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The 39th Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival Returns to Berea in July!

CLEVELAND, OHIO, April 16, 2024 – The 39th Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival returns this summer to Berea, Ohio. The three-day event will take place Friday, July 19th through Sunday, July 21st at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds.

The festival is expected to draw over 15,000 people from across the tri-state region, all descending on the area to celebrate Irish culture and its traditions.

John O'Brien Sr. started the festival in 1982 to celebrate Irish music, dancing, sports, and theater among Clevelanders. Currently, an estimated population of 1.6 million Irish people live in Ohio, with over 13% residing in the Greater Cleveland Metropolitan area alone.

“We didn’t know it would become an annual thing, “ said O’Brien Sr. “We had nearly 4,000 people at the first one and they kept asking about the next one so we kept it going.”

The only remaining family-run festival in the area, which was originally two days, moved to the fairgrounds in 1993, is making way for more space to introduce new exhibits and activities. The event is known for its musical entertainment and draws national and international Irish bands. The festival is thrilled to welcome internationally renowned artists Gaelic Storm, Eileen Ivers, and Rory Makem to this year’s lineup, as well as several other regional and national acts. There are a variety of activities for the whole family including a children’s area with activities and crafts, camogie games, and lots of Irish history and culture to round out the whole weekend.

The festival will continue to be cashless for on-site admission, food, beverages, and festival merchandise. Parente said the progressive move is to help improve the guest experience and offer secure transactions. Other vendors may choose to accept cash payments for their merchandise.

Phillip Parente, O’Brien’s son-in-law, has taken over the festival in recent years and is excited to keep the festival a tradition for families for years to come.

“After not having the festival since 2019, it was really nice to see the family, especially all the young nieces and nephews, along with a lot of our previous volunteers, step up and fill in wherever we needed them.” Parente continues, “Some of the younger family members weren’t old enough or aware of all the duties that went into the weeks leading up to the festival. Now that they are older, they realize it’s a ton of work and have been asking and volunteering to step into some of the roles that took some pressure off me.”

Parente praises the many volunteers that lend their time to the event, “The weekend wouldn’t be a success without the collaboration of all the volunteers and the hours they dedicate. Without them, we’d be nowhere. We are very lucky to have them and know they can be trusted to keep the festival running smoothly.”

About the Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival

The three-day event takes place at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds, 19201 E Bagley Rd, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. The festival hours are Friday, July 19th from 5:00 - 11:00 p.m., Saturday, July 20th from 1:00 - 11:00 p.m., and Sunday, July 21st from 1:00 - 10:00 p.m. A mass will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. on the 21st. Parking is free and children under 10 get free admission. Advanced tickets will be available for purchase online. General admission is \$20.00 per day, weekend passes are \$50.00. Wristbands are \$10 for the Children’s Area or \$35 for a family-pack. For more information, visit www.clevelandirish.org

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