FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ulster County Italian Festival set for Oct. 11 at Kingston waterfront

KINGSTON, N.Y.—The annual Ulster County Italian Festival, a free and family-friendly event, returns to the city's Rondout Waterfront on Oct. 11 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Now in its 12th year, the festival will feature live entertainment on two stages throughout the day, food vendors, cultural exhibits and demonstrations, a spaghetti-eating contest, street performers and costumed characters.

"We have a tradition every year of offering great food, great music, fun for the family, and it's a great community experience," said festival co-chair Tony Marmo. "It's your friends and neighbors celebrating not only the Italian culture, but everybody's culture. That's what the Ulster County Italian American Foundation is about. We bring people together."

At the 11 a.m. opening ceremony on the main stage, the foundation will honor Ron and Marie Ardizzone of Bloomington as the Signore and Signora of the Year. The Ardizzones, both 84 years old, are active in the UCIAF Community Care program and volunteer every year at the festival and other events. The pair also volunteers at People's Place.

This year's Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented posthumously to the late Dr. Philip DiNovo, the founder and former president of the American Italian Heritage Association and the

American Italian Heritage Museum in Albany. DiNovo is being honored for his vision, dedication and lifelong commitment to preserving and celebrating Italian American heritage.

Other honorees this year include Joanne Arcadipane, recipient of the Nina Postupack Community Service Award; Jenny Bella and Maria DePippo, Italian Pride Award; and Brenden Campise and Chase Chapman, Youth Award.

Marmo said live music will be featured on the main stage at T.R. Gallo Park and the O+ stage near the Barn at Hudson River Maritime Museum. The scheduled performers on the main stage include vocalist Angela Bruno at noon, Orchestra DiNapoli at 1:35 p.m., Kingston High School Choir with Andrea Shaut at 3 p.m., Steve Maglio Quartet at 4:20 p.m. and T.S. Ensemble, an eight-piece party cover band at 5:50 p.m.

Performers on the O+ stage will include Dassi Rosenkrantz at 1 p.m., Emerald Groundwater at 2:20 p.m., Sheila and the Deep End at 3:40 p.m. and the Jack Grace Band at 5 p.m.

In addition, various performers will be featured between the main acts, including the Center for Creative Education dancers; Vanaver Caravan performing traditional Italian folk dances, Redwing Blackbird Puppets and strolling accordion players.

One of the biggest crowd pleasers, the spaghetti-eating contest, will be held near the gazebo at 1:25 p.m., and festivalgoers looking for cultural immersion can attend a ravioli-making demonstration at 3 p.m. and a tutorial on winemaking at 3:30 p.m., among other events at the Barn.

Another big highlight is the food. Marmo said while many of the vendors specialize in Italian fare (pizza, fried dough and giant meatballs), there will be plenty of other options to suit every palate.

He added that the festival is known for its Instagram-worthy moments as costumed characters such as Leonardo DaVinci, a gladiator, empress, gondoliers, a stilt walker and fire-eater roam the streets and mingle with attendees.

“It’s really more than a festival,” Marmo said. “It’s a cultural experience with a positive vibe. The whole thing is so uplifting, and you can do whatever you want to do—sit in the cultural barns and learn some amazing things like how to make pasta, or listen to the music, or just eat and relax.”

Free UCAT shuttle buses will run throughout the day with pickup points at the Kingston Plaza (near Hannaford), Kingston High School (enter lot from Andrew Street) and Kingston Business Park at the Howmet parking lot.

For more information on the festival or the Ulster County Italian American Foundation, go to uciaf.org.

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