



**MORE EVENTS, MORE DETAILS ANNOUNCED FOR
WAWA WELCOME AMERICA JULY 4TH FESTIVAL, JUNE 29 – JULY 4**

***Get Free Up-Front Mary J. Blige and KIDZ BOP KIDS “Best Time Ever” Tour Concert Tickets,
New Travel Packages & Deals, New Events, Fireworks Details,
Mural Arts Philadelphia Monument Lab Summer Sampler & More!***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, PHILADELPHIA, PA (JUNE 22, 2017) – Welcome America, Inc. and the City of Philadelphia announce more events, new details and travel packages for the **2017 Wawa Welcome America** six-day Independence Day festival Thursday, June 29 through Tuesday, July 4. Philadelphia's July 4th festival – *Wawa Welcome America* – is a multi-day citywide festival with 50 FREE events including one of America's most inclusive free Independence Day concerts, multiple world-class fireworks displays, outdoor movie screenings, free museum days, community events and more.

Want to see Mary J. Blige up close during the July 4th Concert & Fireworks?

- Become a friend of *Wawa Welcome America* by signing up at welcomeamerica.com/stay-connected and be the first to know when up-front tickets are available.
- Follow *Wawa Welcome America* on Facebook and @July4thPhilly on Twitter and Instagram for up-front ticket opportunities.
- Book a stay at Sonesta Philadelphia or Loews Philadelphia and reserve the *Wawa Welcome America* Hotel Package that includes up-front tickets to the July 4th Concert. welcomeamerica.com/guides/travel-packages

Sonesta Philadelphia's *Wawa Welcome America* July 4th Concert Package includes an overnight stay, free overnight valet parking, and two free up-front tickets to see Mary J. Blige. Enjoy the comfort and fresh, contemporary vibe at the all-new Sonesta Philadelphia. A premier choice among hotels in Philadelphia, enjoy spacious, modern accommodations and luxurious amenities while staying in the heart of downtown only steps away from the Benjamin Franklin Parkway where the *Wawa Welcome America* finale takes place with Party on the Parkway and the July 4th Concert & Fireworks. Packages around \$199.

Stay at **Loews Philadelphia** and book the ***Wawa Welcome America* Concert Package** to receive two complimentary up-front tickets to the Mary J. Blige concert on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The package also includes free overnight parking for one vehicle per room per night. Packages start at \$179.

The Logan Philadelphia, a Curio Collection by Hilton is the closest luxury hotel to the Party on the Parkway. AAA/CAA members save five percent on their overnight hotel stay. Grab a bite at Urban Farmer and then head to Assembly, the chic rooftop lounge with breathtaking views of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the July 4th Fireworks. Assembly is one of the official fireworks viewing parties joining Sugarhouse Casino and One Liberty Observation Deck.

The **Visit Philly Overnight Hotel Package** is another way to experience Philadelphia during July 4th. The offer includes a one- or two-night hotel stay and free hotel parking. Find your package at visitphilly.com.

Book your Amtrak travel 14 days in advance and save 25 percent or more off the lowest available fares on the Northeast Regional and Select Acela Service. Kids ages 2-12 travel for 50 percent off the adult fare, so everyone can travel for less. Information at Amtrak.com.

NEW EVENTS ADDED

Mural Arts Philadelphia *Monument Lab* Summer Sampler

Saturday, July 1 at Franklin Square 1-4 p.m.

Mural Arts Philadelphia gives the first glimpse of *Monument Lab*, featuring a sneak preview of Philadelphia artist Kara Crombie's monument, *Sample Philly*: an interactive sculpture with a sound bank of musical loops drawn from the city's rich musical history. Enjoy live music and refreshments, and chat one-on-one with the artist and curators in Franklin Square. *Monument Lab* is a public art and history project produced by Mural Arts Philadelphia and curators Paul Farber and Ken Lum that invites people to join a citywide conversation about history, memory, and our collective future. The *Monument Lab* Summer Sampler is produced in partnership with Historic Philadelphia, Inc. Visit monumentlab.muralarts.org for more information.

Innovation Demonstrations at Penn Park at The University of Pennsylvania

Friday, June 30, 12-4 p.m.

For the first time *Wawa Welcome America*, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania, will showcase innovation and technology. Local inventors will show off their inventions, while children and families can experience musical technology demonstrations, participate in financial literacy games, hear books read by guest readers including Mayor Jim Kenney and City Representative Sheila Hess, and enjoy interactive ballroom dance performances and lessons. Visitors can also enjoy a Free Museum Day at the Penn Museum.

