



**WAWA WELCOME AMERICA ANNOUNCES NEW BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY EXPERIENCE  
AND JUST-ADDED EVENT DETAILS**

***The Countdown is On! Just 2 Days Until the Start of the  
2019 Wawa Welcome America Festival, Saturday, June 29 – Thursday, July 4***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Philadelphia, PA (JUNE 27, 2019)** – Welcome America, Inc. and the City of Philadelphia announce new event details and a new enhanced experience for the July 4<sup>th</sup> events on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The six-day *2019 Wawa Welcome America Festival* takes place Saturday, June 29 through Thursday, July 4 and will encompass more than 50 free, multicultural and multigenerational, patriotic events throughout Philadelphia’s diverse neighborhoods.

**ENHANCED BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY EXPERIENCE FOR JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> EVENTS**

Welcome America has designed a new layout for the July 4<sup>th</sup> *Party on the Parkway* and July 4<sup>th</sup> Concert & Fireworks which will offer families and guests an enhanced experience. The Benjamin Franklin Parkway will now feature dedicated entry points and a perimeter that will allow guests to enter in a smooth, more orderly fashion, then roam freely to experience all the iconic *Party on the Parkway* has to offer.

“Spending the day with us on the Parkway will be better than ever before; we are really excited to have our guests take advantage of this expanded layout,” explained Welcome America, Inc. President & CEO Michael DeBene.

All entrances will be open from noon until 9 p.m. Guests are highly encouraged to enter through the Main Welcome Gates at Logan Circle. Other entry points include:

- 20th Street & the Parkway from both the north and south sides
- 21st Street & the Parkway from both the north and south sides
- 23rd Street & Pennsylvania Avenue north side

Entry signage will be clearly visible at all gates, and Wawa Welcome America Ambassadors will be on hand to help guests find their way.

*Party on the Parkway* runs from noon to 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup> and is followed by the July 4<sup>th</sup> Concert and Fireworks from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Once guests enter the Parkway, they will be able to roam freely and experience all that Philadelphia's iconic July 4<sup>th</sup> party has to offer from food and drink, to games and rides, to entertainment. This year’s enhanced family-friendly experience includes the free

**PECO Kids' Zone** featuring a zip-line, acrobatic dunkers, bungee jumping, games, arts & crafts, storytelling, face painting, and much more.

As always, guests are permitted to bring picnics and small personal coolers. A full list of prohibited items can be found on [welcomeamerica.com/guides](http://welcomeamerica.com/guides).

There will be many food and beverage options available for purchase, and for the 21+ crowd, Welcome America has partnered with VISIT PHILADELPHIA® to feature craft beers from Philadelphia and the surrounding counties along the Parkway.

Entertainment options abound with four stages of music, dance, and more!

- For the second year, **The Chill Moody Music Stage** is back on the Parkway on July 4<sup>th</sup>! This music experience curated by Philadelphia Music Ambassador/Recording Artist Chill Moody, kicks off at noon and runs until 7 p.m. "My goal this year, as always, is to spotlight some of Philly's rising stars, mix in some love from out of town, and provide an experience I'm sure everyone in attendance will enjoy," says Chill Moody who will also be performing music from his forthcoming *Horns At The Funeral* album.
- The **Multicultural Stage** will feature multiple culturally diverse dance acts from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Philly area bands will jam on the **PA Lottery Philly Groove Stage** from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Visit the **SugarHouse Casino Freedom Stage** for performances of street dance theater, magic, a dance party with DJ Diamond Kuts of iHeartRadio's Power 99, and The U.S. Navy Band Cruisers from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Guests are encouraged to text "AMERICA" to 888-777 to receive updated event information and helpful tips throughout the festival.

### **GOSPEL ON INDEPENDENCE**

An audience favorite returns in 2019 when the 100-voice gospel choir performs in front of Independence Hall on Sunday, June 30 at 7 p.m. The Philadelphia Men's Fellowship Choir will lead this inspiring performance that includes "The Sisterly Love" ensemble. **Gospel on Independence** is hosted by Patty Jackson of iHeartRadio's 105.3 WDAS-FM. It is presented in partnership with VISIT PHILADELPHIA® and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and follows the Historic District Block Party.

### **UNITED STATES ARMY FIELD BAND**

Join the **U.S. Army Field Band** for a musical celebration of American independence on Monday, July 1 at 7 p.m. Enjoy music by DJ Johnny V of iHeartRadio's Power 99 and the sounds of Philly's own Jerry Blavat while scaling up the U.S. Army rock climbing wall and participating in interactive activities with the U.S. Army and other sponsors. Valerie Knight of iHeartRadio's 106.1 The Breeze will host the celebration featuring special guest the Honorable Patrick J. Murphy, former acting Secretary of the U.S. Army and former U.S. Congressman.

