

SHAREFEST RETURNS TO WILMINGTON SATURDAY, AUGUST 14TH

ShareFest 2021, which returns to the campus of Wilmington High School on August 14th at 9:00 a.m., is an opportunity for just about everyone in the Wilmington area. There are many families here who have need for help in meeting some of their daily needs. For those folks ShareFest 2021 is an opportunity to receive help. We also have families who don't have any current unmet needs, and for them it is an opportunity to volunteer and donate their time and money.

In August of 2019, the community organizations and churches of Wilmington, pooled their energy, money and ideas to stage the 1st Annual ShareFest on the campus of Wilmington High School. That day, through the generosity and efforts of several dozen volunteers, several hundred families received free food from Kuzma Cottage, Midwest Food Bank in Normal, IL and Northern Illinois Food Bank. Our Caring Closet clothes ministry on First Street, provided free gently-used clothing and shoes for whoever showed up with a need in that area.

For ShareFest 2021, food, clothes and about 30 reconditioned bicycles will be given away. Several social service agencies, such as the Coalition for a Healthy Community, WIC (Women, Infants & Children), the Pregnancy Resources Center, the Senior Services Center of Will County and Work Force Center of Will County. Wilmington Pastors Association will be present to provide assistance and counseling. Many local pastors will be available to listen to questions and counsel those who feel the need for guidance. Gideons will be on hand to provide Bibles.

ShareFest 2021 will include all those features and many more. Some things will be "tweaked" to make them better, such as much of the food being given away will be pre-boxed, and much of the clothing will be pre-sorted for gender specific and age-specific children.

--- In addition to conventional groceries (WHICH WILL BE DISTRIBUTED BEGINNING AT 11:00 A.M.), the food will include a high protein, low-cost, bean-based powdered mix (along with recipes for its utilization). If the kids need back-to-school haircuts, they will be available for free for persons 12 and under.

--- Whitmore Ace has donated 300 smoke detectors with batteries to be given away FREE, one per household. Another generous donor has provided 9-volt batteries for homes that already have the detectors.

--- For persons who are currently unemployed or underemployed, there will be several employers on hand (Workforce) who are anxious to hire folks to get their staffing back to pre-COVID levels. Some will be for part-time work and others for full-time employment.

--- If you have been putting off getting vaccinated against COVID-19, the Will County Health Department has made arrangements for free vaccinations at ShareFest 2021 that day. The Bag Lady Outreach program has provided giveaway items for 300 adult women who attend the festivities.

--- For those who meet with any of the social service agencies or church representatives, they will receive a free hot dog or hamburger. Free bottled water will be available to everyone who attends.

--- There will be a card-making station where kids can create greeting cards for their grandparents, or for residents of a nursing home in the area. That, too, is free of charge.

--- The Will County Health Department have arranged for their dental van to present for checkups for children and to get their dental needs assessed. Grand Dental Group has donated various dental hygiene supplies.

--- There will be disposable diapers and baby-wipes given to those who need them.

--- There will be raffle prizes including gift cards donated by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, other various gift cards and two new 16" bikes donated by the First United Methodist Church Pre-school. Instructions for taking part in the free raffle will be at the registration desks at ShareFest 2021.

--- Other sponsors include Wilmington Pharmacy, Aldi's, CVS, Wilmington Lions, Wilmington Rotary and Wilmington Athletic Boosters.

Nothing will be "for sale" at ShareFest 2021, so there is NO NEED TO BRING MONEY. You should bring identification documents, especially if you are going to get vaccinated that day.

Gordon Food Service and Valles Produce Market have donated much of the water that we'll be giving away, ShareFest of Will County (Gary Cheney) is helping acquire the food through the Midwest Food Bank in Normal, IL. Berkot's and Valles Foods are loaning grocery carts to help shuttle food back to visitors' cars.

ShareFest 2021 is not just about giving away lots of free stuff. There is also an enormous need for volunteer help that day. If you (and/or your kids) can be available for as much as two hours to help at Sharefest 2021 you can sign-up (look for link to "sign-up genius") OR find more information at <https://www.facebook.com/WilmingtonILShareFest/>.

If you cannot help personally but would like to donate any amount to help us cover our costs, it would be greatly appreciated. You can send your donation to: ShareFest Will County, 22014 Howell Drive, Unit #1, New Lenox, IL 60451. That is an accredited 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS, so your contribution should qualify as a charitable deduction on your income tax.