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NORFOLK, VA – Mermaids on Parade is an innovative public art project featuring more than 375, four- to ten-foot-long mermaid sculptures. Six years after its introduction, Mermaids on Parade has gone beyond the original goal of raising money for the arts in this burgeoning, seafaring city. This art project has captured the spirit of the destination and given visitors a means to map and commemorate a Norfolk travel experience.

“Sailors have brought their tales of the sea to Norfolk for hundreds of years but none have captured the imagination and fascination more than the coveted water fairy,” says Anthony DiFilippo, President and CEO of the Norfolk Convention and Visitors Bureau. “That a public art project like this has been so deeply embraced, is representative of the character of Norfolk itself – an evolving, arts-centric, whimsical, forward thinking destination that doesn’t forget to embrace its roots.”

A complete guide to all things Mermaid in Norfolk can be found online at www.MermaidsOnParade.com. The site includes a photo gallery showcasing all the sirens, Mermaid on Parade history, an interactive Mermaid locator map and an online store featuring all licensed Mermaids on Parade artwork, books, jewelry and posters.

The beautiful sea nymphs have also been celebrated by Norfolk’s own tale-telling author Lisa Suhay from her children’s book, “There Goes A Mermaid! A NorFolktale” The book showcases Norfolk sculptures, telling Norfolk’s mermaid story through charming lore, poetry and an interactive “Mermaid Spotting Map.” Signed copies of the book are sold at various locations throughout the destination. Sales have generated over \$20,000 for local children’s charities, The Literacy Partnership and The Virginian-Pilot Joy Fund.

Visitors to Norfolk can view **Mermaids on Parade** sculptures via several self-guided trails including a “Heart & Art Mermaid Trail” that will culminate at the fins of “

Nora Folk

” a mermaid created by local artist Georgia Mason, which resides at the city’s epicenter of art, **The Chrysler Museum of Art**

. Another mermaid not-to-be-missed: Artist Cindy Graf’s “

Ocean Patina

” located in Waterside Marina, constructed from the same copper used by past generations to repair battleships.

Travelers can take home their own mermaid keepsakes found at the following places throughout Norfolk:

- **d’ART Center**, Norfolk’s connection to the visual arts, has 30 studios where working artists create and sell their art. Throughout the year, visitors can meet artists and learn from them. Admission is free. The original design for the mermaid mold was the brainchild of ten year d’ART Center member, Kevin Gallup, the artist of several area sculptures including three mermaids.
- The gift shop at **Nauticus**, an interactive science and technology complex that explores the power of the sea, offers extensive mermaid mementos, from posters to glass sculptures and jewelry. Another attraction gift shop with mermaid paraphernalia worth visiting is within the peaceful and romantic 155-acre Norfolk Botanical Garden, home to one of the East Coast’s largest collections of roses, azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons.
- **Spertner’s Jewelry**, located on **Granby Street** in the Norfolk waterfront neighborhood of Ocean View. Silver and gold mermaid jewelry of all types is available here and proceeds benefit the Literacy Project. In addition to admiring artist Georgia Mason’s Nora Folk sculpture, the artist’s 12-inch clay mermaid figurines can also be found for sale at Spertner’s Jeweler. Mason’s art studio is accessible by appointment only to purchase her 12-inch figurines, or larger four- to ten-foot fiberglass sculptures.
- Mermaid-inspired meals at **Sirena Cucina Italiana**. Sirena is Italian for Mermaid, and the restaurant offers dishes from land or sea in a relaxed setting that evokes the ocean with cool décor. Granby Street hot spot **456 Fish** is also a favorite for its refreshing assortment of superior fish and crustacean specialties.

- Mermaid merchandise can also be found online at www.norfolkcvb.com or at the Ocean View Visitors Center 757-441-1852.

~ Norfolk, Virginia ~

Considered the dynamic heart of Virginia's storied Hampton Roads region, Norfolk attracts thousands of travelers each year to enjoy its lively downtown waterfront and 144 miles of shimmering coastline. Offering a vibrant blend of history and heritage with contemporary attractions, outdoor adventure and the Commonwealth's most important cultural institutions, Norfolk is an exciting destination. Here, where the Elizabeth River meets the Chesapeake Bay, visitors will find an easily walkable downtown that offers eclectic dining options, a rich arts scene, high-end shopping and year-round special events. For more information about Norfolk, visit the city on the Web at www.visitnorfolktoday.com, or call 757-664-6620 or toll free at 800-368-3097.