

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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Jersey City to Celebrate the 50th Annual Puerto Rican Heritage Festival and Parade as part of the City's 'Tapestry of Nations' Ethnic Festival Series

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, the Municipal Council and the Division of Cultural Affairs proudly announce that the annual **Puerto Rican Heritage Festival**, a two day event being held as part of the City's '*Tapestry of Nations' Ethnic Festival*' series, will take place from **1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** on **Saturday and Sunday, August 21, 2010 and August 22, 2010** at **J. Owen Grundy Pier** at Exchange Place.

The **Puerto Rican Parade** kicks off on **Sunday, August 22nd** at **1:00 p.m.** from **Lincoln Park** at Kennedy Boulevard and Belmont Avenue. It winds its way along Kennedy Boulevard to Montgomery Street and then along Montgomery Street to the reviewing stand at City Hall.

“Jersey City’s greatest strength lies within its rich diversity,” said **Mayor Healy**. “We appreciate the culture and history of our various communities of people, all of whom add to the greatness of this city. In celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Jersey City Puerto Rican Heritage Festival and Parade, we commemorate an event of historical significance and profound meaning for the people of Puerto Rico and Jersey City.”

Each year, the Puerto Rican Heritage and Festival Week recalls the indomitable spirit of the Puerto Rican people who continue to make significant contributions to our city, state and nation, and also serves to enhance appreciation, among us all, for precious freedom and its value in our daily lives.

The Parade Committee has always sought to honor worthwhile and deserving individuals of Puerto Rican Heritage and Festival Parade Committee has bestowed the following honors upon these fine upstanding citizens: Grand Marshall, Johnny Lozada; Honorary Grand Marshall, Freeholder Eliu Rivera; Puerto Rican Woman of the Year, Wanda Rios; Puerto Rican Man of the Year, Joshua Rodriguez; Local Godmother, Sonia Araujo; Local Godfather, Ben Lopez; Educator of the Year, Dr. Anna Villafane; Honorary Man of the Year, U.S. Senator Robert Menendez; Honorary Woman of the Year, Cindy Vero; Green Leadership Award, Oren Dabney; Humanitarian Award, Denise Jefferson;

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Firefighter of the Year, Gerard Vega; Police Officer of the Year, Michael Camacho; Sheriff Officer of the Year, Osbado Hernandez; Correction Officer of the Year, Herminio Sanchez; EMT of the Year, Julio Rivera; Ambassador of the Year, Daisy Martinez; Attorney of the Year, Karen DeSoto; Teacher of the Year, Jerusalyn Figueroa; Businesswoman of the Year, Erika Pacheco; International Godmother, Laura Posada; International Godfather, Jorge Ramos; Student of the Year, Alberto Rivera; Little Miss Puerto Rico, Sierra Rose Dobles; Princess, Armani Treasure Lee Silva; Condesa, Chrissalina Colon; Junior Miss Puerto Rico, Tylasiah Russel; Princess, Jessica Christina Diaz; Condesa, Alexi Gaetan; Miss Puerto Rico, Alexandra Hernandez; Princess, Maria Canales; and Condesa, Alia Paige Rosario.

“This event provides the opportunity for the Puerto Ricans of Jersey City celebrate their pride and heritage with the community,” said **Armando Roman**, President of the Jersey City Puerto Rican Heritage Festival and Parade Committee. “The committee works tirelessly year-round dedicating their time to community service, providing academic and athletic scholarships to Jersey City students, and through community events, they enable schools, businesses, community organizations, and government to join together and celebrate our rich ethnic traditions and cultural ancestry.”

The Jersey City Puerto Rican Day Parade is the largest and longest running parade in Hudson County and in the State of New Jersey. It was founded in 1961 by Emilio Solivan, Diego Berrios, Cristino Roman, Jose Mendez, Rafael Bou, Primitivo Valle, Santiago Bonnilla and Juan Benitez, as a vehicle to unite and organize the Puerto Rican Community in Jersey City.

The Jersey City Puerto Rican Heritage Festival and Parade has been a tradition in Jersey City for decades, providing the opportunity for the Puerto Ricans of Jersey City to share their pride in their heritage. It is considered the largest and most colorful ethnic parade in Jersey City, thousands are expected to march with thousands more as spectators. Bands in colorful costumes, stilt walkers, dancers, floats and native bands will be in abundance. There will be continuous entertainment by local, Island and international artists and much more!

Over the years, the Jersey City Puerto Rican Heritage Festival and Parade Committee has become an active, year-round community service organization providing academic and athletic scholarships to Jersey City students. They also sponsor community events enabling their schools, businesses, community organizations, and government to join together and celebrate the richness of their ethnic traditions and cultural ancestry.

For more information about the Puerto Rican Parade and Festival, call the Division of Cultural Affairs at (201) 547-6921.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///