

As Wallingford Y project continues, Choate offers pool use through holidays

December 21, 2022 05:45PM

By Jessica Simms, Record-Journal staff

WALLINGFORD — As a way to offer free recreational swim opportunities to the community, the Wallingford Family YMCA and Choate Rosemary Hall collaborated to have the Larry Hart Pool open from Dec. 20 to Jan. 1 for public swimming.

“We invite everybody to come on down, get wet, get healthy,” said Sean Doherty, executive director of the Wallingford YMCA.



Doherty said people can register for an open swim time slot through the Y’s system. The pool will be open:

Dec. 20-23: 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dec. 24: 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Dec. 26: 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dec. 28-30: 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Dec. 31: 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Jan. 1: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“So we know exactly who is going to be there and everything in that nature, so the lifeguards know and they can take attendance and all of that good stuff” Doherty said.

Choate and the Wallingford YMCA have had a partnership for years, said Alison Cady, Choate’s chief communications officer. Recently, the YMCA assists Choate with staffing lifeguards.

“We work together year over year in several different capacities,” Cady said. “We host their daycare center here on campus. They actually contract with us and support our fitness center with staffing, which is fabulous. We have been supporters of one another over the years. Choate believes very much in the mission and the work that the YMCA does day in and day out.”

In October, the Wallingford Family YMCA started its East Side Natatorium & Lap Pool Renovation Project, a \$1.1 million project that will take approximately 16 to 20 weeks to complete. Doherty said the project is now in its 10th week and the pool is on track for a February reopening.

The project will improve the natatorium wall, ceiling and any rust that has accumulated over the years. There will be new drainage, new piping, new grouts and a new filtration system. Doherty told the Record-Journal for a past article that the deck will also be updated.

In the meantime, throughout the renovation process, members can go to the Larry Hart Pool for lap swimming from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. during the week except on Tuesdays and 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. during the weekend. Some swim lessons also take place at Choate's pool. Water aerobics and independent water exercise will take place in the Y's teaching pool. To learn more, go to: <https://wallingfordymca.org/2022/10/11/lap-pool-capital-improvements/>.

Members are also welcome to come to the open swim time slots for the general public.

Because campus is quieter leading to the holidays and New Year's Day, Cady said Choate wanted to offer recreational swim slots in partnership with the YMCA.

"As things come together, we just were considering the fact that the Y folks have been here regularly and we have quite a bit of downtime while our students are gone over the holiday break," Cady said. "Wouldn't it be nice given that the Y could help us with a little bit of staffing in regards to lifeguards and signups and that sort of thing, to use the pool. Use a resource that's sitting more quietly during this downtime for the school."

The open swim times at the Larry Hart Pool are only available up until Jan. 1. However, Doherty said that it is possible for something like this to happen again.

"We'll see how the community rallies, to see if this is a big interest for them," Doherty said. "We'll definitely put our resources together to continue doing something for the community."

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