

Ephraim McDowell Foundation joins Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest

DANVILLE – The Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation (EMHCF) is proud to announce a new partnership with Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest to place treasure chests in all three Ephraim McDowell Health emergency departments, including Ephraim McDowell Regional Medical Center in Danville, Ephraim McDowell Fort Logan Hospital in Stanford, and Ephraim McDowell James B. Haggin Hospital in Harrodsburg.

The partnership is designed to provide comfort, encouragement, and joy to children during emergency room visits and other difficult medical experiences. The treasure chests will be stocked with toys, games, and comforting items to help ease fear and anxiety for pediatric patients receiving treatments, tests, or procedures.

Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest began in 2014 after Wyatt, a young boy diagnosed with Burkitt's Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, endured more than 119 days in the hospital, including extended stays in the pediatric intensive care unit while receiving intensive chemotherapy treatments. Following his treatment, Wyatt shared with his grandfather that hospitals should have treasure chests for children because hospital procedures were often much scarier than visits to a regular doctor's office.

Inspired by Wyatt's compassion and determination to help other children, Wyatt and his grandfather designed and built the first Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest and dedicated it to the University of Kentucky Children's Hospital in December 2014.

Since then, Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest has expanded to seven locations throughout Kentucky. Each chest is brightly painted with child-inspired artwork, equipped with wheels, and filled monthly with toys and treasures for pediatric patients. The treasure chests are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, allowing nurses and caregivers to bring comfort directly to children during challenging moments.

Through this partnership, the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation will help expand the mission of Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest by ensuring children visiting Ephraim McDowell Health emergency departments have access to moments of comfort and encouragement during stressful and unfamiliar situations.

"When children come into the emergency room, they are often frightened and overwhelmed by the unfamiliar environment and procedures," said Nick Spoonmore, Administrator of Ephraim McDowell Regional Medical Center. "Having Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest available across our health system gives our caregivers another way to provide comfort and compassion during some of the scariest moments a child and family may experience. We are honored to partner in bringing this meaningful program to our communities."

Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest operates solely through donations and is a recognized charitable 501(c)(3) organization. All donations directly support the ongoing stocking and maintenance of the

treasure chests.

"Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest was created from one child's desire to make difficult hospital experiences a little easier for other children," said Angie Fielder, Director of Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest. "Every child deserves comfort, encouragement, and something to smile about during medical treatment. We are incredibly grateful to partner with the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation to expand this mission and bring joy to children and families across the region."

The Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation believes compassionate care extends beyond medical treatment and includes emotional support for patients and families during vulnerable moments.

"This partnership reflects our commitment to caring for the whole patient and supporting families during difficult times," said Brandie James, Philanthropy Coordinator for the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation. "Providing children with comfort and reassurance during emergency visits can make a lasting impact on their experience. We are proud to partner with Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest to help bring comfort, encouragement, and smiles to children across all three of our emergency departments."

For more information about Wyatt's Warriors Toy Chest or to support the program, please contact Brandie James at the Ephraim McDowell Health Care Foundation at bjames@emhealth.org

Don't let the summer heat hijack your drink

LEXINGTON – Nothing feels better on a hot summer day than a nice, cold drink. It's easy to grab a reusable bottle before heading out – even easier to pick up a bottle of water on the go. But does that convenience come with a cost?

Plastic water bottles contain chemicals like bisphenol A and phthalates that make the bottles more flexible and pliable. The way these chemicals are loosely bound to the plastic allows harmful byproducts, as well as micro- and nanoplastics, to leach from the bottle into the water we consume. These chemicals and plastic pieces are so small that they can be absorbed into the body's cells and tissues.

What can speed up that chemical leaching process? Prolonged exposure to sunlight, or UV light, and elevated temperatures — such as when plastic bottles are

left in cars during the warm, sunny months. Even if the contents of the bottle were consumed right away and never left in that hot car, the bottle could have been subjected to storage and transportation conditions from the manufacturer.

In a 2024 study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a team of researchers analyzed the micro- and nanoplastics in three popular brands of bottled water. They found that, on average, a liter of bottled water included about 240,000 tiny pieces of plastic, 90% of which were nanoplastics. This total was 10 to 100 times more plastic particles than seen in earlier studies, which mostly focused on larger microplastics.

What's the harm? Bisphenol A, phthalates and certain micro- and

nanoplastics are endocrine-disrupting chemicals, which means they can interfere with hormone actions throughout the endocrine system. Exposure has been linked to adverse health outcomes in humans. These include reproductive, developmental, neurological, immune and metabolic disorders. While exposure is potentially harmful to everyone, infants, children, pregnant people and older adults are especially at risk. Infants and children consume more water based on their body weight, which increases the risk of exposure. Pre-existing conditions and a potentially weakened immune system in older adults may heighten risks. These elevated risks are also present in pregnant people and the developing fetus.

An isolated incident or two of forgetting not to drink from a plastic water bottle that has been left in a hot car is not a cause for immediate concern, but be

aware that these chemicals are also present in everyday life — sometimes unavoidably so. These chemicals are also found in food packaging, personal care products and the building materials that make up our homes and workspaces.

