

CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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Mayor Healy & Municipal Council to Celebrate Kwanzaa ***A weeklong celebration honoring the African heritage and culture***

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy and members of the **Municipal Council**, along with the **Division of Cultural Affairs**, will celebrate **Kwanzaa** from **6:00 p.m. through 9:00 p.m.**, tomorrow, **Thursday, December 27, 2012** at the **Mary McLeod Bethune Life Center**, at **140 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive**.

“The seven principles of Kwanzaa are unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith,” said **Mayor Healy**. “These are the fundamental strengths of building a great city and I am proud to celebrate the rich African-American culture and traditions, and their contributions to Jersey City.”

Kwanzaa is a weeklong celebration observed each year from December 26th through January 1st. The event features a candle lighting ceremony which seven candles (Mishumaa Saba) are placed in a kinara, a special candle holder. Each candle represents one of the Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba) of Kwanzaa. The lighting of the candles will be performed by Daniel Wiley, a former African-American studies professor at New Jersey City University.”

Tomorrow’s event, “Matunda Ya Kwanzaa - The First Fruit” will feature expressions of thanks, music, poetry and the candle-lighting ceremony.

“As we gather to commemorate this seven day celebration,” continued **Mayor Healy**. “May we be reminded that Kwanzaa is an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of our African American citizens and I encourage everyone to partake in the events of Kwanzaa.”

About Kwanzaa

The historical legacy of Black Americans is best reflected in the Kwanzaa Holiday, a "first fruits" celebration created by Dr. Maulana Karenga in 1966 California.

Kwanzaa introduces and reinforces seven basic values of African culture that contribute to building and sustaining family, community and culture among African American people. The values, commonly referred to as the Nguzo Saba, which is Swahili for seven principles, are at the heart of the origin and meaning of the celebration.

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The seven principles Kwanzaa are: **umoja** (unity) to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race; **kujichagulia** (self-determination) to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves; **ujima** (collective work and responsibility) to build and maintain our community together and make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and to solve them together; **ujamaa** (cooperative economics) to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together; **nia** (purpose) to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness; **kuumba** (creativity) to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it; **imani** (faith) to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

For more information regarding Kwanzaa, please call the Division of Cultural Affairs at 201-547-6921 or visit jerseycitynj.gov

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-369-0699.///