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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Block Partiers defy forecast for successful lakeside event

LAKE HOPATCONG, NJ, May 12, 2018 – Chilly rain may have put puddles in the parking lot at Hopatcong State Park last weekend, but it didn't dampen the spirits of guests at the 5th Annual Lake Hopatcong Block Party.

Nearly 2,000 attendees joined a couple hundred event volunteers at the event hosted by the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF), putting a sunny spin on a day when the threat of rain looked over everyone's shoulder from start to finish.

"We can't seem to catch a break with the weather," said LHF President Jessica Murphy, addressing the hardy crowd while recalling last year's coastal storm that was potent enough to cause cancellation of the rain-or-shine event.

"So, thank you all for being here and bringing your positive energy and enthusiasm, no matter what Mother Nature tries to do to us."

An early downpour drenched scores of vendors and volunteers as they hustled to set up canopies, displays, tables and chairs, but rain held off throughout the scheduled seven hours of festivities.

"It was pouring when we started out, but we wanted to support the Lake Hopatcong Foundation," said Landing's Bryan Higgins, who attended with his wife, Kara, Kaleb, 18, Emmett, 4, Oliver, 2 and three-month-old Griffin. "We grew up around the lake and it's a special place, so we want to do whatever we can to keep it nice."

Marina Maldonado and Sonia Terranova wandered among the booths, set up at the breezy lakeside end of the parking lot, toting bags full of goodies and giveaways.

“I work hard all week, so I didn’t want to miss this opportunity to have some fun and get some fresh air,” said Maldonado, who made the 35-mile drive from Elmwood Park with her friend to attend the Block Party. “I saw on Facebook that this festival was rain or shine. I thought, if it rains we’ll just relax and enjoy the rain.”

One of the first few guests to arrive was also one of the last to leave. Elizabeth Schmitt and Diane Frazer came from Succasunna with the former’s great niece, 6-year-old Kayleigh, in tow.

“I come every year, rain or shine,” said Schmitt determinedly, almost as if daring the weather to stop her. Frazer, with a pup named Madison at the end of a leash, added, “I’m not that happy with the rain, but I...

“Sorry, but she wants to get going,” she said, yielding to the pull of her yellow-sweatered yorkipoo as the interview came to an abrupt end. “We’re heading for the boat ride.”

By noon, cars filled the State Park pavement and shuttle buses were bringing in guests from several outlying parking lots. The food court filled up and vendors greeted passing patrons, while beach balls, bubbles and live music filled the air.

Meanwhile, bright blue-shirted volunteers did their best to keep everything on course.

“Even in the pouring rain during our setup, they all showed up,” said LHF Volunteer Coordinator Judy Caruso. “They always show up, do their jobs and cover for each other whenever necessary. There’s no way we could pull off an event of this scale without them.”

Lee Moreau, who was a Block Party co-planner with Beth BaRoss, showed up at the State Park before sunrise and was still on his feet as canopies, signs and sound systems were loaded into vans at the end of the day.

“How is it possible to adequately thank everyone in the Lake Hopatcong community who helped make this event a success?” said Moreau, clearly spent and at a loss for words. “The sponsors, vendors, volunteers and everyone who came out... It’s just overwhelming.”

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the mission of which is to “improve Lake Hopatcong for all, now and in the years to come.” Find out more at www.lakehopatcongfoundation.org.