



## ***MAYOR'S MESSAGE***

*December 17, 2020*

Even though we are in the middle of a pandemic and things often appear gloomy and dark, there is an abundance of holiday cheer lifting up our community – and what I've seen happening lately has given me renewed hope for the future.

Case in point, last week the City's Division of Recreation hosted their annual Holiday Lighting Contest, which awards prizes to local properties with the best outdoor decorations. Typically, about ten or twelve properties enter the contest each year; however this year we had twenty entries – and each one was terrific!

My congratulations go to the first place winners of this year's Holiday Lighting Contest, Donna and George Miller, who live at 230 56<sup>th</sup> Street. The Millers did an outstanding job beautifying their home – and our community – and I thank them for their efforts.

This year's second place winner was Henri's Bar at the Braca Café, located at 18 JFK Boulevard, which also had outstanding decorations. Last but not least, our third place winner was the Ciseck-Glancey home, located at 3800 Sounds Avenue, where thousands of colorful lights illuminate the bay.

My thanks go to all of this year's winners and the seventeen other properties that were entered in the Holiday Lighting Contest – because each one is worth seeing! Special thanks goes to the members of the Sea Isle City Garden Club for judging this event, as well as the good folks at 1<sup>st</sup> Bank of Sea Isle City and Rocky & Fred's Creative Design Florist for providing prizes to the winners.

Furthermore, I want to extend my sincerest thanks to everyone in town who displayed outdoor decorations for all to enjoy. I can't remember the last time so many homes and businesses were decorated with holiday trim here in Sea Isle City – and what a difference it has made! Thank you all for spreading joy and lifting your neighbor's spirits!

Also last week, volunteers from the Knights of Columbus, of Saint Joseph Church, participated in the Recreation Office's annual Santa's Calling Program, which allowed children to speak directly with Santa Claus over the telephone. This year, more than ever, the Santa's Calling Program played an important role in the lives of many children, because Saint Nick has not been able to visit with kids face-to-face as much as he would have liked, and this program helped remind youngsters that Santa has not forgotten about them. My thanks and best wishes go to Knights Ron Custer, J.B. Flora, Mike McHale and Joe Mooney, who relayed Santa's phone calls from the North Pole to forty children on December 9. –Ho-Ho-Ho!

Another recent event that filled my heart with joy was a special trip to the New Jersey Memorial Veterans Home in Vineland, which was made by the members of VFW Post 1963 Auxiliary. Each year, our VFW volunteers host a luncheon for retired vets inside Post 1963 here in Sea Isle City, but this year they had to bring their holiday cheer to Vineland – which they did on December 11, when they caravanned to Cumberland County with a mountain of gifts, handmade greeting cards created by local students and other items that brought smiles to the faces of many retired men and women who served this nation in uniform. My congratulations and thanks go to our local VFW Auxiliary members for helping make this season “merry and bright” for others – and for all they do throughout the year!

Looking ahead, on Saturday afternoon the members of Sea Isle City’s Volunteer Fire Department will drive through town with Santa Claus onboard their fire engine, and they will make brief stops in front of homes that have registered for this special “drive-by” event. To ensure that Santa cruises past your home on Saturday, see the special “Holiday Drive-By” section of this newsletter and add your address to the Fire Department’s list of homes to visit. My thanks go to all of our local firefighters for helping make this season cheerful in Sea Isle City!

As you probably have heard, the folks at Mike’s Seafood have cancelled their 2021 Polar Bear Run-Walk for Autism in February, and instead they have launched a different fundraiser called “Around the World in 80 Days,” during which Mike’s Polar Bear will travel around the globe in the hopes of returning to Sea Isle City in less than three months. So far, Mike’s intrepid white bear has been to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Saint Louis, Missouri – and every \$10 that is donated to autism charities will put him one mile closer to his destination. I hope everyone will support this worthy cause and help Mike’s bear get many stamps in his passport.

Another reason I feel so good about this holiday season is the amazing response we have seen during this year’s Mayor’s Holiday Toy and Food Drive. I am overwhelmed by the number of people who stepped-up and supported our annual effort to brighten the holidays of families in need, and I am eternally grateful to everyone who donated food, toys and other gifts for this effort. Their generosity is going to make many people a little happier this Christmas, and that means so much during these difficult times! –Thank you all!

My best wishes for a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!

Smile...You’re in Sea Isle!



Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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