces, provides ample opportunities for individuals to find a peaceful corner for their practice. Meditation allows Buffalonians to connect with their inner selves, reducing stress and anxiety levels while promoting mental clarity and emotional stability.

Local meditation communities and studios offer a range of techniques, from mindfulness meditation to transcendental meditation, catering to various preferences and needs. These gatherings provide a sense of community, fostering a supportive environment for individuals on their wellness journey.

In addition, numerous yoga studios and outdoor classes are scattered throughout the city, offering residents a chance to engage in physical exercise, breathwork, and mindfulness simultaneously. The practice of yoga promotes flexibility, strength, and balance, not only in the physical sense but also in terms of mental and emotional well-being.

For those that long for the great outdoors, Buffalo's proximity to the stunning Niagara Falls and its lush green surroundings make it an ideal location for forest bathing. This practice, deeply rooted in Japanese tradition, involves immersing oneself in nature and mindfully engaging with the environment. Forest bathing provides a unique opportunity for residents to disconnect from technology, reconnect with the natural world, and rejuvenate their spirits.

The city's parks and nature reserves, such as Delaware Park and Tiff Nature Preserve, serve as sanctuaries for forest bathing enthusiasts. Buffalo's commitment to preserving green spaces allows its residents to reap the profound benefits of this practice, including reduced stress, improved mood, and enhanced immune function.

The adoption of meditation, yoga, and forest bathing reflects a growing awareness of the importance of holistic well-being. These practices empower individuals to take charge of their mental, physical, and emotional health, fostering a stronger sense of community and connection among residents. Below are four places in Buffalo that can help those searching for inner reflection and peace.

Himalayan Institute Buffalo

841 Delaware Ave
Buffalo, NY 14209
(716) 883-2223
info@hibuffalo.org
Himalayan Institute Buffalo

If someone is new to yoga and meditative practices, the Himalayan Institute is a great place to start. They have many class options, from beginner to advanced practices, as well as in-person and online offerings. The friendly and knowledgeable staff are amazing resources and practitioners, and can help anyone more forward on their mindfulness and yoga journey.

Shakti Yoga

133 Grant Street
Buffalo, NY 14213
Phone: (716) 884-YOGA
michellegigante108@gmail.com
Shakti Yoga

Shakti translates from Sanskrit (ancient Indian) to “creative force toward consciousness.” Master Yogi Michelle Gigante, along with a supportive team hold space for people to come together to experience the rhythm of breath in their sun-filled three thousand square foot studio with heated floors and high ceilings. The class schedule and offerings vary from Shakti Flow, gentle yoga with meditation, and mantra meditation, and promote internal balance, mental clarity and physical restoration.

The Japanese Garden

1 Museum Ct
Buffalo, NY 14216
The Japanese Garden

Go for a forest bath, or simply take a contemplative walk through The Japanese Garden in Delaware Park. The lush green space was formed in December 1962, when the city of Buffalo joined the United States Sister City International initiative by connecting with Kanazawa, Japan, who helped spearhead the renovations in 1996. Each year, the garden is home to the Buffalo Cherry Blossom Festival, which seeks to build awareness of Japanese culture and celebrate the blossoming of the 40 Cherry Blossom trees in the garden.

Lillion Batchelor Contemplative Garden

Broderick Park
1170 Niagara St, Buffalo, NY
14213
Buffalo, NY

Lillion Batchelor Contemplative Garden

Reconnect with the outdoors, and do a little service to help others find some inner peace. On Saturday, October 14, from at 10 am, Urban Roots Cooperative Garden market is working with the Friends of Brodrick to reclaim and replant the Contemplative Garden that was originally designed to recognize the work of Lillion Batchelor. They are looking to clean and amend the garden so that native species can be planted in the spring and will bring back the beauty of the site. Lillion Batchelor helped bring national and international atten-

tion to the pocket park at the foot of West Ferry Street and its role in the Underground Railroad. This contemplative space was a place for the community to stop and reflect on the importance of the site, and its restoration will ensure that many will be able to enjoy it in the future. Email info@urbanroots.org for more information.





05

Fall Fun Runs and 5Ks for a Fit Season

BY LIBERTY DARR

As the leaves and season begin to change, there is almost nothing better for your physical and mental health than being able to lace up your running shoes and get outside! Participating in a group running or walking excursion not only gets your blood pumping, but it also is a great place to meet new friends or connect with a community you may have never met before.

Here are just a few happening here in the 716!

Run for Rhinos

Friday, Sept. 22 @ 6PM

Get active for a great cause this World Rhino Day for the 4th Annual Run for Rhinos Presented by our ProZoo Board and Reimer Home Services on Friday, September 22, at 6:00 PM.

