

Press Contact: Shea Communications, Inc.: George Shea, Alexis Schneider: 212.627.5766

## **PLACE MATTERS IDENTIFIES NYC'S TOP 10 SUMMERTIME SPOTS**

**New York, August 21, 2009** -- Just in time for the last few weeks of summer, Place Matters has identified 10 Great Summertime Spots, spanning all five boroughs. Place Matters is a collaborative advocacy project of the Municipal Art Society of New York and City Lore that helps recognize and protect historically and culturally significant places throughout New York City.

"These Summertime Spots might not be the city's most popular or most well-known summertime destinations, but they have demonstrated cultural significance, hold memories and anchor traditions for individuals and communities," said Marci Reaven of Place Matters. "Essentially each one of these places helps tell the history of the city as a whole."

The process of identifying these places begins with a citywide survey called the Census of Places that Matter ([www.placematters.net](http://www.placematters.net)). The Census helps the Place Matters team discover places that evoke associations with history, memory, and tradition and helps them understand how and why each "place" is meaningful to people. These "places that matter" can be as diverse as local bakeries, hidden gardens, neighborhood sandlots and historic churches. all of which hold memories and anchor traditions for individuals and communities,

"Each of these places has had a positive impact on the lives of New Yorkers and each plays an important role in community life," said Lisa Kersavage of the Municipal Art Society. "We urge New Yorkers to visit these Summertime Spots, and take in the flavors, the history and the cultural traditions that help make New York such a special and livable city."

### **Summer Spots**

Place Matters is highlighting perfect places for summertime visits, in no particular order, as nominated by New Yorkers.

1. **Jahn's Ice Cream** at 81-04 37th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens, offers chilled relief from summer heat. "This king of ice cream emporiums goes back to 1897 and earlier," one nominator wrote. "It has always been a traditional gathering place for locals, singles, partners, groups and families." Best known for their 'Kitchen Sink' sundae, this Jahn's outpost is the last of several locations that once dotted the city.
2. For another famous Queens confection, head over to the **Lemon Ice King of Corona** at 5202 108th Street in Flushing. His highness, Peter Benfaremo, has been in the Italian ice business since 1945; his father had started the business only a year earlier. One note of caution, King Pete does not mix flavors, if you want more than one kind you'll have to order two 'shovels' of ice!

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3. If you're looking for a bit of shade, check out the **Tree Museum** installed along the **Grand Concourse** this summer in commemoration of the hundred year anniversary of the Bronx's very own Champs-Élysées. While stopping at one of a hundred trees selected by artist Katie Holten, "Visitors will be able to listen in on local stories and the intimate lives of trees offered by current and former residents: from beekeepers to rappers, historians to gardeners, school kids to scientists."
4. On the subject of leafy oases, you could also visit the **Andrew Haswell Green Memorial Bench and Trees in Central Park**. The 19th century urban planner, reformer and preservationist was responsible for the consolidation of the five boroughs, among other great civic contributions. Read more about Green and the memorial on the [PlaceExplorer](#), or [andrewhgreen.net](#), and be sure to print out directions since the bench can be very hard to find.
5. In Brooklyn, another birthday is celebrated this year. The **Prison Ship Martyr Monument** that crowns **Fort Greene Park** was designed in 1908 by the prominent architect Stanford White. The 200-foot tall Doric column was recently restored in honor of its centennial. It memorializes the 11,500 Revolutionary War casualties whose remains are entombed in the crypt below. These patriots died in captivity on British prison ships anchored in Wallabout Bay along the East River.
6. **Highbridge Park** follows the natural bend of the Harlem River between 155th and Dyckman Streets in northern Manhattan, bordering the Bronx. The park is named after New York City's oldest standing bridge, constructed in 1848 as a part of the Croton Aqueduct. Although the Highbridge Water Tower no longer refreshes upper Manhattan residents with drinking water, the park boasts both an Olympic sized pool and a wading pool, offering a cool retreat from the steamy city streets. Like the other 54 outdoor public pools managed by the New York City Parks Department, the pools at Highbridge Park will close on Labor Day.
7. With the return of 'Free Bike Fridays,' a visit to **Governor's Island** at the southern tip of Manhattan will provide a true reprieve from city life. The nominator described how she "fell in love with the charm, the beauty and the sense of place and history. It's a gorgeous place, and notable for its architecture, history and as a spot of pure beauty." The island now offers movable hammocks and oversized Adirondack chairs overlooking the bustling traffic of the harbor at 'Picnic Point.'
8. If you can't get enough island hopping, take a free trip on the **Staten Island ferry** and stop by **Sailor's Snug Harbor**, once a charitable home for retired merchant seamen and now an 86-acre park celebrating maritime history. Of the collection of twenty-six beautiful 19th century buildings, five Greek Revival temples are the centerpiece of this National Historic Landmark District.
9. Finally, the summer would not be complete without a trip to the beach. You could sunbathe at the Bronx's only beach, and one of Robert Moses' favorite projects, **Orchard Beach** at Pelham Bay Park. Intended as the 'Riviera of New York,' this great feat of engineering spans a mile and its 115 acres of white sand was imported from the Rockaways and Sandy Hook, New Jersey.
10. You could also catch some rays, and some cheap thrills, at Brooklyn's most famous beach, **Coney Island**. Be sure to take a break from the hot sun with a drink at **Ruby's Bar & Grill**, 1213 Riegelmann Boardwalk. According to the nomination, "stepping into Ruby's from the Boardwalk is a bit like stepping into a cave where you can meet the past and present life of Coney Island. The walls are full of photos of days gone by, and offer a view of history while you sit with a drink or a Coney Island meal (hot dog, corn, fries). The bar, the tables, the old sofa in the back by the juke box, are worn with wear by many, many folks."

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## **About Place Matters**

Founded by The Municipal Art Society and City Lore in 1998, Place Matters' mission is to foster the conservation of New York City's historically and culturally significant places. These "places that matter" can be as diverse as local bakeries, hidden gardens, neighborhood sandlots and historic churches, all of which hold memories and anchor traditions for individuals and communities, and help tell the history of the city as a whole.

The process of identifying "great places" begins with a citywide survey called the Census of Places that Matter. The Census helps the Place Matters team discover places that evoke associations with history, memory, and tradition and helps them understand how and why each "place" is meaningful to people. Place Matters then follows up with written profiles of the places on [www.placematters.net](http://www.placematters.net) and educational programs and advocacy to work with communities to promote and protect these places and others like them.

One example of Place Matters' advocacy work is at Casa Amadeo in the Bronx, the longest running Latin music store in the city. Place Matters successfully advocated for its listing to the National Register of Historic Places, the first time a place associated with Puerto Rican migration was officially recognized by the national program. Another is SPURA Matters, an initiative on the Lower East Side with a community coalition to envision development for a large chunk of undeveloped land that will benefit local residents rather than displace them. All year 'round Place Matters adds new profiles and photographs to the places nominated by the public on [www.placematters.net](http://www.placematters.net).

The Municipal Art Society of New York, founded in 1893, is a non-profit membership organization that fights for intelligent urban planning, design and preservation through education, dialogue and advocacy. For more information, please visit [www.mas.org](http://www.mas.org). City Lore is a cultural organization dedicated to advancing the living cultural heritage of New York and other cities through publications, media, and school and community programs [www.citylore.org](http://www.citylore.org).

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