MAYOR'S MESSAGE *December 11, 2025*

The holiday season is in full swing in Sea Isle City, and our events have been putting everyone in the Christmas spirit!

As is the case each year, we officially launched the holiday season on Friday of Thanksgiving Weekend with our annual Tree Lighting Ceremony with Santa Claus, who arrived at Excursion Park during our Holiday Procession along JFK Boulevard while riding on the Sea Isle City Fire Department's vintage "Hale" fire engine. It was wonderful to see so many enthusiastic families lining our town's entrance corridor during the procession – and afterwards at Excursion Park as we gathered to sing carols and light Sea Isle City's Christmas Tree. Moreover, we were extremely grateful to hear so many kind words and expressions of gratitude from those in attendance! My thanks go to everyone who braved the chilly temperatures and joined us on November 28 as we kicked off the holiday season together!

Also during Thanksgiving Weekend, the Sea Isle City Chamber of Commerce hosted their annual Winter Village at Excursion Park, where families enjoyed a variety of activities, delicious food and shopping for gifts that will bring their loved ones joy this holiday season.

Following the busy Thanksgiving Weekend, our friends at VFW Post 1963 once again showered the residents of the Memorial Veterans Home in Vineland with kindness and love during Post 1963's annual "Christmas Caravan" on Friday morning. I was blessed to join our local veterans and VFW Auxiliary members as they traveled to Vineland in a convoy of more than fifteen vehicles that carried well-wishers and a mountain of gifts for the men and women who once served proudly in our nations' armed forces and now reside in the Veterans Home – and it was a heartwarming experience that made me truly proud of my friends at Post 1963 and the other members of our community who donated gifts to that important effort!

Another event our local VFW members host each December is their "Brunch with Santa," which took place on Sunday morning – much to the delight of the dozens of children who enjoyed a delicious meal with their families before sitting on Santa's lap and receiving toys and other treats. My heartfelt thanks go to all of the good folks at Post 1963 for "making the season bright" and for setting a good example for us all throughout the year!

One of the other local holiday activities that families look forward to each year is the Recreation Office's "Santa's Calling" program, which took place last night. During this time-honored event, several members of the Knights of Columbus of Saint Joseph Church relayed calls from the North Pole directly to young children, who enjoyed the unique opportunity to speak with Saint Nick one-on-one over the phone – and from what I was told, Santa was able to add many items to his Christmas List during that event. My thanks go to the Knights of Columbus volunteers who donated their time and served as "Santa's Ambassadors" during an event that reminded youngsters that Santa Claus really is coming to town!

Even though numerous seasonal events have already taken place, there is still plenty of holiday fun coming your way in Sea Isle City during the weeks ahead – right up to December 31, when we host our annual New Year's Eve Fireworks Show on the JFK Beach. But before 2026 arrives, you can make the most of the holiday season by going to the "Calendar" page at www.VisitSICNJ.com to learn about the holiday events that are still to come.

Obviously, different people enjoy celebrating the holidays in different ways, and if a "Holiday Beach Experience" will put you in the spirit of the season more than an organized community event, be sure to visit Sea Isle's 72nd Street Beach, where the Bologno Family has once again erected a fully decorated Christmas Tree in the sand. The Bologno clan have been in Sea Isle City for generations – and they obviously know how to celebrate the season in very fun ways! And, to add to everyone's enjoyment, they are inviting others to hang additional decorations on their tree to make it even more festive. –Thank you Bolognos!

As I mentioned two weeks ago, our 2025 Mayor's Holiday Toy and Food Drive is now underway – and we have already begun to receive donations that will make a positive impact on families in need on Christmas Day. In addition to the variety of toys we have received so far, we are also in need of non-perishable food items and gift cards that will brighten the holidays of those who are less fortunate. So, if you are able, I hope you will donate canned goods and other food items at any of the drop-off locations listed in the special section of this week's E-Newsletter – and you can mail or bring gift cards directly to my office in City Hall. For more information about this year's Toy and Food Drive, please call 609-263-4461, ext. 1245.

Before closing, I want to thank the many people who have told us how much they are enjoying Sea Isle City's holiday decorations (including the new items we added for 2025 as well as the older decorations that are in place again this year). I also want to thank everyone who has added to our community's holiday enjoyment by decorating their private properties – including our friends at VFW Post 1963, who once again did a great job making the season bright for everyone who travels along JFK Boulevard!

We have two "Shout Outs" this week. The first goes to two of the nicest people I know: Peggy and Terry Moore, a pair of fine-hearted individuals, who work tirelessly to make the world a better place. Peggy, who serves as President of VFW Post 1963's Auxiliary, and Terry, who is also an Auxiliary Board Member, both care deeply about our community and our nation's veterans – and they are sometimes called "Santa and Mrs. Claus." Thank you for all you do, Peggy and Terry!

Our second "Shout Out" goes to Georgia Chambers, a 7-year-old student at Garnet Valley Elementary School in Pennsylvania. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Georgia's parents, Mike and Taylor, who have a home here in Sea Isle City – and I was very impressed to learn that Georgia recently published a book titled "The Scoop," which is about a young girl who discovers the values of hard work and accomplishing goals. Georgia's book, which is now available on Amazon, is dedicated to Sea Isle City – and you can imagine how happy I was to hear that! Thank you for dedicating your book to our town and please keep up the good work, Georgia!

Smile…You're in Sea Isle!

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

PS: Shown below are some of the toys that were donated to this year's Toy and Food Drive from the good folks at the Commodore Club at the Spinnaker. –Thank you, Commodore Club!


ART & ACTIVITY CASE
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GIANTS


the turtle plate

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