

PRESS RELEASE Wednesday, July 8th, 2026

Detroit's Oldest Benevolent Society, the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit presents the Oldest Continuous Highland Games in North America! 177 Years, **Saturday, August 1st, 2026, and Ceilidh, (big party with music in a huge tent Friday July. 31st, 2026.**

For information/interviews etc. contact the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit's Highland Games **Chair Julie Palmer** at highlandgameschair@detroitscots.com or, phone Julie at 734 904 9510. You're also welcome to contact St. Andrew's Society of Detroit's President **Chris MacKenzie** at president@detroitscots.com or phone 248 760 0981. Or, you may also contact **Van Rohr**, St. Andrew's Society of Detroit Media Relations: 586 431 1753 vrohr@detroitscots.com.

See our website: highlandgames.com

The 177th Annual Highland Games presented by the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit will be held on Saturday, August 1st at Historic Greenmead in Livonia (Eight Mile and Newburgh) beginning at 8 a.m. Advanced tickets are \$25.00 plus a small handling fee with children 12 & under free. Tickets at the gates are available for \$30. A Ceilidh (Scottish Party, pronounced as kay-lee), an adult event, featuring rousing Scottish music bands will be held the night before (Friday, August 1st) at Greenmead. Advance tickets are \$20 plus a small handling fee. Highland bagpipes, heavy athletics, Highland dancing, vendors and entertainment tents are all included in the price of admission on Saturday. Visit highlandgames.com for more information.

History of the Games

The St. Andrew's Society of Detroit is proud to boast that its Games are the oldest continuous Highland Games in North America. The Society has documentation that shows the first Games being held in 1849. Over the years, the Highland Games have been held at Sugar Island, Belle Isle, Grosse Isle, Bob-Lo Island, University of Detroit stadium, Ford Field in Dearborn, Historic Fort Wayne, and the Eleanor & Edsel Ford House in Grosse Pointe. For the past 29 years the Games have called Historic Greenmead Park in Livonia "home". The Games are put on entirely by volunteers. Chair, Julie Palmer of Ypsilanti is aided in her efforts by a group of almost thirty Chairs who take over each phase of the Games. Over 400 volunteers are needed to work in the various areas on Games Day. Volunteers enjoy free admission to the Highland Games. Some of these volunteers start the Monday before the Games laying out the field and getting ready for the Saturday crowds. Many of the volunteers are Society members, their family and friends, and members or the community at large. All help is most appreciated. Again, all volunteers enjoy free admission to the Games. Forms to volunteer can be found on the website.

History of St. Andrew's Society of Detroit

The St. Andrew's Society of Detroit is the oldest benevolent organization in Michigan. Originally founded to help Scots new to the area assimilate into their new location the group also helped their fellow countrymen financially. Today the group is a 501(c) (3) organization that continually raises money for various charities. Money is given to Scottish and local Detroit

charities. The group has a large scholarship program to promote the Scottish Arts helping students learn the art of bag piping, highland dance, drumming or Celtic harp. Each month the organization donates to a local charity. As examples the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit has supported Children's Hospital of Michigan, C.O.T.S, DMC Children's Hospital Troy, Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners, Habitat for Humanity Detroit & Oakland, St. Vincent De Paul, Toys for Tots and more.

In March of 2010 the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit moved into a new home at 2363 Rochester Road, Troy, Michigan. The doors from the old, historic St. Andrews Hall in downtown Detroit, as well as the stained-glass transom above the doors, were installed in the new Kilgour Scottish Center in Troy. Centrally located for the membership that encompasses all the greater Metropolitan Detroit area, the Kilgour Scottish Centre is a beautiful building that is the home of the Society's benevolent efforts.

