



For Immediate Release

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Community Invited to The Vibe, a Fundraiser for the City of Kentwood's Adaptive Recreation Programs

Annual Event to Feature Food, Drinks, Live Music, Silent Auction and Other Activities

Kentwood, Michigan, Sept. 7, 2021 – Community members are invited to The Vibe, an annual celebration and fundraiser to enhance the City of Kentwood's adaptive recreation programs, on Thursday, Sept. 16.

This year's event will be held 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Kent District Library – Kentwood (Richard L. Root) Branch, 4950 Breton Ave. SE. It will include food and cocktails, live music by Main Street Dueling Pianos, a silent auction, adaptive equipment displays and yard games.

The evening also will feature guest speaker Brad Dion, a longtime Grand Rapids resident and East Kentwood High School graduate, who will share his life experiences of living with cerebral palsy, accomplishing goals and giving back to his community.

As a wheelchair athlete, Dion enjoys competing in wheelchair tennis. He also loves to mentor and coach wheelchair sports to kids with disabilities. He spends his days inside the classroom teaching fifth and sixth grade general education as well as supporting special education. He has learned to use his life story with a disability to show others that the sky's truly the limit when it comes to what someone can do if they set their mind to it.

"We are grateful to have Brad Dion share his story at this year's event," said Val Romeo, Kentwood Parks and Recreation director. "We welcome the community to join us to hear his journey and learn more about the value of inclusive recreational opportunities."

Tickets for the casual-attire event are \$40 per person. They can be purchased online at KentwoodVibe.com or by calling 616.656.5270.

Funds raised at this year's event will go toward purchasing new Jet Skis for Kentwood's adaptive water ski program. The program includes various adaptive water ski clinics offered by the Kentwood Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with community partners. Kentwood also offers its own "Sibs Clinic" once a year, where friends and family members are encouraged to ski with their loved one with a disability.

The clinics give youth and adults of all abilities an opportunity to experience water skiing in a positive and safe environment with the help of trained staff and volunteers, and equipment designed for individuals with cognitive or physical challenges.

Smaller watercraft are a critical component of the program to keep participants safe while they experience the thrill of water skiing. While participants are skiing, two watercraft trail the skier. Each

has a trained “jumper” riding on the back, ready to get into the water and assist a skier immediately after a fall.

“We offer a variety of adaptive recreation programs to meet the interests of all individuals – from those who enjoy relaxing leisure opportunities all the way to the biggest thrill seekers,” said Katelyn Bush, Kentwood’s recreation program coordinator. “Because water sports are high-adrenaline activities, they are a great way for people to get out of their comfort zone, enjoy the rush of going fast and feel the wind in their hair. It’s no surprise we have a waiting list each summer.

“They’re also the most involved in terms of equipment and people needed to ensure a safe and quality experience for participants. New Jet Skis will ensure we can continue this popular program for many years to come.”

The Kentwood Parks and Recreation Department provides Michigan’s most comprehensive adaptive recreation programming in partnership with community partners such as Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan, Hope Network and Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital and dozens of volunteers.

Adaptive programs include archery, bike club, boccia league, bowling, canoeing, downhill skiing, golf league, leisure club, kayaking, rock climbing, track and field clinics, pickleball, wake boarding and water skiing, along with dances and other social events.

Open to individuals of all abilities in Kentwood and beyond, the programs enable participants to enjoy the benefits that come with any athletic or recreational activity, such as a sense of camaraderie, improved confidence and new skills. To learn about current offerings, visit kentwood.us/adaptive.

The City of Kentwood will continue to monitor public health guidance and orders, which may require changes to events. Residents are encouraged to follow [current public health guidelines](#) to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

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