

Alton mother surprised by Wood River Aquatic Center's response to her breastfeeding

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
June 16 2017 12:30 PM



WOOD RIVER - On Thursday, Brie Theisen, of Alton, visited the Wood River Aquatic Center with her friend, Kendra Courtoise, hoping to get some relief from the early summer heat.

The friends and children enjoyed about an hour at the pool before it came time to feed her 14-month-old daughter, she simply pushed away one side of her swim top and let her child breastfeed.

"I was simply going about my own business and nothing was visible," Theisen said. "You could see her head, and it covered just as much as any swimming suit did."

While breastfeeding, Theisen said one of the facility's managers approached her and asked her to be "more discrete."

[Read more about the incident here.](#)

Still very upset by the situation, Theisen hopes that expectant mothers who are planning to breastfeed or current breastfeeding mothers are aware of their rights, and that the social stigma toward breastfeeding can come to an end.

"This is the type of situation that makes people so afraid to breastfeed in public," she said. "I'm not shaming any mother who formula feeds or bottle feeds, but breastfeeding mothers should be treated no differently than them."

The statement from the Wood River Parks and Recreation Department reads as follows:

"The Wood River Aquatic Center prides itself on being a family-friendly environment. We regret any controversy that was caused by the occurrences yesterday.

"The Aquatic Center does not discriminate against breast feeding mothers, and allows breast feeding mothers to nurse their children at our facility in accordance with the law.

"Our manager and staff have been fully briefed on the law and will incorporate the law into our training for all employees immediately.

"We apologize to the mother and child for any inconvenience we may have caused them."