Festivities at Greenmead Begin 5 p.m. Friday, July 31st with a Céilidh – (kay-lee)

Traditionally, a Céilidh was a gathering in a home in Scotland where friends got together to play music, sing, dance, eat and drink. So, our Céilidh offers it all – except for gathering in a home – we gather in a huge tent and have a great time!! Great bands such as Wakefire, Ironwood, the Kreellers, Pictus, Stoner Clover and Celtica Nova! We suggest that you look at the brochure or online for exact time of each performing band. Céilidh tickets are available for \$20 plus a small handling fee, in advance, and a limited number of tickets will be available for \$25 at the gate. To get advanced sale Céilidh tickets go to highlandgames.com

Friday, August 31, 2026, at 7 pm in the Alexander Blue House will be a very special whisky tasting hosted by Elliot MacFarlane, Whisky Wizard. This event offers a unique opportunity to taste rare vintages from the Whisky Wizard's private collection. Tickets are \$200 each plus a small handling fee and available online only through noon August 31st or, while they last. This ticket includes entrance into the Céilidh.

Highland Games Day, Saturday, August 1st Festivities Includes a Bagpipe Competition

What would a Highland Games be without bagpipes? Those who attend the 177th Annual Highland Games won't have to answer that question. There will be upwards of a dozen or more pipe bands. Members of these bands will be involved in individual competition, band competition and playing in the Mass Band Parade both at Welcoming and Closing ceremonies. Bands come from all over the Midwest as well as Canada to compete. Piping is judged on tone, tuning and expression and execution. The Mass Bands are the assembled bands all marching down the field together playing the same tune. It is a hair-raising sound and a treat for the eyes! The Society's Pipe Major, David Martin of Livonia, has been with the band for many years. His band, The St. Andrew's Society Pipe Band, competes and plays year-round.

Saturday August 1st there will be Heavy Athletic Competitions

One of the favorite areas of the Highland Games is the Heavy Athletic competition. These events thrill guests each year. The Caber Toss is the most spectacular and the biggest crowd pleaser.

The caber (Gaelic for 'tree') weighs about one hundred pounds and can be as long as eighteen feet. The idea is to toss the caber so that it will land in a twelve o'clock position. The Hammer's Throw, the Stone Put, and the Weight for Distance and the Weight for Height are other events. Competition is for amateurs in the morning hours of the Games and for Professionals in the afternoon. The judges look for strength, balance and agility in all the events. Ages of the competitors generally range from 20 years to 40 years old. They come from Michigan, and all over the US. Kurt Pauli of South Lyon chairs this event. The St. Andrew's Society of Detroit's Games rank in the top five of all the Games held in the quality of the competitors.

Saturday August 1st there will be Highland Dancing

Over 175 Highland dancers will be competing at the 177th Annual Highland Games in Livonia. Chair, Jennifer Miller Combs of Highland keeps the dance competition running smoothly all day long. Ranging in ages from 4 to adults the dancers come from all over the United States and Canada. Each of the dances performed have a great story behind it. The Seann Truibhas dance originated when after the Highland uprising in 1745, English rule forbid the wearing of the kilt. Scots now had to wear the "truibhas -trews – trousers". The dance shows how the trews were happily kicked off when the law was repealed. The Sword Dance shows the dancers dancing around the swords that are strategically placed on the floor or shield without touching them. To be successful in this feat meant good luck in battle. The dance was done before and after the battle to celebrate victory.

Saturday August 1st there will be Wee Bairns Area (Children's Area)

The members of the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit believe that 'kids are our future' and thus have expanded the Wee Bairns area of the Highland Games. Noted by some who travel to Highland Games around the country is the fact that our children's area is second to none. Usually, over 800 children enjoy this part of the games. Youngsters can design a targe (shield), make a headdress, use a catapult (under supervision) and get involved in the reenactments where they could have fun and learn something at the same time. They'll have their own parade where they could share their targes and head pieces. Story tellers are also in the area involving children in history and suspense. Paula Lupi from Sterling Heights makes this all happen to the delight of the children and their parents.

