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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday Makes Dutchess County Fair Experience Fun for All

July 31st, 2018

Rhinebeck, NY - Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro and Dutchess County Fairgrounds President Andy Imperati invite individuals and families with developmental disabilities to "ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday at the Dutchess County Fair" on August 23rd, 2018. Individuals with developmental disabilities and families will be able to enjoy the Dutchess County Fair ahead of the crowds with a special early gate opening at 9am and sensory sensitive hours on the carnival midway from 9:30am to 11:30am.



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***Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro chats with local residents during
"ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday" at the 2016 Dutchess County Fair.***

County Executive Molinaro said, "The Dutchess County Fair is a true 'Distinctly Dutchess' annual tradition, and we are thrilled that 'ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday' is quickly becoming another popular annual tradition. We are grateful to the Agricultural Society and the entire Dutchess County Fairgrounds team for showing how to ThinkDIFFERENTLY and setting a great example for fairs across New York State."

The Dutchess County Fair is New York State's second-largest county fair, hosting nearly half a million patrons each year, featuring live entertainment, carnival rides, agricultural



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exhibits, horticultural displays, and so much more. However, for some individuals and families with developmental disabilities, the lights, sounds, and crowds can make it difficult, particularly for those with sensory processing issues, to enjoy all the Dutchess County Fair has to offer. The flashing lights and loud music, in addition to waiting lines for rides, can cause stress and anxiety.

The Fair is offering individuals with developmental disabilities and their families early entry to the fairgrounds on Thursday, August 23rd starting at 9am, an hour before the official 10am start time. The early opening is a chance to enjoy the fairgrounds, including the animal barns on Livestock Hill and the 4H Exhibit Hall, ahead of the crowds. Although all of the attractions and exhibits will not be open at 9am, the soft opening provides families a chance to ease into their day at the Fair as the fairgrounds "wake up for the day," ahead of the arrival of the crowds.

New this year for ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday, the "AgriVenture Kids Activity Tent", which debuted at the Dutchess County Fair in 2016 in the infield and has been significantly expanded for 2018, will also be open at 9am to take advantage of. The AgriVenture Kids Activity Tent presents a mock farm, showing children how food is grown and sold, and how it does not simply "appear" on grocery shelves. Take part in various farm activities including digging up potatoes from a sandbox, shear a wooden (and woolen) sheep, pick apples from a plywood tree, and



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milk "Dutchess" the cow. Then take the crop to a warehouse to sell and use sale money to make purchases. AgriVenture will be open for all to enjoy and learn about Dutchess County's agricultural roots.

Dutchess County Fairgrounds President Andy Imperati said, "We are proud to 'ThinkDIFFERENTLY' at the Dutchess County Fair. We want everyone to be able to enjoy the Fair experience, so we are thrilled to again offer ThinkDIFFERENTLY Thursday in 2018 so individuals and families can have a great day at the Dutchess County Fair."

Other county fairs across New York State are following the Dutchess County Fair's example and choosing to ThinkDIFFERENTLY. The Saratoga County Fair in Ballston Spa, NY will host its first ThinkDIFFERENTLY Day this Thursday, July 26th as part of its annual six-day fair event.

Additionally, the Dutchess County Fair's carnival midway area will open at 9:30am and will be "sensory sensitive" until 11:30am. The flashing lights, music and other sounds and noises will be turned off until 11:30am enabling individuals who are impacted by sensory processing issues the opportunity to enjoy the rides without the drawbacks that lights and sounds can cause. The early midway opening also means fewer people and little to no waiting time for the carnival rides, making it easier for individuals who need extra time or have difficulty with the distractions of crowds.



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County Executive Molinaro's "ThinkDIFFERENTLY" initiative, launched in 2015, is a call to action to help make Dutchess County a community that is supportive and inclusive for individuals of all abilities. 100 villages, towns, cities and counties across New York State have made the commitment to "ThinkDIFFERENTLY" in their own communities.

The Dutchess County Fair runs Tuesday, August 21st through Sunday, August 26th, opening at 10am each day. Admission and ride tickets can be purchased online, at an advance sale discount rate, or on-site. Children 11 and under are free. On Thursday, August 23rd, developmental disabilities families coming to enjoy "ThinkDIFFERENTLY" Thursday should enter the Fair at the main ticket gate, at the Welcome Center, conveniently located near accessible parking. For more information and a full schedule of the Dutchess County Fair's events, see: www.dutchessfair.com/dutchess-fair.

www.dutchessNY.gov

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