



Recorder's

BIRTHDAY PARTY

planner



SPECIAL SECTION

JULY 13, 2017

Ponte Vedra 
Recorder

Not your average newspaper, not your average reader

Karate America Ponte Vedra offering 20 free birthday parties

Karate America is offering 20 free birthday parties for First Coast kids at its location in Ponte Vedra to promote health, fitness and self-defense.

"It's our service to the community," said Master Daniel Giménez, a 6th degree blackbelt and four-time world champion who runs Karate America Ponte Vedra. "It's a way to help kids learn about self-discipline, self-esteem and confidence."

The first 20 people to call Karate America Ponte Vedra at (904) 285-4031 can schedule a \$300-valued party for free. According to Giménez, a typical birthday party lasts 1.5 hours and includes a karate class led by an instructor, pizza, cake, drinks, a birthday gift for the child and a broken board signed by all guests of the party.



The Karate America Ponte Vedra competition team gathers at a recent tournament in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The business, which is located at 288 Solana Road, also provides all guests of the parties with free karate headbands, a black belt for the birthday child during the party and free uniforms for those guests that decide to schedule a class after the party. In addition, Karate America provides the family of the birthday child with invitations to send to the party guests. Lastly, all guests receive a free month of training.

Giménez said those interested in scheduling a party must do so on a Saturday at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. All parties must be scheduled by the end of 2017. An unlimited number of kids can attend.

Recent accomplishments

Karate America Ponte Vedra recently sent its competition team to the 2017 ATA World Championships in Little Rock, Arkansas, where teammates Lucas Giménez and Amber Smith captured three combined world champion titles.

After the championships, the team kicked off the 2017-2018 season and took home several tournament medals. Giménez won gold in traditional weapons; silver in creative weapons; gold in XMA form; and bronze in XMA weapons. James Goodrich placed fourth in traditional weapons, while Eilla Guenzler won gold and bronze in traditional weapons and traditional form respectively.

Xander Javier placed fourth in both traditional form and traditional weapons, and Xavier Javier placed fourth in traditional form and took home a bronze medal in traditional weapons. Jessie Miller placed fourth in both traditional form and traditional weapons. Lilly Sonn won gold in traditional form and silver in traditional weapons. Amber Smith wrapped up the group's accomplishments in style, winning gold in both



Photos courtesy of Karate America Ponte Vedra

Kids enjoy a birthday party at Karate America.



Kids at a Karate America birthday party participate in a karate class led by an instructor.

traditional form and traditional weapons.

The next stop for the Karate America Ponte Vedra competition team will be the 2017 Fall Nationals at the ESPN World Wide Sports Complex in Orlando in October.

Ideas for planning your next water-based birthday party



By Terri Mashour

Special to the Recorder

Everyone knows summer birthdays are hard. Friends are gone for the summer so it can be challenging to find people to attend. It's hot outside so the traditional park parties or backyard parties are limited. However, you can beat the heat and attract friends to attend by hosting a water-based birthday party! Below are some surefire ways

for kids to stay cool while celebrating birthdays that fall from June through August...and since we are in Florida, beyond!

Head to a water park.

Whether you take a trip as a family to Orlando's Coco Key, a resort with a fun pool, Legoland's water park area, Wild Adventures' water park area or stay in Jacksonville and invite friends to Adventure Landing's Shipwreck Island, water parks are tons of fun and help guests forget that it is hot! Adventure Landing's birthday parties include the water park, a decorated table with an assistant, hot dogs or pizza, and you can get a \$10 off coupon when you mention Fun4FirstCoastKids.com here: <http://bit.ly/2tYJZSo>

Head to a spring!

At 74 degrees year-round, the "freezing" water - to us Floridians - is the BEST way to stay cool during the summer! Most are no more than two hours from Jacksonville. The re-

furbished Spring Park Pool is nearby in Green Cove Springs. The small spring head drains to a large swimming pool, and kids can swim or play on the playground for only a \$2 entry! Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy views of the St. Johns River. Find all the springs near Jacksonville here: <http://bit.ly/2kQG0Dr>

Head to a local splash park.

There are six splash parks in Jacksonville and many have free entry! Sunshine Park has a wooden playground, and kids can stay cool while they get wet in the splash park area. Murray Hill has a new splash park; Jacksonville Zoo and Hanna Park have splash parks; and if you're a member at a local club with a pool or splash park, add friends and family to the guest list and bring your food and cake there. Kids will love splashing with friends while parents talk and keep an eye on their children. Find all the local splash parks here: <http://bit.ly/2sGGMqo>

Enjoy a party at your swimming lessons location.

Many programs have their own pool- indoor or out- and host parties! Swim and enjoy life guards during the party, then break for cake and ice cream. Not only is the party fun, but parents will appreciate the extra, trained eyes on their kids. Find all the swimming lesson locations here: <http://bit.ly/2moedaz>



Photos courtesy of Adventure Landing

Water-Based

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Head out on a water adventure!

Jacksonville has many kayaking companies, locations that rent canoes and paddle boards and we love our St. Johns River Water Taxi and St. Johns River Ferry! Many offer a guided nature lesson or history tour. Bring cake to eat on the taxi/ferry or stop at an island to enjoy snacks and sing happy birthday. Find all the local water adventures here: <http://bit.ly/2swHe6y>

Head to the beach.

