MAYOR'S MESSAGE: *March 15, 2018*

As the old proverb goes, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." With that in mind, we can all attest to this month's lion-like start – and no doubt we all share the same hope for March's lamb-like closing. However, regardless of the weather, March often brings with it several events that many of us look forward to each year. For example, Sea Isle City's annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade takes place this Saturday, March 17, at 3:30 p.m. along Landis Avenue from 83rd to 63rd Street. This year's parade will once again feature a variety of festive participants that will delight spectators along the parade route, including an Irish bagpipe brigade, the Ancient Order of Hibernians Color Guard, Sea Isle's 2018 "Irish Royal Family," Grand Marshal Bill Johnson, and many others. And, to add to the day's fun, there will also be a 'Best Dressed Irish" competition at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, which will be open to the public, and an Irish Celebration immediately after the parade. So, don your favorite Celtic sweater or green derby and join the festivities this Saturday!

Another springtime event that's worth mentioning is Sea Isle's annual Easter program at Dealy Field on March 21 starting at 5:00 p.m. During this year's Easter Program – which is always a big hit with local children up to age 11 – families will enjoy egg hunts, photo-ops with the Easter Bunny and other activities. To learn more about the Easter Program, phone the Recreation Office at 263-0050 or go to www.VISITSICNJ.com.

As you are no doubt aware, Sea Isle City is a hub of charitable giving. Each year, many non-profit organizations host 5K Runs and other fundraisers here because they realize that the people of our community are extremely generous – especially when it comes to good causes that positively impact families in need. For me, one of those worthy causes is Shriners Hospitals, an organization that cares for critically ill children, including kids with orthopedic issues, burns, spinal cord injuries and cleft lips and palates – regardless of their family's ability to pay for medical care. That's why my family and I are hosting a Shriners Hospital Fundraiser this Friday, March 16, starting at 6:00 p.m. at Kix-McNutley's on 63rd Street. I hope you can join us as we raise money that will touch the lives of children and help them get much-needed medical care they may not otherwise receive. For more info about Friday's fundraiser, phone 609-263-6341.

Next, I would like to draw your attention to a problem that has a much wider effect on our nation than many people realize: Bullying. According to the American Psychological Association's website, children who are bullied are more likely to drop out of school, they have lower academic achievement and lower self-esteem, and they have higher levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness. Because bullying is such an important issue, even Shriners Hospitals has added a link about bullying to their website, because, sadly, children with disabilities are twice as likely to be bullied. I encourage every parent to discuss the reality of bullying with their children and to help bring this important topic into the daylight. You can also support one of the various charities that address bullying, including The Humanity Preservation Foundation, which will host an "Orange Tie Gala" fundraiser at the Camden Aquarium on April 13. I commend the supporters of the HPF (some of whom have a strong connection to Sea Isle City) as they help raise awareness of child abuse and bullying. For more info about HPF, go to http://humanitypreservationfoundation.org/.

This week's "Shout Out" goes to Colleen and all the "fashionistas" at Groovy Girls on Landis Avenue, where they are celebrating their store's 10th Anniversary. Thanks for helping make the ladies of Sea Isle City look so "groovy!"

Smile…You're in Sea Isle!

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Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio