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Flatiron Partnership & NYC Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Launch 2013 Holiday Shopping Season in New York City

-DCA Commissioner Mintz Joins Flatiron Partnership Executive Director Jennifer Brown to Launch "23 Days of Holiday Cheer" Initiative and Offer 10 Savvy Shopping Tips-

(New York, N.Y.) - Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz, Flatiron Partnership/23rd Street Business Improvement District (BID) Executive Director Jennifer Brown, Eataly New York and Marimekko today officially kicked off the 2013 Holiday Shopping season in the bustling Flatiron shopping and dining district and offered New Yorkers and visitors tips to protect their money during the season.

"Flatiron is one of the most dynamic and successful neighborhoods in New York City, offering people who live or work here or are visiting from across the globe everything they desire for a captivating and engaging holiday experience," said Flatiron Partnership Executive Director Brown. "With more than 550 places to shop, dine and explore in the neighborhood, it's time for everyone to discover this secret: Flatiron is the place to shop and celebrate the holiday season."

"With the arrival of Thanksgiving and Hanukkah simultaneously and a late Black Friday and Cyber Monday, the holiday shopping season will be even shorter this year, which means we'll all be hustling more than usual to get it all done," said DCA Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "I hope all New Yorkers will take a minute to read our tips, especially our new [10 Things Every Consumer Should Know guide](#), and be smart shoppers and enjoy the holiday season here in Flatiron and around the city."

"One of our favorite things about Flatiron is the dynamic landscape and proactive approach to creating an exciting environment for shopping, dining, and more. We're proud to be part of a neighborhood that caters to all walks of life and look forward to being a part of the community for many holidays to come," said Dan Amatuzzi, General Manager of Eataly New York.

"Marimekko is thrilled to be part of all the excitement and sense of community that abounds in the Flatiron neighborhood. It's always wonderful for us to see so many friends come in to the store and learn about all the different traditions that make New York such a melting pot," said Anastacia K. Stathakis, Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Marimekko North America.

The event announced the second year of "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer," a near-month-long initiative of engaging family programming, giveaways, and contests showcasing the wealth of shopping and dining destinations in the district. The "23 Days of Flatiron Cheer" opening ceremony will be held on Monday, November 25th at 7:00 p.m. with the unveiling of a giant 3D pop-up card stationed in front of the landmark Flatiron building, one of the most photographed buildings in New York City, and performances and tastes

of the district. The full calendar of events will start on December 1st. The BID has launched a special holiday webpage at discoverflatiron.org/holiday, which provides mobile-friendly access to all of the diverse options in the district.

With six subway lines, nine local and express bus routes, the PATH train, and 86 Citibike docking spaces, Flatiron is easy to reach, and to get around. Flatiron is home to 550 ground-floor businesses, including 185 eateries in every cuisine, style and price point. A number of new restaurants opened this year, including Flatiron Hall, Grey Bar, Hanjan, The Flatiron Room, Maysville, Num Pang and Sweetgreen.

The “23 Days of Flatiron Cheer” calendar of events, programs, contests and giveaways includes:

- **Ugliest Sweater Competition** – The Flatiron BID will hold its second-annual Ugliest Sweater competition (Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30 PM), complete with a runway stage, judges and prizes for the most tragic holiday knits. The event will immediately follow the Madison Square Conservancy’s annual holiday tree lighting festivities – complete with children’s activities and performances - at Madison Square Park (which run from 3:30 to 5:30 PM), of which the BID is a sponsor.
- **Hot Treats for a Cool Time in Flatiron** – Warm your belly with hot chocolate, handed out in the north plaza (December 4th, 11th, and 17th).
- **Take a Spin** – Drop by the Flatiron Partnership’s giant Prize Wheel to determine your fortune: gifts from some of the neighborhood’s most popular destinations. Every participant gets a free candy cane to start (December 2nd, 9th, and the 16th).
- **Be Nice – Not Naughty – This Season** – Every Thursday, help bring cheer to your fellow New Yorkers in need. The BID will host a food drive to support several organizations this season. And, anyone dropping off goods can collect coupons offering nearby discounts (December 5th, 12th, and 19th).
- **Kidding Around** – Bring the kids for some family fun: to be amazed by balloon-creations and meet popular holiday characters, including bestselling author Nick Bruel’s Bad Kitty (Friday, December 6th), face-painting and holiday balloon handouts (Saturday, December 7th), crafts and holiday card designing (Sunday, December 8th) and TADA! Youth Theater (Sunday, December 15th).
- **Songs – and Dance & Drama! - of the Season** – All the world is a stage, and so are the Public Plazas this season. Get ready for some premiere performances from the People’s Improv Theater (PIT) (12 and 2 PM, Friday, December 13th), Matt Wilson’s Tree-O (5 PM on Wednesday, December 18th), the New York Ballet Theatre (Saturday, December 14th).
- **Toys in the Plaza** – On the heels of the Flatiron-headquartered Toy Industry Association’s announcement of the Toy of the Year Award nominees, the North Public Plaza (Tuesday, December 3rd) will showcase some of the toys competing in the 12 categories. Then (on Sunday, December 8th), the Toy Industry Foundation will host children – and adults – crafting cards to distribute to the children of U.S. soldiers on active duty or stationed overseas.
- **It’s a Wrap** – You do the shopping – the Flatiron Partnership provides the labor and supplies with two days of free wrapping in the plaza! (December 20th and 21st). Free with a purchase of \$25 or more from a local Flatiron retailer.

With the holiday shopping season, including Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday, approaching, DCA Commissioner Mintz issued a list of 10 savvy shopping tips to New Yorkers and tourists. Additional shopping guides are available online at nyc.gov/consumers or by calling 311.

- **Get DCA’s new 10 Things Every Consumer Should Know guide.** DCA’s new consumer education guide provides important tips that every consumer should know to protect their hard-earned dollars in the marketplace. The guide includes important information like checking refund policies, keeping receipts, avoiding false advertising and scams, filing a complaint and more. Download [*10 Things Every Consumer Should Know*](#) from nyc.gov/consumers or call 311 to request a copy.
- **Create a budget and make a list.** Don’t let holiday spending put you in debt for the New Year. Create a budget, make a list, and start shopping early. Watch your bank balance or credit limit. You’ll be less likely to overspend if you pay in cash or with a prepaid debit card—but be wary of hidden fees with

prepaid cards. If you're struggling with debt and need help budgeting, make an appointment for free, financial counseling at the City's Financial Empowerment Centers by calling 311.

- **Compare prices.** Use websites, smartphone apps and social media to research products, compare prices, and find sales and discounts.
- **Know the rules about gift cards.** Gift card funds must stay valid for at least five years from when the card was purchased or money was last loaded onto it. All fees must be listed and no inactivity or service fees can be charged if the card has been used within the past 12 months. If you're buying an "experience" card (like a spa treatment, flight or hotel stay), buy one with a specific dollar value so you can benefit from these consumer protections. Even though there are more fee limitations, watch out for hidden fees; there is no cap on the monthly fee after 12 months of inactivity. Visit federalreserve.gov for the latest information on gift card rules.
- **Know your rights about layaway.** A "layaway plan" is a payment plan that requires at least four payments for an item that costs more than \$50. The written layaway plan must include a full description of the item, total cost of item, tax and any additional charges like delivery, cancellation plan use, duration of the plan, payment schedule, any late charges or penalties for missed payments, the store's refund policy, and where and when merchandise will be held for the consumer, including whether it has been removed from inventory.
- **Protect your identity.** Never give personal information over the phone, by email or text, or on social media sites, especially if you're using a public computer or public Wi-Fi, and shred papers that have personal information. Protect your computer, tablet, and smartphone against viruses and "malware" with security and firewall software. Review your free credit report every year for unusual activity at annualcreditreport.com. If you are a victim of identity theft, place a fraud alert on your credit report and report the theft to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ftc.gov/idtheft and your local police precinct. Download [DCA's Identity Theft Prevention Tips](#) from nyc.gov/consumers.
- **Don't buy counterfeit or "pirated" goods.** One in five jobs in NYC is at risk because of illegally downloaded movies, music and books and counterfeit designer goods. Take a stand to protect the jobs of your fellow New Yorkers and buy real products.
- **Get a delivery date.** Secure a delivery date in writing before you leave a store. If retailers don't specify a "ship by" date for your online purchase, they must ship within 30 days. To file a complaint about a NYC-based business that fails to deliver goods or services, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/consumers.
- **Check for recalls.** To check if a gift or toy has been recalled, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission at cpsc.gov and click on the recall section.
- **File a complaint if you've had a problem the business won't resolve.** File a complaint with DCA at nyc.gov/consumers or by contacting 311. DCA mediators will help. You can file your complaint in multiple languages.

About the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

The Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District, formed in 2006, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance the area's reputation as one of New York's most vital and exciting neighborhoods. This is accomplished by maintaining a clean and safe environment for the district's businesses, residents and visitors; by spearheading area improvement projects; and by marketing the diverse business and retail options in this vibrant and historic neighborhood. Learn more at:

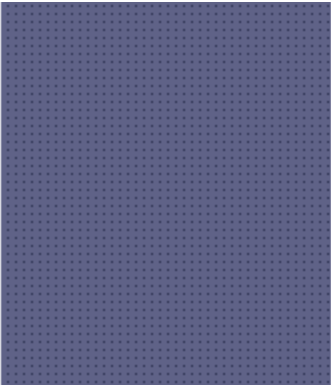
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About DCA

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Empowering consumers and businesses to ensure a fair and vibrant marketplace, DCA licenses about 79,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. The DCA Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) was launched by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at the end of 2006 as the first local government initiative in the country with the specific mission to educate, empower, and



protect individuals and families with low incomes. OFE creates innovative programs, products, and services for New Yorkers so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. Our goal is to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and counseling; connect individuals to safe and affordable mainstream banking and products and services; improve access to income-boosting tax credits, savings, and other asset building opportunities; and enforce and improve consumer financial protections to safeguard financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers. Follow @NYCDCA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).