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***Mayor Fulop Announces Return of Jersey City’s Fourth of July
“Freedom & Fireworks Festival” for Second Year; Fireworks
Display Visible from Jersey City and West Side of New York City***

***Free Event to Feature Live Music, Amusement Rides, Kids Entertainment, Food and
Fireworks by Nationally-Acclaimed Grucci; Donate \$20 or More to Support Special
Olympics New Jersey and be the Official Launcher for the NJ’s Premier Fireworks Show***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced today that the City of Jersey City will host New Jersey’s premier **Fourth of July concert and fireworks** spectacular, the Second Annual *Jersey City “Freedom & Fireworks Festival,”* from **noon to 10:30 p.m.** on **Saturday, July 4, 2015** at **Liberty State Park**, with fireworks by nationally-acclaimed Grucci, Grammy Award Winning Violinist Miri Ben-Ari, live musical performances, amusement rides, food vendors, and entertainment for the entire family.

The Jersey City Festival, which is free and open to the public, is expected to draw approximately 150,000 people to Liberty State Park, the most patriotic site in the country to celebrate America’s independence with views of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, One World Trade Center, and the Jersey City and New York City skylines.

“Home to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, Jersey City is the gateway of America and there is no greater place to celebrate our nation’s independence,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “That is why we were committed to returning the fireworks to Jersey City last year and this year have built on that success. We are looking forward to showcasing our great city to visitors from across the region who want to enjoy a breathtaking fireworks show while enjoying a day of fun for the entire family.”

The 20-minute fireworks display, which will be visible from locations in Jersey City and the west side of Manhattan, will be performed by the nationally-acclaimed fireworks entertainment production company, Fireworks by Grucci, known as “America’s First Family of Fireworks.” Their state-of-the-art fireworks performances have been designed for many of the world’s most special events, including seven consecutive U.S. Presidential Inaugurations, the Olympic Games and World’s Fairs. **This year, with the Grucci Fireworks App, downloadable from the app store, you can sync the music for the fireworks performance directly to your smart phone.**

“We’re honored and delighted to once again work with the City of Jersey City to provide a fireworks extravaganza that will be a shared experience for a very wide audience,” said **CEO and Creative Director Phil Grucci**. “As the designer and choreographer of this event, the City of Jersey City will provide an unparalleled stage to celebrate America’s Independence.”

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Donate \$20 or more to New Jersey Special Olympics for the opportunity to be the Official Launcher for the Freedom & Fireworks Festival Fireworks show. It's a once in a lifetime chance to launch the most spectacular, most patriotic 4th of July Fireworks show and donations can be made at officialstarter.org

Grammy Award-Winning Violinist/Producer Miri Ben-Ari will headline the Main Stage. The day will also include great local bands such as the Jersey Rollers, People In Disguise, Gordon James, Sons of Seymour, and more. The festival will feature an array of food and beverage options, children's entertainment, recreational activities and several amusement rides. Guests are encouraged to hashtag their social media posts with #JC4th and #JerseyCity.

Since last year's announcement that New York City was moving the Macy's Fireworks display to the East River, Mayor Fulop has worked to fill the void of a fireworks show along the Hudson for residents of Jersey City, northern New Jersey, and the west side of New York City. Since Mayor Fulop began the tradition last year, the administration intends on continuing to make Jersey City one of the premier Independence Day events in the nation.

Partners for the event include Suntex Marinas, Liberty House Restaurants & Catering, the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation, and The City of Jersey City's Stop the Drop Campaign.

A detailed schedule of events, including musical acts and additional entertainment, can be found at www.freedomandfireworks.com

This year, the "**Freedom & Fireworks Festival**," benefit partner is Special Olympics New Jersey, a not-for-profit, 501(c)3 organization that provides sports training and athletic competition to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics New Jersey is organizing **The Statue of Liberty 5K**, which takes place on Liberty Island, home of the Statue of Liberty. Check-in for this event will take place at Liberty State Park the morning of July 4th and a private ferry will transport participants to Liberty Island. Participants can run in the 5K or opt to walk in the 3K walk component. If you are interested in sponsoring a participant, you may do so by visiting the Statue of Liberty 5K website: <http://www.sonj.org/events/liberty-5k/>

"The Statue of Liberty 5k is a unique opportunity for participants to show off their patriotism and philanthropic spirit through their support of Special Olympics New Jersey," said **Heather Andersen, President and CEO of Special Olympics New Jersey**. "The Statue of Liberty 5k is a celebration of equality and inclusion for all, including those with intellectual disabilities, as we strive for acceptance on the playing fields, in schools and in our communities. The race is a wonderful way to kick-off the activities of the Freedom and Fireworks Festival, and the funds raised will make a real impact on the lives of our athletes."

The 2nd Annual Freedom & Fireworks Festival will also coincide with the Hermione-Lafayette Parade in New York Harbor past Lady Liberty.