The race begins in Delaware Park and ends in the Buffalo Zoo. Registration includes a race t-shirt and packet and admission to the Zoo on September 23! Proceeds support the Buffalo Zoo and the International Rhino Foundation, a leading international rhino conservation organization.

SPCA's Paws in the Park

Saturday, Sept. 23 @ 9:00 am

30 years and still walking strong! Join us for the best walk you will take all year at the SPCA's Paws in the Park on Saturday, September 23, at Beaver Island State Park!

Your participation will make a lifesaving difference for pets and wildlife in need. The funds raised

for Paws in the Park will provide animals with shelter and lifesaving medical care, adopt pets into loving homes, rescue animals from cruelty and neglect, and so much more.

Buffalo Out of the Darkness Walk

Saturday, Sept. 23 @ 8:30AM
44 Prime St, Buffalo 14202

The Community Walks, held in hundreds of cities across the country, are the core of the Out of the Darkness movement, which began in 2004. These events give people the courage to open up about their own connections to the cause, and a platform to create a culture that's smarter about mental health.

Wellness Walks presented by Independent Health

Every Thursday through December starting at 10AM. Please call 716-825-6397 to confirm walk will be taking place.

Drop by Tiffy Nature Preserve every Thursday and join us for a casual volunteer-led tour of the Preserve.

Cost: FREE but a \$3 donation per person requested.



Maggie Lee Memorial 5K Run

Sat, Oct. 7, 2023 @ 8:30 AM
2 Nottingham Terrace
Saint George Church
Buffalo, NY US 14216

Maggie Lee was a counselor at the Epilepsy Association of WNY, a community activist, a friend and she had Epilepsy. In June of 2001, she died suddenly as a result of injuries sustained during a seizure. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder resulting in recurring seizures. Epilepsy affects one out of every 100 persons living in WNY. Proceeds from the event help to support the outreach, awareness and education programs of the Epilepsy Association of WNY.

Monster Scramble 5K/10K

Sunday, Oct 15 @ 9:30AM
Holy Cross Cemetery, 2900
South Park Ave, Lackawanna

In October, adults and children alike will lace up their running shoes to participate in the National MS Society's chip-timed, Halloween-themed 5K/10K fundraising event. Full of chills, thrills, spooky costumes, and sweet treats this event will also include a one-mile family fun walk.

Howl-O-Weenie 5k

Oct 28 @ 11:00am
4190 N Buffalo St
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Embrace the Halloween spirit as you dash through the 5K course in Orchard Park. Costumes are encouraged, whether you're a wicked witch, a creepy ghoul, or a playful pumpkin, don your most creative attire and race alongside fellow participants in

their Halloween finest. This family-friendly event promises not only a challenging race, but also a boo-tifully good time.

Waylands Wicked 5K

Sunday, Oct. 29 @ 10AM

Wayland's Come be part of a "scary" good course along a flat & fast route along Webster Road in Orchard Park, NY as 5K route traverses along Webster Rd. and Carriage Drive. Then the Post-race event gets better with a Wicked time inside the ultra modern and Western New York's newest Brewery where the beer suds will be flowing and food served to the running & walking revelers!

Take A Breath for Life 5K

Saturday, Nov. 11@ 11:00AM
beginning at the Hamburg
Fairgrounds

5K Run / Walk Race to spotlight Lung Cancer.

Veterans Race

Saturday, Nov. 4 @ 8:30 AM
Buffalo & Erie County Naval and
Military Park, 1 Naval Park Cv,
Buffalo, NY

Veterans Race presented by Destination Races and Presenting Sponsor the law office of Richmond\ Vona has been honoring all who served and currently serving in our military. Our goal is to improve services towards local veteran organizations. This year, we are proud to host the race with Veterans One-Stop Center and Buffalo Naval Park. Proceeds will benefit these two groups to preserve, protect, and honor all who served.

128th Annual YMCA Turkey Trot

Thursday, Nov. 23 @ 9AM
Delaware Avenue YMCA, 2564
Delaware Ave.

The YMCA Turkey Trot is an 8k footrace held annually on Thanksgiving Day in the City of Buffalo, NY. The race welcomes competitive and amateur runners, joggers, and walkers of all ages. Known to be the oldest consecutively run footrace in the world, the YMCA Turkey Trot started in 1896 with six runners on dirt roads.

Project Best Life empowers people to take control of their lives, and take tangible steps to be their healthiest and happiest selves. Buffalo Rising and Project Best Life have teamed up to produce a series on wellness inspiration and advice to direct readers to the people, places, and experiences in Buffalo and beyond that will help them fulfill their health, nutrition, and wellness goals.

For more information on how you can live your best life, go to projectbestlife.org.

project
best life
BY ROSWELL PARK

