

Monday Movie Madness Returns To Infinity Park

by Kurt Woock

Writer for and on behalf of the City of Glendale

From the outset, the creators of *Infinity Park* intended to do things differently. The rugby played inside would be of the highest caliber, but the prices would be kept low. You can sit in the front row for less than \$10. When they weren't playing, players would join the crowd and watch other teams play, explain the game to those new to it, and even teach the sport to kids as a coach in the renowned *Raptors Youth Rugby Program*.

This didn't happen by accident. From the outset, *Infinity Park* was to be a place where the community could gather together and grow stronger. It was by design. "The city of Glendale's mission and vision when building the Glendale Sports Center, as well as the elements of the stadium, was to give back to the community," said Linda Cassaday, Deputy City Manager, City of Glendale.

While rugby is the centerpiece of that plan, other events held in the stadium have helped turn *Infinity Park* into the rich social hub that it is today. One of the events that the community has embraced with the most enthusiasm is *Monday Movie Madness*. It has become a cornerstone of the summer for thousands of families in the past, and with each screening it becomes so for even more. In 2015, *Monday Movie Madness* celebrates the eighth year of this successful program.

Behind-The-Scenes Of Monday Movie Madness

Cassaday said that early on city leaders wanted to hold annual programming at *Infinity Park*, to create a place where "residents as well as the community-at-large can experience family fun, on the pitch, under the stars, for free." The free movie concept was truly original. Cassaday said that city leaders weren't aware of anything like *Monday Movie Madness* anywhere else. The decision to host a bi-weekly movie night every summer was due, in part, to *Infinity Park's* unique situation: A stadium built for a community, with a mission to give access and opportunity to attend events therein to as many people as possible. A jumbo screen and seating for thousands didn't hurt, either.

Free since the first movie, organizers have been creative with getting the word out to residents using grassroots and social marketing to promote the event via word of mouth. It's worked. "We really didn't set any goals specific to the number of moviegoers other than the fact that we wanted to see the field covered with blankets and families," Cassaday said. "We are there. We are seeing an average of 3,000 people per movie and expect to see many more this summer."

One of the hallmarks of the movie season is the way in which movies are decided. Moviegoers are able to vote online for which movies they want to watch during the upcoming season. This kind of participation not only ensures that the movies shown are ones people want to watch, but also helps build excitement before the summer. One movie, *The Princess Bride*, has proven to be truly timeless, being voted in every year since voting began three years ago. The entire 2015 lineup can be found online at infinityparkatglendale.com/movies.

Planning The Perfect Night Out

In addition to being free, the simplicity of attending a movie is a big draw, especially for families. Parking is free and multiple lots are available within a two-block radius of *Infinity Park*. The gates to the stadium open at 7 p.m., and the movie starts promptly at 8 p.m., every time. The best spots on the grass go fast, so movie night regulars tend to come a few minutes early to grab a spot in line before the gates open. You'll spot many picnics throughout the stadium, as outside food is welcome while others who choose to skip packing a meal can be seen getting food from one of the many vendors on-site.

Kids especially will love the newest addi-



The night finishes off under the stars while families stay cozy and comfortable on the stadium field at Infinity Park for Monday Movie Madness.



The sun sets just as the movies kick off at 8 p.m. during Monday Movie Madness at Infinity Park. Photos by Seth McConnell

tion to Monday Movie Madness: The introduction of *Max*, a French Bulldog and *Monster*, a Chihuahua who will serve as emcees for the year. These two mascots for the night will entertain everyone on the jumbo screen before the movie begins.

Building A Summer Tradition

Attending a camp, canoeing on a lake, watching fireworks, going out for ice cream

on a hot night: Those experiences mean so much to a child when they take place, and, when those children grow up, they become among their most cherished memories, traditions they then hand down to their kids. Monday Movie Madness joins that list of events that everyone can count on when the days get long and the temperature stays warm into the evening. The

first Monday Movie Madness of the year signals the beginning of summer, and every movie night thereafter, families head to *Infinity Park* with the intent to enjoy a movie with one another. But collectively, they're doing so much more: They're playing an active part in building a community, and through doing that, they're building something that will last a lifetime.



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