Wells Fargo Citywide Community Day

Saturday, July 1, Starting at 12 p.m. Times Vary

Wells Fargo will present **Citywide Community Day** on Saturday, July 1 during *Wawa Welcome America*. The festival takes place throughout the City of Philadelphia with Performances in Public Spaces—an afternoon of free, family-friendly pop-ups happening simultaneously in 10 public parks, squares and plazas throughout Philadelphia neighborhoods. Performances, hosted by The Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and *Wawa Welcome America*, ranging from cultural experiences to hip hop dancing, jazz and storytelling will be performed in the heart of Philadelphia's diverse neighborhoods. In addition to the performances, *Welcome America* will provide free books for children courtesy of Books In Homes plus debut the *Philadelphia World Heritage Coloring Book* produced by Global Philadelphia, patriotic fun and activities. The African American Museum of Philadelphia will offer free admission and special programming from 2 to 3 p.m. At 4 p.m. In Gospel We Trust presents a riveting afternoon of Gospel featuring Trenea Ferebee and the Sounds of Soar Gospel Ensemble along with Citywide Praise Dance Troupe at City Hall. The day ends with a free concert and fireworks over the Delaware River Waterfront. Visit WelcomeAmerica.com for complete details.

KIDZ BOP KIDS "Best Time Ever" Tour and More for Families on July 4th

Tuesday, July 4 on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway 12-7 p.m.

Enjoy five blocks of FREE entertainment, food and fun for all ages July 4 at **Party on the Parkway**. Families can enjoy an interactive kid's area featuring the Strider Bikes obstacle course, a Zipline, games, and make-and-take arts and crafts. Animal lovers can bring their furry friends to enjoy the Amtrak All

Aboard Pet Zone. For the second year, **KIDZ BOP KIDS** will perform a free live concert on July 4 on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway at 1 p.m. on the main stage.

Win front row tickets for KIDZ BOP KIDS “Best Time Ever” Tour! Stop by a Beneficial Bank participating branch now through Friday, June 23 and complete a financial literacy activity to win up-front tickets. Participating branches include: Broad & Porter Streets, 21st Street & Passyunk Avenue, 10th & Catherine Streets, Passyunk Avenue & Mifflin Street, 12th & Chestnut Streets, and 16th & Chestnut Streets.

MORE TO DO AND IT’S ALL FREE

More Museums Join the Schedule of Free Museum Days

- National Constitution Center (courtesy of Wawa), June 29
- Penn Museum, June 30
- Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (5 – 8 p.m.), June 30
- One Liberty Observation Deck (8 – 11 a.m.), July 1
- African American Museum in Philadelphia, July 1
- Philadelphia Museum of Art (pay what you wish), July 2
- The Barnes Foundation (courtesy of PECO), July 2
- National Liberty Museum, July 3
- The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection at Temple University, July 3
- National Museum of American Jewish History, July 4
- Philadelphia History Museum, July 4

More **Stoli Vodka Red, White and Blue Happy Hours** – A brand new format of Fourth of July themed happy hours with crafty cocktails and live entertainment at individual restaurants. Participating restaurants include: Moshulu, Art Bar | Sonesta, XFINITY Live!, City Tap House Logan Square, Cafe Cret, Midtown Continental, Positano Coast by Aldo Lamberti, and Campo’s.

Five Nights of Free Movies Around Town

Grab plenty of popcorn for more movie screenings under the stars. **Philly @ The Movies presented by St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children** features free outdoor movie screenings.

- The Piazza at Schmidt’s, *Despicable Me 2*, June 29
- Main Street in Manayunk, *Despicable Me*, June 29
- Panati Playground, *The Lego Batman Movie*, June 30
- Vernon Park, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, July 1
- The steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Rocky*, July 2
- Franklin Square, *SING*, July 3

DATE CHANGE

Wawa Welcome America Debut! Food Trust’s Night Market Spruce Hill: Independence Day Weekend Edition at 40th & Walnut Streets will offer a unique family-friendly culinary experience with street eats, live music and neighborhood pride. This is the Food Trust’s debut in West Philadelphia. Saturday, July 1 from 6 – 10 p.m.