Saturday August 1st there will be Scottish Animals

Did you ever see a Highland Cow (Coo)? Well, now is your chance. These big very furry animals will be at the Annual Highland Games in Livonia. Along with the coos will be the Westies, Gordon Setters and the Bearded Collies. Delighting crowds of all ages these animals, all native to Scotland are a big hit at the Games.

Saturday August 1st there will be Living History Presentations

The St. Andrew's Society of Detroit can boast that it hosts one of the greatest reenactment units around at its Highland Games. Grant's Company of the 142nd Highlanders help give color to the

games showing visitors how life used to be. Historical demonstrations let young and old get involved and have a wonderful educational experience.

Saturday August 1st there will be a Tug O' War Competition

Again, this year teams will compete at a Tug O' War on the main field. Each team will enter the field in its own unique vehicle. This crowd pleaser event offers a trophy to the winning team. The trophy is a loving cup that has been around St. Andrew's Society of Detroit for over 100 years. It was first presented at the Games in 1914 by the Wayne County Sheriff's Department.

Saturday August 1st Music All Day at the Entertainment Tent

The great bands who'll play Friday evening at the Céilidh will perform throughout the day Saturday in the big, Entertainment Tent. Saturday admission to the Entertainment Tent is included in the price of a gate ticket.

Saturday August 1st there will be Scotch Whisky Tastings

Back by popular demand is the Scotch Whisky Tasting event. This educational and fun presentation will need a special ticket (available online only). Visitors to this activity will have the opportunity to taste different Scotch Whiskeys and learn all about them. Tickets for the Scotch tasting are \$60.00 plus a small handling fee. The Scotch Tasting is on Saturday, August 1st at 1pm & 3pm. You must purchase a Games Entrance ticket or a Patron ticket with this ticket. This ticket can only be purchased online

Ticket Information for the Games, Saturday August 1st

General Admission Gate Advance Ticket: \$25 plus a small handling fee / Ticket at Gate: \$30

Children under 12 are free if accompanied by an adult.

Tickets are available at Greenmead or online www.highlandgames.com

Patron Tickets for the Games, Saturday, August 1st

Become a PATRON OF THE GAMES, and for your generosity we offer you the comfort and convenience of the Patron's Hospitality Tent, located on the Main Field, and Reserved Parking. Cold Beverages, assorted fruits and vegetables, cheeses, scones and shortbread and other Scottish hors d'oeuvres will be served throughout the day at the Patron's Hospitality Tent. A cash bar will be available for Patron's in the Patron's Tent.

Patron Package Prices

Individual Patron: \$90.00. Each additional member of your family aged 13 to 17: \$25.00. Each additional member of your family aged 12 and under \$15.00. There is a small, extra handling fee for these.

Tickets are available at Greenmead or online www.highlandgames.com

Parking

There is limited, \$5 parking on site at Greenmead – after 11 a.m. or so it is usually full. There is free parking at Schoolcraft College with a free shuttle that will take you to and from Greenmead.

Dear Media Partners: In advance, thank you for your media support for the St. Andrew's Society of Detroit and our 177th Highland Games! If you can run a public service story in advance of the Highland Games, please feel free to contact Games Chair, Julie Palmer or SASD President, Chris MacKenzie for more information. If your organization can run a public service story, you are invited to receive four general admission tickets as our gift of appreciation. Come see this historic event firsthand!

Again, for more information about this, contact Highland Games Chair Julie Palmer at highlandgameschair@detroitscots.com or, phone Julie at 734 904 9510. You're also welcome to contact St. Andrew's Society of Detroit's President Chris MacKenzie at president@detroitscots.com or phone 248 760 0981.

Thank you again in advance for your support!

Over the years, funds raised at the St. Andrew's Society Annual Highland Games have been donated to scholarships or to many, charities as an example: Children's Hospital of Michigan, C.O.T.S, DMC Children's Hospital Troy, Forgotten Harvest, Gleaners, Habitat for Humanity Detroit & Oakland, St. Vincent De Paul, Toys for Tots and many more!

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