Step into Spring

2021 Annual Review
As always, the Festival celebrated spring and honored the Festival’s history and traditions through Japanese arts and culture. This year, there was a special focus on showcasing and supporting the resilience of its hometown, Washington, DC. Festival events and programming directly supported local restaurants and businesses, as well as brought the Festival celebration to the homes and lives of local residents.

Through the support of Leadership Circle Sponsors, Events DC and Amazon, and all our partners and supporters, this year’s Festival presented reimagined, innovative programming and offered multiple ways to access and engage with signature and brand new experiences, providing the most access to Festival experiences in the safest way possible.

As you’ll see in this 2021 Annual Review, the National Cherry Blossom Festival has once again proven to be one of the world’s greatest springtime celebrations.
The spirit of spring filled DC this year during the National Cherry Blossom Festival, and once again reached audiences around the world.

Online, the Festival actively engaged with its longstanding community and brand-new audiences across social media channels, resulting in increased followers and active participation before, during, and following the Festival.

BloomCam, in partnership with the Trust for the National Mall, garnered more than 1 million views (+18% over the previous year) by users from more than 150 countries.

The Festival was exposed to a new audience of 30,000-plus attendees by participating with a booth in the NBC 4 | Telemundo Health & Fitness Virtual Expo.

Festival leaders and stakeholders spoke at the annual Press Conference on March 1, presented virtually from the Walter E. Washington Convention Center’s Studio 801.

This year’s Festival garnered local, national, and international participation.

- **Opening Ceremony** - 11,000+ viewers, including log-ins from Canada, Japan, the UK, and more
- **Blossom Kite Fly** - 19% of registrations came from outside the region: 43 states and 7 countries
- **Celebration Show** was syndicated to 88% of U.S. television markets, with more than 1,000 airings to an audience of 2+ million

2.45 million total impressions across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms, with increased followings:

- 120,005 followers on Facebook (1% YOY increase)
- 16,223 followers on Twitter (12% YOY increase)
- 20,900 followers on Instagram (19% YOY increase)

2.3+ billion impressions through earned local and national media coverage and publicity

- $57.5M earned media value
- $4M of advertising value from media partners
Celebration Show

The nationally syndicated Celebration Show, presented by Events DC, elevated the National Cherry Blossom Festival to its biggest stage yet with a high-energy, eye-popping celebration of spring.

This entertainment extravaganza highlighted the sights and sounds of DC in springtime and brought the spirit of the Festival into living rooms nationwide.

Co-hosted by Drew Barrymore and ABC7’s Alison Starling, the Celebration Show featured an all-star lineup of performances and special appearances by LeAnn Rimes, Amy Grant, CeCe Winans, Norm Lewis, Samantha Diaz, Kristi Yamaguchi, and more!

With a reimagined format and wider-than-ever distribution, the Celebration Show was able to reach even more spring and blossom enthusiasts. The program first premiered on the virtual platform GATHER by Events DC, and was then broadcast locally on ABC7 and WJLA 24/7, and nationally syndicated with more than 1,000 airings scheduled through the end of June.

In Fall 2020, the Spirit of Spring 5K Run/Walk, sponsored by Mars Petcare, encouraged people to get outside and appreciate their surroundings independently or with their pod—including their furry friends. 260 registrants joined the event - 33% of which were from locations other than DC, MD, and VA—to celebrate the hope and renewal the cherry blossoms symbolize and show that the Spirit of Spring is a feeling that lasts all year long.

Paws & Petals Parade

This year’s virtual Paws & Petals Parade, presented by MARS Petcare, gave pets and their proud owners the opportunity to join in the festivities by dressing up in all things spring! Some furry friends were selected to be showcased on the Festival’s Instagram story, and even had a cameo appearance in the Celebration Show.
The Pink Tie Party, sponsored by Events DC and Amazon, was reimagined this year by becoming a virtual and interactive celebration. It was a party with a purpose, contributing to nearly 1,000 meals ordered from local restaurants, supporting the economic recovery of the city the Festival calls home.

Decked out in their finest — and pinkest! — apparel, Pink Tie Party attendees partied with their pod and mingled online during an unforgettable evening. The whole night was filled with fun, interactive experiences, live entertainment, giveaways, and a spirited online auction.

Tommy McFly and Kelly Collis of the Tommy & Kelly Show hosted the online event and a small live audience celebrating at the Peacock Café. The live hosts made partygoers at home feel connected and engaged with all aspects of the evening.
Kids, families, and pods of friends could learn how to build and design their own kites through the many “DIY” training videos and follow-along instructions from kite experts hosted on the Festival website.

The Blossom Kite Fly, presented by Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc., brought a long-standing Festival tradition to audiences across multiple access points — in person and online.

On the weekend of March 27 and 28, colorful kites soared across the Washington, DC, area... and far beyond. In fact, this year the festivities were joined by kite fliers who registered from almost every state in the U.S. and multiple countries around the world!

Families created new traditions of their own, building and flying kites in their neighborhoods and backyards. Local organizations helped promote kite making and flying safely within their communities. 1,734 kite making kits were donated to and distributed by community organizations to serve families in all 8 wards of DC and neighboring MD and VA.

Kite fliers near and far shared their memorable experiences by posting their pictures online with the tag #BlossomKiteFly. This active online engagement showed that in spite of the physical distance and separation, connections can be created through meaningful, shared experiences.
During the Festival’s inaugural Petal Porch Parade, presented by Amazon, Washington, DC, residents transformed their homes into monuments to spring. Beyond inspiring creativity, this crafty event also ignited some neighborly competition.

More than 550 homes, balconies, and yards blossomed with all things floral and pink from paper lanterns and giant cherry blossom arrangements to festive yard inflatables. Lots of neighborhood champions rallied their neighbors to join in on the springtime fun, competing not only for bragging rights, but also the chance to experience seeing the Petal Procession – a celebration of spring on wheels – on their street.

An online map identifying locations of the Petal Porches had 57,796 views. Residents were encouraged to Step into Spring and plan a walk, bike, or drive to visit participating homes and share photos of their experience using #PetalPorchParade.
Petal Procession

The brand-new Petal Procession, a parade of ten Toyota hybrid vehicles uniquely painted by local artists, dazzled spectators as it rolled through neighborhoods in all eight wards of the District and neighboring communities in MD and VA. The flowering procession traveled 78.8 miles over 2 days inspiring many smiles, waves, and cheers.

DC-area artists applied their style to the vehicles: Sally Evans, Kate Fleming, Eddie Harris, Matt Long, Tendani Mpolubusi, Maggie O’Neill, Shawn Perkin, Juan Pineda, Chelsea Ritter-Soronen, and Samantha Testa.
Washington, DC, and surrounding areas became a City in Bloom during this year’s National Cherry Blossom Festival. Participating partners transformed spaced and surfaces into “all things pink” for this 10th annual tradition.

Well-known landmarks and beloved local establishments brought City in Bloom to life, inspiring residents and visitors alike to step out on the town to enjoy spring, connect with the community, and peep some blossoms along the way.
As 180 Cherry Picks restaurants bloomed with springtime menus, they also rolled out cherry blossom-themed events and deals to support the city’s economic recovery and invite community members to Step into Spring.
Art in Bloom, presented by Amazon, celebrated the magical and whimsical mystique of the DC area while honoring its vibrant arts scene. A community-wide visual arts exhibition, Art in Bloom featured 26 oversized cherry blossom statues that were painted by local and national artists, and told unique and meaningful stories.

These breathtaking installations were then placed in locations throughout all eight wards in DC as well as Virginia’s National Landing neighborhood and Maryland’s National Harbor. Community members were invited to go on a city-wide Blossom Hunt to find all 26 sculptures and share images online using the #ArtInBloom hashtag.

The Art in Bloom exhibition concluded with many of the sculptures being relocated to locations where the public can continue to enjoy their artistry, with a handful being auctioned or sold to private owners.

PETAL TO THE METAL
David Greenfieldboyce

RISAIKURU (RECYCLE)
Jon Gann

RENEWAL BLOSSOM
Ameena Fareeda

FLOWER KUTIES
Kaila Garcia

PETAL PARTY
Matt Long

THE GIFT
Patrick Guyton

BLOSSOMS ON THE MALL
Jaleel Davis

CHERRY GARDEN
Rashin Kheiriyyeh

ICE FLAVORS
Cory Oberndorfer

CRANE’S DANCE
Lee Craigie-Marshall

HAPPY DOTS
Hiba Alyawer

CELEBRATION
Sandra Perez-Ramos

CHERRY TATTOO
Andrew Funk

THE MESSAGE
Andrew Funk

THE REAL LANDMARKS
Diane D’Costa & Nia Keturah Calhoun

FULL CIRCLE BLOSSOM
Alex Goaster

PETAL PARTY
Matt Long

THE MESSAGE
Andrew Funk

THE REAL LANDMARKS
Diane D’Costa & Nia Keturah Calhoun

FULL CIRCLE BLOSSOM
Alex Goaster

PETAL PARTY
Matt Long

THE GIFT
Patrick Guyton
Art in Bloom Map

The Art in Bloom map on the Festival website was viewed over 169,000 times.