A NAME CHANGE

The July 4th parade has undergone a name change and will now be known as **“The United States of America’s Independence Day Parade.”** This name change begins to set the stage for the 250th birthday of the United States of America on July 4, 2026! The parade will feature ten floats; historical characters

John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin; Miss America 2017 – Savvy Shields; Season 1 Winner of “America’s Got Talent” Bianca Ryan, as well as a long list of historical, cultural, and musical elements. The 4,000 participants in the parade come from Maine, Minnesota, Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

FIREWORK SOUNDTRACKS

Because there’s no such thing as too many fireworks to celebrate July 4th, four fireworks displays synchronized to music will set Philadelphia’s skies aglow.

***Wawa Welcome America Fireworks* presented by NBCUniversal and Pyrotecnico Friday, June 30 at 9:30 p.m. over the Delaware River Waterfront**

Titled “The Best of American Composers” the show includes the music of American composers George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Irving Berlin. The songs of all three will be married together with choreographed fireworks to create an amazing experience for listeners and viewers alike. The show opens with “I Got Rhythm,” a very popular Gershwin tune, followed by Bernstein’s ever-powerful “Overture to Candide.” The city traffic sounds of honking horns and the fast pace of the city come to life in Gershwin’s “American in Paris” flanked by the very emotional and bone chilling “Somewhere” from Bernstein’s – *West Side Story*. Then into Berlin’s “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” followed by Gershwin’s “Strike Up The Band.” The show ends with Berlin’s very powerful “God Bless America.”

***Wawa Welcome America Fireworks* presented by NBCUniversal and Pyrotecnico Saturday, July 1 at 9:30 p.m. over the Delaware River Waterfront**

Showcasing the “Sounds of Two States” this show is dedicated to amazing musical artists from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The fireworks and the artists are introduced by the legendary Philadelphia radio host Jerry Blavat. The show opens with “American Bandstand Boogie,” co-composed by Pine Grove, Pennsylvania native and the original host of American Bandstand Bob Horn, followed by New Jersey native, Bon Jovi. Then into New Jersey favorite the Jonas Brothers, followed by the chilling voices of Philadelphia’s native sons Boyz II Men. Philadelphia’s own The Hooters and Berks County’s Taylor Swift are featured. The show closes with one of Philadelphia’s greatest musical treasures, Patti LaBelle.

***Wawa Welcome America Fireworks* presented by NBCUniversal and Pyrotecnico Tuesday, July 4 at 9:30 p.m. over the Benjamin Franklin Parkway**

(Firing simultaneously *The Freedom Festival Fireworks* at Wiggins Park over the Delaware River Waterfront sponsored by the Camden County Chosen Board of Freeholders. *separate soundtrack)

The July 4th show is a celebration of everything Philadelphia. It begins with the famous words of the Declaration of Independence. The show moves into a segment of the “Star Spangled Banner” followed by the Fanfare for *Rocky*. The show celebrates the diversity and inclusion of Philadelphia with spoken words by Maya Angelou backed by the beautiful music of “Glory.” The pace picks up with “Philadelphia Freedom” and Philadelphia’s Kathy Sledge and Sisters with “We Are Family.” The show closes with a high energy tune called “Rock’n on Top of the World” celebrating all the musical successes Philadelphia has had from the beginning of time to now, followed by a bone chilling musical piece by Patrick Stump called “THIS CITY.”

For more details on these and the 50 free events already announced visit WelcomeAmerica.com.

About Welcome America, Inc.

Welcome America, Inc. is a 501c3, non-profit organization in public-private partnership with the City of Philadelphia. Welcome America, Inc.’s mission is to promote American history, education and Philadelphia. The organization seeks to enhance the resident and visitor experience through citywide events that provide an economic boost to the local economy. Moving forward, Welcome America, Inc.

will produce and assist in the growth of select city events year-round that can increase awareness of Philadelphia as an event destination.

Founded in 1993, Welcome America, Inc. celebrates its 25th year in 2017. Welcome America, Inc. produces the annual *Wawa Welcome America* festival, the nation's premier July 4th celebration in the birthplace of our nation.

Wawa Welcome America is presented by Title Partner, Wawa, Inc. and presenting Broadband Communications Partner Comcast NBCUniversal with NBC10 and Telemundo62 as the local broadcast partners. With additional support by the City of Philadelphia, Live Nation, Philadelphia International Airport and Visit Philadelphia.

For more information, visit WelcomeAmerica.com. Join the conversation at:

- Facebook – Facebook.com/WawaWelcomeAmerica
- Twitter – Twitter.com/July4thPhilly
- Instagram – Instagram.com/July4thPhilly

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Media Contact:

Melanie Sole

Cashman & Associates for Welcome America, Inc.

melanie@cashmanandassociates.com

215-627-1060 (o)

856-261-8569 (m)