

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 4, 2005

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JAHA invites churches and non-profits to be a part of FolkFest

“Community Kitchen” to again feature local non-profits and churches

The Johnstown Area Heritage Association is offering local churches and non-profits a chance to raise funds through the “Community Kitchen” at the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, which is scheduled for September 2-4, 2005. This is the second year of the Community Kitchen, which allows Johnstown-area non-profits to receive free booth space to vend food and drinks for all or part of the three-day festival.

JAHA is sending a letter to more than 300 churches and non-profits in the area, as festival officials want to make sure all eligible organizations are aware of this opportunity. The letter provides details about the application process, and interested organizations are asked to call JAHA to receive a complete application. The application deadline is June 30.

“Although the deadline is a way off, it can take time for an organization to do the necessary planning,” said Ron Carnevali, festival chairman and president of the JAHA board of directors. “Last year we had six organizations take part, and we’re hoping to grow this initiative every year.

All FolkFest vendors receive a 10’X10’ booth covered by an awning or tent, electrical service, 8’ of counter space, grease mats, refrigeration space and access to hot water. To offset the cost of providing these items, booth space at the festival is sold to for-profit vendors.

“Last year was our first year in the new festival park, and we’re making some adjustments in how the festival is laid out,” Carnevali said. “For example, we’re moving the Community Kitchen area to an even better location with increased traffic.”

JAHA has designed the Community Kitchen so that groups may participate during one, two or all three days of the festival, in hopes of including smaller groups that may not have the resources to produce food in sufficient quantities to vend all three days. To avoid duplication, past Community Kitchen vendors will be offered first option on vending the food items they offered last year.

“Being a part of the Community Kitchen was a very positive experience for us last year,” said Pastor Mike Clark of the Walnut Grove Church of the Brethren. “It was a lot of work, but a wonderful opportunity to work together, for fellowship and for raising some needed funds.”

To take part in the Community Kitchen, interested non-profits and churches must:

- **Complete an application and return it to JAHA by June 30.** To receive an application, call Shelley Johansson at JAHA, 814-539-1889 x 308.
- **Vend food and drink only.** JAHA is looking for food and drink vendors only; the FolkFest does not accept vendors of any other type of product or service. Preference will be given to groups that plan to serve homemade food, which adds to the richness and variety of the festival, and past Community Kitchen vendors will be offered first option on the menu items they served last year.
- **Accept scrip only.** The FolkFest is free to festivalgoers; there is no admission charge. This means JAHA depends on sponsorships and commission from scrip in order to stage the festival each year. All vendors, both for-profit and non-profit, are required to accept scrip only, and JAHA will receive a 15% commission when they cash in.

- **Have liability insurance.** All groups participating in the festival must have \$1 million in liability insurance, which most organizations can obtain relatively easily; churches, school districts and parent organizations generally have insurance policies that include liability. Interested organizations should check with their insurance providers for details.
- **Submit a \$250 refundable deposit to JAHA.** Once an organization's application is accepted, a \$250 deposit must be submitted to JAHA that will be refunded as soon as the festival is over. The purpose of the deposit is to make sure that all the space available in the Community Kitchen is taken by groups that will be there.
- **Have a Pennsylvania state sales tax number.** Although non-profit organizations are not required to pay sales tax when they purchase items, they are required to collect sales tax when they sell something. Application for a sales tax number may be made through the local office of the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.

In addition, all non-profit groups planning to take part in the Community Kitchen must comply with the City of Johnstown's health regulations concerning food. These include:

- **One person in the booth must hold a health card.** These cards are very simple to obtain; one simply fills out the application, included in the application packet, and a physician must sign it. A \$5 fee applies.
- **Compliance with city food safety regulations.** JAHA will send participating organizations the information needed to do so in the application packet. The City also charges a \$50 fee. An on-site inspection of each booth will be conducted at the FolkFest, and the Health Card and Health License will be issued at that time.

Community Kitchen participants do **not** have to pay the \$100 peddler's license fee the City of Johnstown requires of for-profit vendors, nor must they pay city mercantile tax. In addition, non-profit vendors are **not** required to be certified by the State of Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Division.

Interested organizations that would like more information about the Community Kitchen or need an application packet should call Shelley Johansson at JAHA, 814-539-1889, ext. 308.

The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest began in 1990 when the Johnstown Area Heritage Association persuaded the National Folk Festival to come to Johnstown. The National Folk Festival stayed for two additional years before moving on to another American city, at which point JAHA began to produce the event as the Johnstown FolkFest. The outdoor festival continues to present more than 70 hours of free music each year over Labor Day weekend. For more information about the AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest, visit JAHA's Web site at www.jaha.org.

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