Muriel Bowser, Mayor of the District of Columbia, helped promote the January 2021 Art in Bloom Call, encouraging DC artists to submit concepts.
Opening Ceremony

The 2021 National Cherry Blossom Festival opened with a beautiful, artistic celebration of the 1912 gift of trees, the longstanding friendship between Japan and the U.S., and spring as a season of renewal. Featuring incredible one-of-a-kind performances, the Opening Ceremony set the stage for a Festival unlike any other.

Presented along with The Japan Foundation and live-streamed around the world, the Opening Ceremony honored the tradition and roots of the Festival by showcasing world-class performers from both Japan and the U.S. and offered the perfect official welcome to spring.

Co-hosted by Olympic gold medalist Kristi Yamaguchi and ABC7’s Michelle Marsh, the Opening Ceremony featured special performances from acclaimed artists, including 2.5-Dimensional Musicals, tap dancer Kazunori Kumagai, and TAIKOPROJECT.

Adding to the prestige of the virtual event, guests speakers presented their remarks from the historic Lincoln Theatre in Washington, DC.
The Student Art Showcase, presented by Chase, featured works of art from DC public and charter school students. These creative masterpieces were inspired by the theme of friendship, and their interpretations of the saying “Home is Where the Blossoms Are.”

All submitted works were featured in a Virtual Gallery where visitors could vote on the 2021 People’s Choice Distinction in each grade category.

"Friendship Blossoms Into Sisterhood" by Madison B.
1st grade, Whittier Education Campus
People’s Choice Winner for Pre-K-1st Grade Category

"Blooming Friendships" by Charity S.
3rd grade, Elsie Whitlow Stokes PCS
People’s Choice Winner for 2nd-3rd Grade Category

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is an event for ALL ages thanks to Blossom Kids, presented by Chase.

Families experienced the Festival through an online repository of fun-ducation videos, crafts, and activities that introduce the Festival, highlight DC, celebrate springtime, and more. Children earned achievement “badges” by completing the wide variety of content provided by over 50 community organizations. As part of their mission of giving back to the community, Chase committed to plant 30 cherry trees in the community this fall to honor the first 30 children who completed a Blossom Badge.

**DID YOU KNOW:**
Girl Scouts of Nation’s Capital continued its longstanding partnership with the Festival with a refreshed “The Gift of Trees” patch program! More than 51,000 Girl Scouts in the greater Washington area and Girl Scouts in Japan had the opportunity to celebrate peacebuilding through this special collaboration.
Participating Organizations

During this unique Festival, 30 local restaurants, businesses, and civic organizations rallied to put on special cherry blossom and spring-themed programs across the DC metro area. From virtual presentations to limited in-person gatherings, the Festival’s Participating Organizations added to the robust options for celebrating the season and history of the blossoms in safe yet memorable ways.

2021 Festival Participating Organizations

The 11th Street Bridge Park
ARTECHOUSE
Aurora Highlands Civic Association
Blue Fern Travel
Blues Alley Jazz
Capitol Riverfront BID
Craft Beer Cellar
Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10-Mile Virtual Run
DowntownDC BID
EDENS / Mosaic District
Fairfax County Visitor Center
Freer and Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art
Frying Pan Farm Park
The George Washington University with The Textile Museum
Green Spring Gardens

Hook Hall
The Japan-America Society of Washington DC
Library of Congress
National Harbor
National Japanese American Memorial Foundation
National Landing
National Philharmonic
Planet Word
Sake Brewers Association of North America
Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA
SJA (Study Japanese in Arlington)
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Synetic Theater
Torpedo Factory Art Center
Unlimited Biking
Washington Wizards
Workhouse Arts Center
The beautiful artwork Guyton created for the 2021 Festival was on public view at Macy's Metro Center, artfully showcasing its intricacies and conveying its emotion.

