

\$\$\$Frugal Fun\$\$\$

When times are financially challenging, it may be difficult to think of ways to have fun – BUT REMEMBER THAT FUN & RELAXATION ARE CRITICAL. You don't have to spend a lot to have a good time. Here are some options to maximize your potential for fun without emptying your wallet.

Locally:

Take a hiking or biking trip along the **Fox River Trail**: Cost is free!

Visit the **MANY natural areas in Kane County** (St. Charles Park District alone has six nature preserves containing 372 total acres), a **Kane County Forrest Preserve** (the web site lists a whopping 71 preserves with various amenities & activities – most FREE) . Bring your binoculars and a sack lunch for a fun and exciting adventure.

Visit your local historical museum – hours vary by town; no entrance fees. (Examples: **St. Charles History Center**, 215 East Main Street, St. Charles; **Geneva History Center**, 113 South Third Street, Geneva; **Fabyan Villa Museum, Windmill and Japanese Gardens**, located at Fabyan Forest Preserve in Geneva; **Batavia Depot Museum**, 155 Houston Street, Batavia).

Pour over your **local park district guide**, by season. ***NOTE: park districts offer scholarships for eligible households. Please contact their administration for further details on how to qualify and apply.*** Visit their websites; you will be astounded at the number of parks and recreation areas within minutes of your home. Many park districts offer fun and educational events for all ages at little or NO COST. See the **Butterfly House at Peck Farm Park** in Geneva, **Primrose Farm Park** in St. Charles or **Braeburn Park and Preserve** in Batavia.

Summer months offer **outdoor concerts** (Thursday nights at Lincoln Park in St. Charles; Wednesday nights at Island Park in Geneva)

Local libraries host free story times for kids as well as a wide-ranging agenda of informative as well as entertaining presentations. Please see your local library newsletter. Speaking of libraries.... did you know that you could check out movies, music and more? No need to spend a penny!

Watch for free classes and fun activities at the **Tri City Corps of the Salvation Army**, 1710 South Seventh Avenue, St. Charles. Line Dancing, walking groups, open gym nights & computer classes are just a sampling of what they have to offer.

Watch for **free or VERY LOW COST special family events at your local movie theater, which at times offer recent movies during special showing hours** (PG & G-rated) (avoid the snack counter to keep the expense to a minimum)

Classic Cinemas – Charlestown 18, 3740 E. Main Street, St. Charles, IL. 60174

Randall 15, 550 N. Randall Rd., Batavia, IL. 60510

A Short Drive:

Phillips Park Zoo has free admission. 1000 Ray Moses Drive, Aurora, IL. 60505 A wonderful facility, just minutes from home.

The Morton Arboretum has designated Wednesday as its discounted day. Admission for seniors is \$6.00, Adults \$7.00, and Children over 2 and under 17 are \$5.00. The Morton Arboretum is located at 4100 IL. Route 53, Lisle, IL 60532.

Cantigny Park Memorial Day through Labor Day it is \$5.00 per car (\$2 early morning and later in the day) to access the park gardens and museum. Cantigny is located at: 1 S. 151 Winfield Rd. Wheaton, IL. 60187

A Trip to the Big City:

A Round trip weekend ticket (the WHOLE weekend!) to go downtown **Chicago on the train from Geneva is \$7 per adult and free for up to three children per paying adult.**

Instead of buying lunch downtown, pack a picnic lunch and spend the day in **Millennium Park** admiring the gardens, the architecture, and the famous “Bean”. Millennium Park Family Fun Festival is free! It takes place June 13- August 21, 10 am-3 pm. There will be live music, hands on activities, and performances. Visit millenniumpark.org for details.

Some other downtown options (remember to pack that lunch to keep the day inexpensive):

Art Institute Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL. 60603, (312) 443-3600, Free Admission Thursdays and Fridays 5-9 pm. Visit artinstituteofchicago.org for details

Chicago Children’s Museum, 700 East Grand Avenue, Chicago, IL. 60611 Located at Navy Pier. Free First Sundays.

Free admission on the first Sunday of every month for children 15 and under from 10 am – 5 pm.

The Field Museum. Free basic admission the second Monday of the month 9 am-5pm. Visit fieldmuseum.org for details. The Field Museum is located at 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60605

Lincoln Park Zoo is always free! It’s open from 10 am-5 PM weekdays, and 10 am to 6 pm on weekends. Lincoln Park Zoo is located at 2001 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL. 60614

Brookfield Zoo offers free days from October through February. Check their website for exact days. Located on 1st Avenue, between Odgen Avenue and 31st Street in Brookfield, IL.

Visit: www.citiesonthecheap.com for more ideas.

An Evening at Home:

Redbox: at your local grocery store. Rent recent release movies for \$1.00 out of the Redbox machine. But, don’t forget those free movies at the library!

Lifestyle TIPS recommends a **“Dinner in”** “Instead of going to a restaurant, we pile in the car and drive to a grocery store. We each pick a frozen dinner, and while the dinners are heating, we play a board game. It’s much cheaper than dining out, and clean up is a breeze, and we spend some quality time together.”

A **baking night** would also be a fun way to spend the night with friends or family.

How about a **backyard weenie roast? Make some s’mores.** Tell stories and enjoy the company of family and/or friends. Doesn’t cost much to make great memories!

Volunteer Opportunities:

Almost all of the resources listed above rely, at least in part, on volunteers to keep things going. How about scheduling a regular time to offer your assistance to one of these wonderful programs? You will be glad you did. Better yet, get the whole family to volunteer together.

Other volunteer opportunities might include:

Northern Illinois Food Bank, Production Drive in St. Charles

Anderson Animal Shelter, Route 31 in South Elgin

Fox Valley Wildlife Center, located in the Elburn Forest Preserve, Route 38, Elburn.

Delnor Community Hospital

Lazarus House, South Third Street, St. Charles

Salvation Army, South Seventh Avenue, St. Charles

Your **local school, senior living facility, church sponsored outreach and ministry activities,**

The possibilities are endless!