MAYOR'S MESSAGE *December 2, 2021*

The Christmas season has arrived once again, and our annual holiday activities have gotten off to a great start. If you were in Sea Isle City during Thanksgiving Weekend, I hope you were able to join us during our annual Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday night. The parade was wonderful, and afterwards we received positive feedback from many of the folks who lined Central and Landis Avenues. After the parade, our Tree Lighting Ceremony attracted a huge crowd at Excursion Park, where, despite the chilly temperatures, families sang carols, drank hot cocoa, and cheered gleefully as Santa Claus flipped a switch and illuminated our town's giant Christmas tree.

I want to thank all of the participants who made the Holiday Parade so delightful, including the numerous fire departments from other communities, the local businesses and organizations that entered vehicles in the parade, and the various City departments that made sure the parade was a success. Additional thanks go to everyone who made the Tree Lighting Ceremony so memorable, especially Santa Claus, Boy Scout Troop 76 for manning a snack concession stand, the Sea Isle City Chamber of Commerce and Revitalization for providing everyone with free hot chocolate, and all of the spectators who helped us kick-off the holiday season in grand style!

As I always say, Sea Isle City is a wonderful place to spend the holidays – mainly because of the exceptional people you'll find in our community. Case in point, for the second year in a row, Nick and Shannon Giordano and their children have placed a fresh-cut Christmas tree on the 44th Street Beach for all to enjoy. I hope you and your loved ones will make a special trip to view their tree as part of your holiday activities; and, while you are there you can even add an ornament of your own. My thanks go to the Giordano family for helping make the season bright once again!

In addition to the Giordanos, our community is filled with many other people who effortlessly display kindness, generosity and love during the holidays – and throughout the year. This is evident all over Sea Isle City, including in our churches, at VFW Post 1963, at gatherings and fundraisers hosted by local civic organizations, and elsewhere in our community.

Another example of why Sea Isle City is very special is the tremendous amount of support we receive each year during our Mayor's Holiday Toy and Food Drive. This year marks our 29th holiday campaign, and I am extremely grateful for the assistance we have received from the community over the years – assistance that we are counting on once again in 2021. If you are able to contribute non-perishable food items or unwrapped toys for families in need, please bring them to one of several local drop-off locations throughout town, including First Bank of Sea Isle City's Landis Avenue branch, Mrs. Brizzle's Buns, Rick's Breakfast House, Sands Department Store, Kix Package Goods, the lobby of City Hall, and the Welcome Center.

This year, at the request of Nick and Shannon Giordano, we are adding an additional drop-off location for our Toy and Food Drive: in front of the Sea Isle City Beach Patrol Headquarters on the Promenade at 44th Street. This newest location will allow people who plan to visit the Giordano's Christmas tree on the 44th Street Beach to easily make a donation that will help struggling families enjoy the Christmas season. I appreciate the Giordanos for making this suggestion – and I am very grateful to everyone who plans to support our annual drive. Thank you all!

The City's Administration will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting at 10:00 AM on Saturday morning, December 4, inside the Welcome Center's Community Lodge, where we will outline the many reasons we want to build a new Community Center for Sea Isle City. The Town Hall meeting is open to all residents and property owners. Those who will not be able to attend in-person can view the meeting on Facebook Live. To learn more about our Town Hall Meeting, please see the special section in this newsletter.

As I have said before, we are extremely confident we can build our future Community Center in a fiscally responsible manner and simultaneously achieve other important municipal goals, including making improvements to our City's infrastructure and addressing flood mitigation. And speaking of flooding, as you know, we have been able to keep our local flood insurance premiums low because we came together as a community to make Sea Isle City the top-rated municipality in the State of New Jersey when it comes to flood standards. With that in mind, I am happy to announce that we recently received confirmation that Sea Isle City will maintain its "Class 3" status in FEMA's CRS Program, which allows property owners of compliant structures to receive a 35% discount on flood insurance policies. I want to thank Sea Isle City's Flood Plain Manager, Neil Byrne, for all of his hard work to keep our flood insurance rates low. Furthermore, I hope this news from FEMA will serve as a reminder of all the good work we have achieved so far in our community – and as an indicator of the many good things still to come!

Smile…You're in Sea Isle,

Len

Mayor Leonard C. Desiderio

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