

For Immediate Release



**Armory Youth Project Invites the Community to a “Back to School Kick Off Celebration”  
to be held on August 28, 2020 from 4-7 pm**

**Manistee, MI – August 20, 2020** -- The Armory Youth Project reopened this month and the staff and volunteers are excited to be able to again serve the youth of Manistee County! The team will be hosting a **“Back to School Kick Off Celebration”** for the community on **August 28 from 4-7 pm** to get students registered for fall programming including sports activities, arts and crafts, cooking, babysitting, and Tae Kwon Do classes and tutoring and personal development. Booths will be available to showcase offerings and to give community members the opportunity to learn more. There will also be music, games, prizes and free hot dogs, popcorn and beverages donated by the Little River Casino Resort who also donates the food to the Armory daily meal program.

The Armory Youth Project (commonly referred to as AYP or the Armory) is a not-for-profit organization that provides a safe environment where young people from grades 6-12 can build community and be encouraged in their educational, emotional, physical and Christian spiritual development. The Armory is located at 555 First Street in Manistee, MI.

“This kickoff event is a great opportunity for our students and their families to see what all we have to offer whether it’s sports activities or arts and crafts, yoga or tutoring,” said Wojciechowski. “Since we have opened the kids have had fun in a variety of activities including cooking classes where they have made homemade salsa and pita chips and veggie pizzas. They have also made beaded jewelry from polymer clay, built mason bee houses and enjoyed sports such as ping pong and cornhole.

Registrations will be done during the event and students who register will receive a gift bag including a free water bottle from the Armory and a string backpack provided by Shelby Bank.

“We hope to register as many students grades 6-12 as possible at our kick off celebration so that they are able to join in the fun immediately,” Wojciechowski stated. For more information and to register online, go to <https://armoryyouthproject.com/students/>.

**Registration required to enhance security**

The Armory has implemented new procedures for registration and security that students will be required to follow before taking part in any activities. **All students, including those who were registered in the past, must complete the new registration and waiver process which requires a parent or guardian signature.** The Armory will also have a new security/access system that allows each student to swipe their card to access the Armory. This ensures the Armory knows who is in the facility at all times. The Armory is also following State of Michigan, CDC guidelines and Department of Health guidelines to help ensure a safe and secure environment.

### **Community Support is invaluable**

“The Armory could not operate without the support and collaboration with other community partners and our donors and volunteers! We are so thankful for the community’s support which has allowed us to open in a safe and secure way to keep our students and staff and volunteers as safe as we can,” stated Wojciechowski.

“We were awarded a Manistee County Community Foundation COVID-19 Community Response Grant which helped us purchase personal protection equipment and cleaning and sanitizing materials to open in a safe and secure way,” she said. “The Armory was also a recipient of the Minger Grant through the Manistee County Foundation which will be used to help update the gym and support numerous enhancements to the gymnasium and safety and security for visitors.”

### **How to Contribute**

“If anyone is in a position to help support our operations, we would appreciate it and we are happy to share more information about our strategic plans to help you understand just how impactful your contributions can be.” To donate online, please visit [www.armoryyouthproject.com/donate](http://www.armoryyouthproject.com/donate). Or, if questions about how to contribute, please contact Amy Wojciechowski at [director@armoryyouthproject.com](mailto:director@armoryyouthproject.com) or call 231-299-1205.

### **Volunteers Still Needed**

The Armory operates with a very small staff and relies heavily on volunteers to work in registration, engage with the kids while supervising a sports activity, or be behind the scenes in the office. Wojciechowski stated, “We will personally train each volunteer to make it easy. There is a short application to complete and all volunteers much go through a background check. Whether a person can come every afternoon or just one day a week or even one to two days a month, we need all the support we can get. The more volunteers we have, the more program options we’ll be able to offer.” For more information on how to sign up to volunteer, go to <https://armoryyouthproject.com/volunteer/> or stop by the volunteer booth at the kickoff event to learn more.

“We’re looking forward to a great event on August 28<sup>th</sup>,” Wojciechowski said. “It will be great chance for parents, family and community members to see all the great things available at the Armory and to meet our staff! We hope people take the time to come and join us for a fun evening!”

Watch [www.armoryyouthproject.com](http://www.armoryyouthproject.com) for updates to the schedule .

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