The effects of these chemicals are cumulative, so knowing where they can

be found and how they move from your water bottle to your cells can inform your decision-making as a consumer. There are steps you can take to reduce your exposure: Reusable stainless-steel and glass bottles not only help eliminate waste from plastic water bottles but also help mitigate risks from the chemi-

cals in plastic. Plastic water bottles aren't the only culprit lurking in your house; consider replacing your plastic food storage containers with glass or ceramic.

So, when you load up the car for a summer adventure, pack some peace of mind in the form of a glass or stainless-steel reusable bottle.



PATRICK R. HANNON



JENEEN WICHE

Dig and divide daffodils

If your daffodils didn't bloom well this year, ask yourself these two questions: did you allow the foliage to die back naturally last summer before you cut it off; and has it been eons since they were last divided?

Patience is a virtue when it comes to daffodils. Often the first color to appear in early spring, their beauty is long awaited.

Then we must wait another two months before we can remove the dulling green foliage. The foliage gathers nutrients for the bulb to store over winter, allowing it to grow and bloom next spring. If you remove the foliage prematurely, you reduce the blooms for next year. Dead heading the spent blossoms will help prolong blooming and allow more nutrients to be absorbed by the bulb when the bloom cycle is complete.

If it has indeed been eons since you last divided your daffodil clumps plan to do so when the foliage dies back naturally in mid-June. Daffodils can be divided every 5 to 7 years; and if you do it when the foliage is ready to be cut back at least you can easily locate what you want to dig!

Use a garden fork to pop up your bulbs. A garden

fork is less likely to sever the bulbs in half and helps to loosen the soil around the bulbs. Once the bulbs are out of the ground, clean them off and then check them over. Discard any bulbs that are soft, bruised or punctured, if the case may be. Pretend you are selecting onions from the grocery store. Any damage means that they are more likely to rot. Break apart the loosely attached "baby" bulbs, leaving those that are firmly attached to the mother bulb. These larger bulbs will produce more bloom next spring. The baby bulbs will need a year to grow.

It is best, and more convenient, to replant your bulbs right away. This way you do not need to worry about curing and storing them properly until fall planting. I like to plant clusters of large and small bulbs, so the smaller non-flowering bulbs are not so noticeable. Or plant the smallest bulbs in an area where they can mature for a year and then move them where they can be enjoyed.

A well-drained environment is essential to growing healthy daffodils, or else they may rot. To prepare your planting area dig down about 10 inches so

you can add a special concoction to ensure good drainage. The legendary Helen Trueblood, a Southern Indiana daffodil aficionado, called it "chomp" because she added perlite, river gravel, sand, compost and calcium enriched bulb-boosting fertilizer (low in nitrogen) and then "chomps" it all together. Drop your bulb in and cover it with a light soil and compost mixture and water.

Plant bulbs at a depth about 2 to 3 times their diameter, and about 4 to 8 inches apart. Choose a site that will camouflage the foliage after blooming is complete. Ground cover beds in your landscape are ideal because the ground cover helps to maintain soil moisture and the foliage is not as noticeable against the green back drop. Keep in mind that they will not always nod their heads towards you and your vantage point, daffodil blooms nod their heads towards the sun so plant them with any shade coming from behind the bed.

EMPLOYMENT

Trade Winds

Trade Winds Transit is seeking Class A CDL drivers for regional OTR. Out 2-3 nights a week, home every weekend. We offer top pay and a full benefits package. Call 502-348-3503.

Sealed bids will be received until 11:00 a.m., Monday, June 22, 2026 in the office of the Marion County School Superintendent Chris Brady, 755 East Main Street, Lebanon, Kentucky, 40033, on the following:

Surplus Lawn Mowers: Exmark Laser Z (72" deck with 2685 hours) and Scag Cheetah (61" deck with 1750 hours)

Immediately thereafter, all bids will be publicly opened and read. Bids must be typed or written in ink. Bids must be in an envelope marked "Exmark" or "Scag" for corresponding mower in the upper left-hand corner. The bidder's return address shall appear in the lower left-hand corner. The seller reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive technicalities.

For more information and specifications, please visit <https://www.marion.kyschools.us/documents/departments/finance/current-bids/137493> call 270-692-3721 or email scott.spalding@marion.kyschools.us

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natalie.browning@ky.nacdnet.net
Visit our Facebook Page Marion County Conservation District for directions.

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM (CAIP)

Applications will be available for Marion County's CAIP to assist farmers in completing on-farm improvements. Please allow 30 minutes to review CAIP Application & Guidelines. Bring a valid Ky Driver's License or photo ID & either a water or utility bill with home address for proof of residency, not the farm address. Must be 18 or older to apply.

Application Period:
June 5, 2026- June 26, 2026- Office will be closed on June 19, 2026, for the holiday. No applications will be accepted after June 26, 2026, at close of business.

Application Availability:
Marion County Conservation District
Monday – Friday (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. est.)

For More Information:
Contact Natalie Browning at 270-692-7681 or email natalie.browning@ky.nacdnet.net.

All applications are scored, based on the scoring criteria set by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board.

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