OUTDOOR FUN RETURNS!

PLAYGROUNDS BACK OPEN IN SAN FRANCISCO WITH NEW REGULATIONS

SAN FRANCISCO—Children in San Francisco will now be able to visit the over 180 public playgrounds in the city because on Wednesday, October 14, Mayor London Breed indicated they are officially open.

The announcement comes after the State of California allowed playgrounds to operate again on September 28, and released some guidelines to do it safely. San Francisco is limiting the number of people depending on the size of the playground, and limiting the time of visits to 30 minutes when there are other people present. Visitors must follow physical distancing rules, and everyone 2 years or older must wear a face covering. No one is allowed to eat or drink in the playgrounds. Also, only one adult should accompany a child and they must actively supervise them. Officials encouraged caregivers not to use their phones while taking care of their children on playgrounds.

“If a caregiver must take a break, children should stay by their side until they can resume,” said Mayor Breed in the announcement.

During the first two weekends, playgrounds will be supervised by Recreation and Park Department monitors who will ensure that health guidelines are being followed. Public health officials said that since the city was removed from the State watch list, opening environments for children had become a priority. During the announcement, they advised communities to keep following safety guidelines to continue with re-opening efforts in the city. Recreation officials also expressed they were excited for this announcement.

“We are thrilled to welcome families back to their neighborhood playgrounds and all the fun, connection, and creativity they inspire,” said Phil Ginsburg, General Manager for the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. “For kids, play is serious business. It is essential to their cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. A trip to the playground relieves stress, reduces anxiety, and promotes healthy bodies and imaginations.”

Besides the reopening, Breed announced that six renovated playgrounds would launch in the city as part of a project made in collaboration with the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and the San Francisco Parks Alliance. Breed also expressed she was excited for the official reopening of these spaces for children.

“We know kids and parents have been missing playgrounds since the end of March, and I’m excited that we’re now at a place where we can safely reopen them,” said Mayor Breed. “It’s important kids have a place to explore, have fun, and get some outdoor exercise. We hope this brings families and kids some joy during an otherwise challenging time.”

The Department of Public Health released the following tips to safely enjoy the playgrounds:

- Go to the playground during days and times when there are fewer people.
- Choose playgrounds within walking distance of your home instead of taking public transportation.
- Choose smaller playgrounds with fewer people over larger playgrounds that can hold more people.
- If your child is crying and cannot be consoled, remove them from the playground structure or playground until they are calm, since loud crying can produce a large number of respiratory droplets.
- If anyone in your household is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, do not visit a playground.

"TOY BOAT CAFE" VANDALIZED AND ROBBED

SAN FRANCISCO—A popular ice cream store in San Francisco was vandalized and robbed last week. Toy Boat Cafe, located on Clement Street, recently re-opened in late September. On October 8, Toy Boat Cafe made a post on Instagram, announcing two incidents that occurred at their location within a week.

The windows of the business were initially vandalized with acid, after which a man pretending to be a worker came to “fix” the windows, before stealing several rare and vintage toys displayed near the ceiling. Employees were preoccupied with customers, and trusting of the repair, that they didn’t notice the theft take place. The toys were a collection of vintage tin robots and tin wind-up figures belonging to the original owner, and were intended to be a personal and original touch of decor to the business.

“We are heartbroken that today someone pretended to be a repair person for our vandalized windows stole a huge part of this collection. Any information is much appreciated. These items are special to so many people and our staff was trusting that someone was here to fix our ruined windows. The thought that this was staged to steal toys is really hard to take,” read the Instagram post.

Police are currently investigating the incident, and are trying to identify suspects and a motive.

SF INDEPENDENT SHORT FILM FESTIVAL BEING HELD VIRTUALLY

SAN FRANCISCO—The SF IndieFest has announced they will present the 2020 San Francisco Independent Short Film Festival online from October 9 through October 18.

The SF IndieFest official website states that more than 150 short films from across the globe have been featured in the festival. Audiences can purchase an all-access pass or a single film from the list and watch whenever during the event. Viewers will have 24 hours to finish the movie once it begins.

The film festival includes various genres from different cities and countries including the art genre; Asanasa from Canada; the Bay Area story and storyteller genre; “Can dyman” from the United States; LGBTQ genre; “Kiko’s Saints” from France and international genre and “DA YIE” from Ghana. The event will provide interviews and behind-the-scene discussions with participants that will be available on the SF IndieFest YouTube channel.

The SF IndieFest has been operational, as a non-profit organization since 1998 by Jeff Ross. It started when Ross realized there was no avenue available to present his friend, Rand Alexander’s film “CAGED” after it played an essential role in the Slamdance Film Festival of 1998. Ross began holding a four-day event with his own fund.

Since then, the organization has brought audiences and filmmakers, ranging from 3,000 to more than 21,000 last year, to attend the SF IndieFest. For more information, visit the SF IndieFest.