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OVER 1,000 CELEBRATE NATION'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY AT SENATOR JOHN LIU'S AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

Fresh Meadows, NY - Over 1,000 New Yorkers celebrated America's 250th anniversary yesterday at State Senator John Liu's America 250 Celebration at Francis Lewis High School. The free community event featured live music, food, games, historical reenactors, student performances, and a community time capsule that will be preserved for the next 50 years.

The celebration took place at Francis Lewis High School, the namesake of Francis Lewis, a Queens resident, Founding Father, and signer of the Declaration of Independence. The program included performances by local musicians, 2Complicated, the Queens Oratorio Society, New York Young Arts Foundation Chamber Ensemble, Sol Sharp Music Education, the Francis Lewis High School Band and the JROTC Color Guard. The event also featured a recitation of the Declaration of Independence read by 13 local students representing the original 13 colonies and a reading by the winning essayist from Senator Liu's America 250 Student Essay Contest.

Attendees enjoyed carnival games, took photos with historical reenactors, and contributed to a community time capsule that will be sealed and housed at the Main Street - Flushing branch of the Queens Public Library for the next 50 years, to be opened on the nation's tricentennial on July 4, 2076. Throughout the afternoon, attendees contributed messages of hope for the future along with mementos such as artwork, family photos, letters, newspaper clippings, and other signs of our times, including New York Knicks championship memorabilia. Of course, all enjoyed hot dogs and hamburgers, the requisite of any Fourth of July bbq.

State Senator John Liu stated, "It was absolutely inspiring to see so many families, students, and neighbors of all ages celebrate the greatest nation in history together with some even moved to tears by the passionate performances and the chance to reflect on our shared past, present, and future. We all have a role to play in making sure our country lives up to the vision of our Founding Fathers, and it was clear by the enthusiasm, patriotism and sense of community that every single one of us, young and old, is up to the task. Whether contributing a family photo to our community time capsule or sharing a note for a child yet to be born, everyone who participated helped preserve a piece of our history and give the next generation hope for the future."

Queens Public Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott stated, "We thank Senator John Liu for bringing the public together for this meaningful commemoration of America's anniversary and for entrusting us to safeguard their messages of hope, reflection, and aspiration at Flushing Library. We are honored to preserve this important historic record for future generations and to contribute our Freedom to Read library card and QPL trading cards featuring branches throughout Queens to the time capsule, reflecting the values of access to information, intellectual freedom, and the diversity of our communities."

Queens Borough Historian Jason Antos delivered a historical account of the role of Francis Lewis, a resident of Whitestone, Queens, in the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He stated, "This was a historic event to celebrate our nation's milestone birthday and to also honor Francis Lewis of Whitestone. It is extraordinary to know that a signer of the Declaration of Independence lived here in 1776 and that his family and property paid the ultimate price at the hands of the British army."

Co-sponsors included State Senators Leroy Comrie and Kristen Gonzales, State Assembly Members Ed Braunstein, Alicia Hyndman, Nily Rozic, David Weprin, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, and Queens Public Library President Dennis Walcott.

The installation of the community time capsule at the Main Street - Flushing branch of the Queens Public Library will be held in early July.

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