Bring a tent, table and beach buckets and shovels to enjoy hours of free fun with a beach party! This is a fun and relaxing option that will keep kids busy for hours. Be sure to have plenty of drinks and watery snacks, like watermelon and other fruits to keep kids hydrated. Organize fun-like beach Olympic competitions or a sand castle contest, or just frolic in the sand. Find all the local beaches here: <http://bit.ly/2tDCYFN>

Terri Mashour is the owner of Fun4FirstCoastKids.com.



Recorder file photo

Backyard water fun

Rent a bounce house with a slide and add water; put out a sprinkler; add water guns, bubbles and pool noodles that squirt water; and you have your own water park in the back yard. Enjoy a bounce house rental special from Big City Bounce when you mention Fun4FirstCoastKids.com. More information can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2uRhX15>

And last, but not least, the classic pool party...

If you are lucky enough to have a backyard pool and you have summer birthdays in your home, you are set for birthday parties for life! Pool parties are classic Florida fun for the kids to swim for hours. You have to beg them to get out of the pool to eat, yet they jump out at just the mention of cake. Throw in some pool toys and be sure to designate life guards and “wa la,” you have a party. If you don’t have one at your home, no worries: there are 33 City of Jacksonville public pools! You can find the one closest to you here: <http://bit.ly/2sNw29U>



Photos courtesy of Adventure Landing



Suggestions on how to fill your party goody bags

By Terri Mashour

Special to the Recorder

Goody bags are a classic part of birthday parties. You bring a gift to the party, you enjoy and eat cake and you leave with a gift or bag of treats as a thank you when you head out the door. Some say goody bags are not necessary anymore, over the top or just a bunch of plastic with trinkets that are played with once and then thrown out. Yet others say goody bags are here to stay. Here’s a list of goody bag ideas that are less trinket-based, and more hands-on and memorable.



Jacksonville Rocks!

What are these, you ask? They’re a

great craft for a birthday party. Purchase rocks at the local hardware store and have the kids paint and decorate the tops and then paint “Jacksonville Rocks” underneath them. Let them dry before the kids take them home. Then, it’s up to them to hide them in their neighborhoods or at a local park for others to find and re-hide, or take them home and enjoy. Search for your local Rocks group on Facebook to join the clubs and learn more!



Baked goods

Whether it’s a Rice Krispies Treat, chocolate chip cookies or a bag of chocolates, you can’t go wrong with a sweet treat in your goody bags. They are easy to make and inexpensive as many can be

made from the ingredients in your home. Or you can purchase specialized treats from a baker, referencing this list of contacts here: <http://bit.ly/2tTWWMo>



Photo booth photo gifts

Kids love to pose in photo booths with props and the funny signs (“I’m here for the cake!” or “Birthday Girl!”). Provide photos as a goody gift so kids can always remember the day. For local photo booths and related ideas, visit <http://bit.ly/2tPKhug>

Action gifts

If you’re having a superhero party, make, or purchase from a website like ETSY, masks and superhero capes to play

with at the party and take home. If it’s a princess party, make a princess hat to play with and take home. The kids will continue to play with the gifts long after the party is over.

Experience gifts

If you have a birthday party at a fun zone or the zoo, include a ticket to come back, or a coupon for an ice cream or frozen yogurt. Those gifts will provide a fun experience for families at a later date.



Consumable gifts

Offer crayons and a coloring book, sidewalk chalk or bubbles as a gift. These

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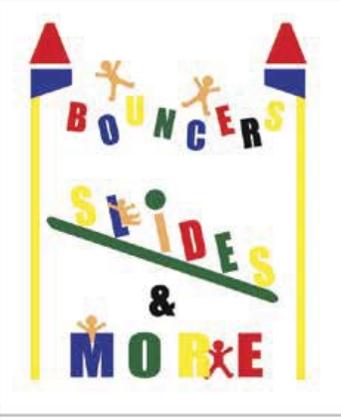
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Goody Bags

Continued from 19

are items that parents always need for activities at home. Our kids enjoyed the long wands with bubbles at two recent summer parties and use them for bubbles and as imaginary magic wands even a month later!

Garden gifts

Head to the local hardware store for bird or wildflower seed, and place it in plastic wrap with ribbon to hand out to party guests. They will enjoy going home to watch the birds come or to plant seeds, and the process will ultimately help the environment!

Books

Head to the dollar store and purchase some cheap books. We've had one dollar

store book about a Minnie Mouse mystery for five years, and we love reading about who ate Minnie's daffodils, even though the book is now held together with tape! Have kids pick out a book before they leave, and families will enjoy reading it for many years to come.

And last, but not least, don't be afraid to mix the party bags!

Many say death to goody bags; some feel they promote consumerism or the

feeling that kids should always get something in exchange for being at the party. Families enjoy just being together to celebrate, and goody bags are not mandatory. I actually forgot goody bags for my daughter's birthday, and no one mentioned it! Alas, if you are a stickler on the birthday party etiquette, consider the above list and enjoy the fun!

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SUMMER FUN!



PV2-LV40184

Contest open to children ages 3-12 and will be judged in 3 categories: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.
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