At 8 p.m., The U.S. Army Field Band will debut "Let Freedom Ring," a musical and visual celebration to honor Independence Day. Recall the historic fight for liberty as authentic fifes and drums march out "Yankee Doodle." Feel the power of American music as the Concert Band performs one of the most iconic symphonic works of all time, the Finale from Aaron Copland's "Symphony No. 3." Join Army Field Band Soldiers as they honor the Greatest Generation and mark the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day

landing at Normandy. The program comes to a dramatic conclusion as the Concert Band and Soldiers' Chorus perform "Testament of Freedom," based on the writings of Thomas Jefferson. The evening's finale will be a breathtaking fireworks display choreographed to a soundtrack featuring the Great American Orators. Fireworks are presented by *Comcast NBCUniversal, Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, and Pyrotecnico.*

### **THE CHILL MOODY EXPERIENCE**

This year, the Chill Moody Experience has expanded to a two-day celebration during Wawa Welcome America. Kick things off with Chill Moody on the rooftop at Cira Green for the ***Girls.Like.nicethings Pop-Up Art Exhibit*** in partnership with Sunset Social on July 3 from 5 to 9 p.m. The pop-up will feature the work of some of Philly's most talented women visual artists, an artist chat, and a jam session. Then visit The Chill Moody Stage at *Party on the Parkway* on July 4<sup>th</sup> for a music experience curated by Chill.

### **CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM CEREMONY**

Celebrate July 4th where it all began – Independence Hall – with the annual **Celebration of Freedom Ceremony**. This moving, patriotic celebration on July 4 at 10 a.m. features:

- A reading of an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence by Philly's own **Patti LaBelle**.
- Entertainment by the **Philly POPS BIG Band**.
- The administration of the **Oath of Enlistment** to new military recruits.
- The presentation of Mayor Jim Kenney's fourth annual **Magis Award** to former Philadelphia Eagle, **Connor Barwin and the Make the World Better Foundation**. **Jason Kelce**, Philadelphia Eagle and a Make the World Better supporter, will be present with Connor Barwin to receive the award. The Magis Award is presented annually during the Celebration of Freedom Ceremony on July 4<sup>th</sup> to acknowledge a local individual or group that has gone above and beyond in serving their fellow Philadelphians.
- The reveal of the **Wawa Foundation Hero Award** winner. The award recognizes non-profit organizations that support the Greater Philadelphia area through service that assists others and builds stronger communities through preserving our independence, protecting our safety, and educating and inspiring our youth. The winner is chosen by public vote and the recipient receives a \$50,000 grant with the three runners up each receiving \$10,000 grants. The 2019 finalists are:
  - ASAP/After School Activities Partnerships
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence
  - Esperanza
  - The Pennsylvania Center for Adapted Sports
- The Celebration of Freedom Ceremony will end with a performance by **"Sisterly Love" Ensemble**.

The Celebration of Freedom Ceremony is produced by the City of Philadelphia's Office of the City Representative and Independence National Historical Park and is televised live on NBC10 and Telemundo62.

### **SALUTE TO AMERICA INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE NEW ELEMENTS**

The 2019 Wawa Welcome America *Salute to America Independence Day Parade* on Thursday, July 4 at 11 a.m. will feature multiple branches of the United States Military, performers from six states, and the

debut of the “CANVAS OF AMERICA,” a magnificent flag measuring 18 feet wide by 190 feet long that is comprised of 195 flags from countries around the world. The inclusion of “CANVAS OF AMERICA” in the parade is in recognition of the global diversity amongst Philadelphia residents and celebrates Philadelphia as a destination for global tourism. The parade and “CANVAS OF AMERICA” are proudly presented by the Philadelphia International Airport. The flag will be carried by Philadelphia International Airport employees, Global Philadelphia representatives, and athletes from Philadelphia Unity Cup teams. Portions of the parade can be watched live on NBC10 and Telemundo62.

### **UNION HOSPITALITY**

Building and operating the temporary concert arena at Eakins Oval on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway is no small feat; it takes an army of union workers. Martin Law keeps them cool and hydrated by proudly sponsoring the on-site hospitality tent for the second year.

### **About Wawa Welcome America**

*Wawa Welcome America* is a six-day festival taking place Saturday, June 29 through Thursday, July 4 that celebrates American history, education, and Philadelphia. The 2019 festival will encompass 50 free, all-ages, patriotic events in Center City, the Historic District, and in Philadelphia’s diverse neighborhoods. The festival concludes with 12 hours of non-stop commemorations and celebrations on July 4th. The theme of this year’s *Wawa Welcome America* festival is “Celebrate With Us.”

For more information, visit [WelcomeAmerica.com](http://WelcomeAmerica.com). Join the conversation at:

- Facebook – [Facebook.com/WawaWelcomeAmerica](https://Facebook.com/WawaWelcomeAmerica)
- Twitter – [Twitter.com/July4thPhilly](https://Twitter.com/July4thPhilly)
- Instagram – [Instagram.com/July4thPhilly](https://Instagram.com/July4thPhilly)

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