To create the piece, Guyton merged gold and silver leafing techniques from the 14th century with contemporary creative methods to develop his signature style, which he describes as “gilded modernism.”

“I've been making cherry blossom art for 10 years,” Guyton said. “It was a gigantic honor to be selected to create [this] piece, and know it could be added to the whole array of other pieces that have been done [for the Festival over the years].”

Guyton's 2021 Festival artwork was featured on official commemorative merchandise, including posters, t-shirts, magnets, and more and was available to purchase online.

The official 2021 National Cherry Blossom Festival artwork was created by Patrick Guyton, and beautifully captures the energy and colors of the Tidal Basin in springtime: a metallic, reflective spiraling vortex of cherry blossoms set against the backdrop of the Washington Monument.

For the fourth year in a row, the Festival partnered with Old Ox Brewery to produce FestivALE, which was available in grocery stores and specialty markets throughout the region.

Cherry Tree Endowment

Each year, community members can make a fashion statement while making an investment in the future of the treasured cherry blossom trees by purchasing a collectible Festival lapel pin. The 2021 iteration depicts a single, graceful branch bursting with blossoms.

Those who purchased the 2021 collectible lapel pin provided invaluable support to the Festival's award-winning programming, and contributed to the Trust for the National Mall's Cherry Tree Endowment, which ensures the flowering cherry trees are sustained for future generations to enjoy.
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ANA

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2021 NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Art in Bloom presented by Amazon
Blossom Kite Fly presented by Otsuka America Pharmaceutical, Inc.
Celebration Show presented by Events DC
Opening Ceremony co-presented with The Japan Foundation
Petal Porch Parade & Petal Procession presented by Amazon
Pink Tie Party presented by Events DC and Amazon

Additional Programming
BloomCam presented with National Park Service and The Trust for the National Mall
Blossom Kids presented by Chase
Cherry Picks Restaurants in partnership with the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington
City in Bloom
Girl Scout “Gift of Trees” Patch Program inspired by ANA
Paws & Petals Parade presented by MARS Petcare
Spirit of Spring Virtual 5K Run/Walk sponsored by MARS Petcare
Student Art Showcase presented by Chase, in partnership with the DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative

 Participating Hotels
AC Hotel Washington DC Convention Center
The Alexandrian, Old Town Alexandria, Autograph Collection
Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport
Eaton DC
Fairfield by Marriott-Washington, DC/Downtown
Hilton Arlington
Hilton Garden Inn Arlington/Courthouse Plaza
Hilton Washington DC National Mall
The Wharf
Hilton Washington Dulles Airport
Home2 Suites by Hilton Woodbridge, VA
Homewood Suites by Hilton Washington DC Capitol - Navy Yard
Hyatt Place DC White House
JW Marriott Washington, DC
Key Bridge Marriott
The Mayflower Hotel, Autograph Collection
Morrison House, Old Town Alexandria, Autograph Collection
Moxy Washington DC, Downtown
Renaissance Arlington Capital View
Residence Inn Arlington/Rosslyn
Riggs Washington DC
The Ven at Embassy Row
Westin Crystal City
Westin Washington National Harbor
Wingate Dulles Airport
YOTEL Washington DC Capitol Hill
Yours Truly DC

Senator Adam Ebbin, Diana Mayhew, Tracy Sayegh Gabriel (National Landing BID), and Rob Pulciani (Amazon) plant cherry trees along S. Hayes Street in Arlington, VA.
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Ambassador Tomita Koji hosted a Thank You Luncheon to celebrate the conclusion of the Festival; (l-r): Pete Berlowitz, Ryan Shaffer, Ambassador Koji, Alison Starling, Diana Mayhew, Richard Bradley, and Greg O’Dell.
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A Message

FROM FESTIVAL PRESIDENT & CEO DIANA MAYHEW

The National Cherry Blossom Festival ended its season with a new found hope and renewal of spirits. The Festival brought the community joy in a time of the unknown. It stretched us and allowed us to grow into a new experience, one that supports the community in new ways and allows for new forms of engagement for years to come.

We thank all of our sponsors and supporters. We are most grateful for the vote of confidence and commitment to help deliver the 2021 Festival in a creative and safe way. As we begin to plan for 2022, we look forward to bringing back Festival traditions and continuing the momentum of community participation, as well as engagement from those (audiences) from afar.

Diana Mayhew
President and CEO