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MAYOR

City of Charleston
South Carolina

OFFICE OF
COMMUNICATIONS

For Release: August 9, 2023

20th Annual First Day Festival Set for Sunday, August 13

Charleston, S.C.—The city of Charleston’s annual First Day Festival will take place on Sunday, August 13, 2023 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Gaillard Center (2 George Street) and the South Carolina Aquarium (100 Aquarium Wharf). Each year, the festival serves as a celebration of the importance of education and a kick-off to the new school year. Students who attend the festival will receive pre-packed bags of donated school supplies while they last.

How to donate: School supply donations will be accepted through 5 p.m., Thursday, August 10, 2023. The most requested supplies include pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils, composition notebooks, loose-leaf paper, spiral notebooks, glue sticks, two-pocket folders and pencil pouches. View the full list of drop-off sites here: <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1217>

About the Festival: The First Day Festival, sponsored by the city of Charleston since 2003, is a celebration of education that welcomes students, families, educators and community partners to share information about available resources and support services prior to the start of the new school year.

The annual event is made possible through partnerships with the Charleston County School District, SC Aquarium and Lowcountry Food Bank; financial sponsors LINCS, TD Bank, United Bank, Nucor Steel, CharityProud, the InterTech Group, Hanysworth, Sinkler, Boyd, the Town of Mt. Pleasant, Baker Motor Co., Hubner Manufacturing Corp, and Burr & Forman; and the generous contributions of exhibitors, volunteers and donors.

What to expect: In addition to the school supply distribution located at the Gaillard Center, the venue will host a number of exhibits providing information on student support services and community resources, as well as a free food distribution with the Lowcountry Food Bank.

Liberty Square, located in front of the South Carolina Aquarium, will feature the city of Charleston Recreation Department’s Kids Zone with a variety of activities and entertainment. Free boat rides and admission to the South Carolina Aquarium will be offered during Festival hours, while supplies last. Boat ride tickets can be picked up at Liberty Square.

Parking information: Festival parking will be free in the Aquarium (24 Calhoun Street) and Gaillard Center (33 Alexander Street) parking garages. A free shuttle service will be provided and will run between the Aquarium and Gaillard Center throughout the afternoon to allow Festival attendees to easily move between event locations.

What they’re saying: Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said, “There’s no question that the First Day Festival wouldn’t be possible without our remarkable community partners who continue to show up in support of our local students. We’re proud to host the 20th annual event this year and look forward to helping attendees start the new school year off strong.”

Learn more: For more information on the First Day Festival, please contact Mindy Sturm at sturmm@charleston-sc.gov.

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