

Glenside, PA – Glenside’s annual, stirring, action-filled, morning-into-night marking of America’s birth each July 4 has become, over the years, the biggest, best, family-friendly Independence Day Celebration in Greater Philadelphia’s tri-state locale.

The three-tiered event, now into its second century, occurs in the Abington and Cheltenham Townships’ areas of Montgomery County, PA, and features “a grand starburst of activity on the 4th,” as noted by THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (July 3, 2006). “First will come a children’s morning program in a park, then a parade through the heart of Glenside, and finally fireworks above Abington High School’s playing fields. The total cost is \$50,000”

All events are admission-free and sponsored by the volunteer membership of the Greater Glenside Patriotic Association (GGPA). This non-profit, tax-exempt, 501© [3] group’s sole, year-round effort is sponsorship and promotion of the Annual Independence Day Celebration each July 4.

As expressed in its by-laws, the GGPA mission is “To exclusively advance and perpetuate the spirit of Independence Day (July 4)...to honor the birth of the U.S.A.; to organize and supervise an annual parade and other activities on July 4 (or rain date) in celebration of Independence Day; and to encourage the citizens of the community to participate and join in with the association in the spirit of patriotism.”

The patriotic gala begins with a “We Love America” Children’s Program from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Renninger Memorial Park in Cheltenham Township. Festivities for 2,000 some attendees include decorated bike/stroller parades and competitive, award-winning field/sports contests, followed by lunchtime refreshments.

“The Grand, Glorious, Patriotic Parade,” at 4 p.m. is a two hours-plus, 1.5 mile march through American flag-bedecked streets. Begun in 1904, and now among America’s oldest, consecutively run July 4 marches, the colorful spectacle consists of three divisions – United We Stand, American Patriots and Heroes, and Let Freedom Ring.

Known locally as “The Parade !,” it’s the talk of the town as each July 4 approaches, not only in Glenside, but neighboring communities as well. Besides Glensiders, the parade’s thousands of spectators include former residents who return for the traditional staging and out-of-area attendees from near and far.

The celebration’s rousing finale is an after-dark “America the Beautiful Aerial Fireworks Spectacular” at Abington High School athletic grounds. Police have estimated annual attendance at more than 20,000 with many viewers coming from neighboring or nearby areas of eastern Montgomery County, lower Bucks County and Northeast/Northwest Philadelphia County neighborhoods.

In a feature story about Glenside in its newspaper editions of Sept. 27, 1992, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER observed: “It’s real Americana here! On every 4th of July...there has always been a parade so big, so important that the (sponsoring) Greater Glenside Patriotic Association needs to hold fundraising activities for it. It’s an opportunity for everyone to come together. Glenside is THE 4th of July Parade!

It's something that links the Cheltenham and Abington sides of the community." (Glenside is an unincorporated area of Montgomery County shared by Abington and Cheltenham Townships.)

Besides bringing the community together in a patriotic sense, each celebration has a positive economic effect on Greater Glenside businesses that remain open each July 4 to serve celebratory throngs.

In 2000 the Greater Glenside Chamber of Commerce presented a Distinguished Community Service Award to the patriotic association for its annual and effective sponsorship of the entire Independence Day Celebration.

Glenside's holiday extravaganza has also been a first place winner in the "Favorite Local Event" category of the Montgomery Newspapers' Annual Readers' Choice Awards.

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