Per the **Friends of Hermione-Lafayette in America**, "A small group dreamed of reconstructing an exact replica of General Lafayette's 18th-century ship called the Hermione. Today, the majestic vessel is the largest and most authentically built Tall Ship in the last 150 years. The Hermione has set sail in France, launching an adventure that comes to the United States in the summer of 2015 for an unprecedented voyage. It will be an historic moment when we welcome Lafayette's flagship Hermione as she passes in front of the Statue of Liberty on July 4th. Guests of the Freedom & Fireworks Festival will get to see the Hermione-Lafayette Parade procession from Liberty State Park at approximately noon.

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TRANSPORTATION TO THE EVENT

Anyone attending the event is encouraged to arrive by foot, bike, or public transportation to Liberty State Park as **parking will be extremely limited in the park** and surrounding areas.

Guests may arrive on foot or by bike through the **Ethel Pesin Liberty Footbridge** which connects downtown Jersey City with Liberty State Park. The footbridge is located at Jersey Avenue and Mill Creek Road, and is in close proximity to the Grove Street PATH and three Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Stations: Marin Blvd, Jersey Avenue, and the Liberty State Park station. Liberty State Park can also be reached on foot via the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway so anyone wishing to attend the event from downtown Jersey City can walk to the park along the walkway.

NJ TRANSIT's Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLR) will be providing regular service to Liberty State Park, via the Liberty State Park station. Due to the high attendance forecasted for the evening fireworks and concerts, attendees are advised that HBLR service capacity is **extremely limited** and as a result, customers will experience delays leaving Liberty State Park station following the fireworks in particular.

Attendees planning to utilize Hudson-Bergen Light Rail service to and from Liberty State Park for the July 4th fireworks may encounter overcrowding, service delays due to the limited operating capacity, and extensive wait times which could span in excess of hours. With this, attendees planning to use the HBLR should build enough time into their travel plans or consider leaving the park before the end of the fireworks or remaining in the park after the fireworks to participate in planned activities. ***Customers are strongly encouraged to buy roundtrip tickets from ticket vending machines in advance of the fireworks event.***

Guests utilizing the PATH train system, should check the PATH website at <http://www.panynj.gov/path/full-schedules.html> for an updated holiday schedule.

Ferries are available to guests of the event via Liberty Landing Ferry. **Liberty Landing Ferry** is a water taxi that runs every 30 minutes to the following locations until 8:30 pm:

- **Liberty Landing Marina** Jersey City, New Jersey
- **Warren Street** Jersey City, New Jersey
- **World Financial Center Terminal** New York, New York

Jersey City will provide Water taxi service free for guests between 8:30pm and 11pm between Warren Street and Liberty Landing Marina ONLY. You can view their schedule via their website: <http://www.libertylandingferry.com/weekend-schedule.aspx>

Commercial parking will be available throughout the city. Visitors are advised to use only registered and licensed parking facilities. Check with lot operators for fees and hours of operation.

BAGS/BACKPACKS/COOLERS ARE SUBJECT TO SEARCH

Please be advised that any bags, backpacks and coolers brought to Liberty State Park are subject to search by Law Enforcement Authorities.

MEDIA RSVP

All media wishing to cover the event must RSVP with the City of Jersey City by emailing jenniferm@jcnj.org with the names of the reporters and/or camera crews attending the event. Please indicate if you will be bringing a satellite truck or other vehicle. Once registered, you will receive a MEDIA Parking Pass (printable) and instructions on how to enter the park. Media credentials will be issued on-site media tent.

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ABOUT GRUCCI FIREWORKS

The Gruccis have transformed the night skies to the delight of millions across the globe since 1850. Among their signature performances are countless performances in and around Las Vegas, NV., seven consecutive U.S. Presidential Inaugurations; the Olympic Games in Beijing, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles and Lake Placid; commemorations such as the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty and star-studded extravaganzas including the grand opening of the Atlantis Dubai and the Palm Jumeirah Island in the United Arab Emirates. On New Year's Eve 2013, a stunning performance displaying 479,651 fireworks made its debut above Dubai's iconic skyline. The Gruccis achieved their "Largest Fireworks Display" title with this performance and smashed the Guinness Book of World Record's preceding mark.

ABOUT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY 5K

Before the barbecues, parades and fireworks, participants in the Statue of Liberty 5k have the opportunity to kick-off their 4th of July at one of America's most iconic landmarks. The run, which is the only official race around the Statue of Liberty, is a celebration of the nation's birthday and a showcase of the spirit of philanthropy, as all proceeds from the event benefit Special Olympics New Jersey. The race is capped at 500 participants and runners must raise a minimum of \$100 for the opportunity to run or walk. Check-in begins at 5:30am at Liberty State Park, and runners will be transported to Liberty Island on a private ferry provided by Statue Cruises. Race time is 7:15am. The first public ferry does not arrive at the Statue until 9:00am, giving runners time to visit the island without a large crowd. The Statue of Liberty 5k is organized by the New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics, which is the largest grassroots fundraising organization for Special Olympics New Jersey. For more information visit www.liberty5k.org.

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY

Special Olympics New Jersey provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in 24 Olympic-type sports for more than 25,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities, completely free of charge, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. Visit www.sonj.org for more information.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary for the City of Jersey City, at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.////