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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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43rd Washington Folk Festival Returns to Glen Echo Park, August 23, With New Middle Eastern Spotlight and Expanded Family Stage.

GLEN ECHO, Md. — The Folklore Society of Greater Washington (FSGW) will present the 43rd annual Washington Folk Festival on Sunday, August 23, 2026, from noon to 7 p.m. at Glen Echo Park. Now in its fifth decade, the free, family-friendly festival—presented in cooperation with the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture—is one of the biggest annual events at the Park and brings together six stages, more than 40 performing acts, and food trucks for a full day of music, dance, and storytelling drawn from American and international folk traditions.

New Middle Eastern Spotlight

This year's festival introduces a Middle Eastern Spotlight, developed in partnership with the Governor's Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, part of the Maryland Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. The Spotlight features a Jewish Music Showcase; the Sarv School of Persian Music, dedicated to sharing the history, art, and cultural heritage of Iran; Group Mavi, made up of members of the DMV Turkish Music Ensemble; Humayun Khan with Whirling Dervishes; and Kylie Hilali & The Fez Tones, bringing a Middle Eastern hafla (party) featuring instruments such as the qanun, oud, riq, and darbuka, alongside a halal Turkish food stand.

New Songs for All Ages Stage

The festival is also debuting a sixth stage, Songs for All Ages, dedicated to programming for children and families throughout the day. The lineup includes Donna Elanor's Tricorn Tales with Compass Rose, an interactive pirate-themed music and movement adventure; Bill Jenkins World of Music, an all-hands-on drum and percussion experience Jenkins has led across the D.C. area for 30 years; and award-winning musician Maureen Andary. In the early evening, the stage will host a special segment, "Liberty & Justice for All," featuring beloved songs of conscience and hope drawn from America's long tradition of music for freedom and unity.

A World of Music, Dance & Story

This year's broader lineup reflects the region's remarkable cultural diversity, with performances spanning Celtic-influenced folk-rock from Ardmore; gospel a cappella from Mutual Agreement; Django Reinhardt-style hot jazz from Djangolaya; Zydeco, blues, and New Orleans R&B from Little Red & the Renegades; Andean folk from Raymi; flamenco from Furia Flamenca; Russian and Ukrainian folk music from Samovar, playing since 1966; Japanese koto music from the Washington Toho Koto Society, founded in 1971; traditional Irish music and dance from the Culkin School; English Morris dance from the Rock Creek Morris Women; singer-songwriter sets from Charlie Bryant, Lydia Martin, and Collide; and bluegrass from Blue Spruce, featuring two-time Bluegrass Hall of Fame inductee Tom Gray on bass – among dozens of other acts across six stages. The day also includes a storytelling stage featuring local tale-tellers, at least five food trucks (twice as many as in 2025), and picnic tables throughout the park.

Governor's Citation

The 2026 Washington Folk Festival has been honored with an official citation from Governor Wes Moore, recognizing the festival's contribution to Maryland's cultural life and its role in celebrating the state's diverse communities.

Sponsors and Community Support

The Washington Folk Festival is made possible by the support of the Maryland State Arts Council, Carpe Diem Arts, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, Michael Marceau & the DC Bluegrass Union, Takoma Radio (WOWD 94.3 FM), and the Takoma Park Folk Festival, and is presented in cooperation with the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, Inc., the National Park Service, and Montgomery County, Maryland.

"The Washington Folk Festival is an oasis for our minds and bodies in the Washington area, as relevant as ever at a time when many of us might need it more. In a way that only live folk music, communal dance, stories and the arts can do, the festival allows us all – freely accessible for everyone – to revel in and be inspired by our diverse cultural arts, connect with each other, and in a timeless place that is Glen Echo Park.

We have leaned into that this year with the Middle Eastern spotlight, and by creating an encouraging space for younger people to discover the joy and balm of folk arts with the Songs for All Ages stage. The Washington Folk Festival is a regional treasure, and I'm grateful that we have many individuals, organizations, and public institutions in our community support this chapter of the festival's endurance.

If you haven't been to the festival before, it is not an exaggeration when I say that... you are in for a magical experience."

— Ayan Kishore, Vice-President, Folklore Society of Greater Washington

Get Involved

The Washington Folk Festival is volunteer-run, from performers to stage crews, and relies on community support to remain free each year. Members of the public are invited to attend and bring family and friends, volunteer for a festival-day shift (sign up at fsgw.org/washington-folk-festival), and donate in support of the festival.

Event Details

What: 43rd Annual Washington Folk Festival

When: Sunday, August 23, 2026, 12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd, Glen Echo, MD 20812

Admission: Free (donations welcome)

Accessibility: All venues are accessible

Parking: On-site and limited; carpooling strongly encouraged

Info & RSVP: fsgw.org/washington-folk-festival

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Note to editors: High-resolution photos available upon request.

About the Folklore Society of Greater Washington

Founded in 1964, the Folklore Society of Greater Washington (FSGW) has been creating opportunities for participation in the joys of traditional dance, music, and storytelling in the Washington, D.C. region for over 60 years, hosting more than 200 events a year. FSGW has produced the Washington Folk Festival since 1977 as a free, volunteer-run community event. Find out more at fsgw.org.

About Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture

Glen Echo Park is a vibrant arts and cultural center presenting festivals, exhibitions, and dances, as well as children's theater, music programs, nature programs, and art classes. The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture, a nonprofit organization, oversees these and other activities, including preserving the historic structures in the Park. Glen Echo Park, part of the National Park Service, is located in Glen Echo, Maryland, six miles northwest of Georgetown along the scenic Potomac River palisades.

The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture is supported in part by the Maryland State Arts Council (msac.org) and also by funding from the Montgomery County government and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (creativemoco.com). All programs are produced in cooperation with the National Park Service and Montgomery County, Maryland.