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CLASS ACT: ITHACA CELEBRATES NY TEACHERS WITH “WINTER RECESS”

ITHACA, NY - Ithaca is rolling out the red carpet this winter in an unusual celebration for an improbable group of VIPs. The Finger Lakes community is once again pooling its resources for a festival honoring state public school teachers.

“Winter Recess,” Feb. 16-23, offers the state’s pre-K-12 teachers and their guests a discounted week of recreation, relaxation and entertaining education. The inaugural edition last February attracted more than 1,300 educators and family members. Organizers expect attendance to double this year.

“The response last year was simply overwhelming,” said Fred Bonn, director of the Ithaca Tompkins Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Winter Recess was a hit with teachers, the community, local businesses—everyone. Based on that, we believe it’s going to become a major event this winter and for years to come.”

Held during the statewide February school break, Winter Recess is the nation’s first citywide festival celebrating state school teachers. The event takes all of Ithaca’s assets—its attractions, college events, theaters, spas, shops, restaurants, clubs and inns—and puts them on sale for educators.

The celebration allows teachers and school district employees a chance to relax, refresh and renew among friends in a city that truly values education.

“It’s unusual to commit your entire town to a celebration of teaching, but we feel strongly about this,” Bonn said. “Ithaca is built on education. It’s our industry. With this event, we’re coming together as a community to acknowledge teachers across the state and say, thanks—we get it.”

The weeklong festival offers a packed calendar of family events, headline concerts, theater performances, winter recreation, winery tours and more. Most events are free or steeply discounted for visiting educators. Area lodges provide affordable accommodations with teacher rates starting at \$59 per night for economy motels and \$100 per night for luxury, four-star inns.

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In addition, restaurants and retail shops offer significant teacher discounts throughout the week. The discount programs are available to all public school teachers, district employees and their guests. Union membership, school IDs or letters of employment are required at check in. Details are online at IthacaLovesTeachers.com.

Less than a half-day's drive from everywhere in New York, Ithaca is a progressive community renowned for breathtaking gorge waterfalls, outstanding recreation and world-class thinking. Home to Cornell University and Ithaca College, the city's rich culture, fine lodging and abundance of top-quality restaurants make it an ideal base for any Finger Lakes getaway. Travel and lodging information is available at VisitIthaca.com, or 800-284-8422.

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