Strawbery Banke Museum and Ice Dance International announce the 2023 “Seacoast Skating with the Stars” contestants to perform on-ice on February 4

PORTSMOUTH NH (January 9, 2023) – Strawberry Banke Museum, in partnership with Ice Dance International (IDI), presents the fourth annual “Seacoast Skating with the Stars” professional skating event on Saturday, February 4, at 2 PM at Labrie Family Skate at Puddle Dock Pond, the Museum’s outdoor skating rink. The rain date for the ice show is Sunday, February 5, at 11 AM.

The six 2023 Seacoast Skating with the Stars contestants are Joanna Kelley, Ashleigh Tucker Pollock, Ned Raynolds, Logan Sherwood, Emmett Soldati, and Cynthia Mead Whitcomb.

Directed by Douglas Webster, Ice Dance International & Labrie Family Skate at Puddle Dock Pond Artistic Director, the six local “stars” are paired with IDI pros in a skate-off for audience votes. As in “Dancing with the Stars,” esteemed judges give their marks on skill and expression. Seacoast Skating with the Stars (SSWTS) also includes performances by the IDI company.

Tickets for rinkside viewing are available at StrawberryBanke.org/events/skatingstars.cfm. VIP tickets include access to an exclusive viewing area on the rinkside Kennebunk Savings Terrace, the opportunity to meet and greet the skaters, and skating admission to Labrie Family Skate at Puddle Dock Pond post-show until 4 PM (first come, first served). VIP tickets are $22 for adults, $18 for children (ages 5-17), and free for children under 5. General Admission includes a rinkside view of the event. General Admission tickets are $15 for adults, $10 for children (ages 5-17), and free for children under 5.

2023 Seacoast Skating with the Stars contestants:

- **Joanna Kelley** is the owner of Cup of Joe, a welcoming cafe & bar in the heart of downtown, a Strawberry Banke Trustee, and is the Assistant Mayor of Portsmouth serving her first term. Although this is her first time skating, and she is nervous about her ice-dancing debut, Joanna hopes her participation in SSWTS 2023 will inspire all to embrace new challenges.

- **Ashleigh Tucker Pollock** is the Chief of Staff at The Music Hall. A former professional dancer, Ashleigh is looking forward to challenging herself with a new art form, "dancing" on ice. She is thankful for this opportunity and hopes it inspires the community to get out on the ice and enjoy another way to love living on the Seacoast
in the winter.

- **Ned Raynolds** is a 20-plus-year resident of Portsmouth and has three children, the youngest a junior at Portsmouth High School. He has served three terms on the City Council and is known for his advocacy of green building, renewable energy, and making Portsmouth a bicycle-friendly community. He was just elected to represent 3/5 of the City in the State Legislature, but he’s going to do his best to represent the whole City just the same. Although a lifelong hockey player, Ned has always loved the grace and athleticism of ice dancing and figure skating, so SSWTS was a chance he could not pass up.

- **Logan Sherwood**, morning radio co-host on WOKQ, is participating in Seacoast Skating with the Stars for two reasons. Reason one is simple: nostalgia. Logan grew up playing hockey and having his parents bring him from rink to rink. Some of his best childhood memories were of his dad waking him up to go to an early morning hockey game. Skating brings Logan back to his fun, youthful, carefree days. The second reason he is participating is to spread that nostalgia, perhaps to those who have never skated. Whether it is ice hockey or figure skating, skating is beautiful, and he is happy to introduce that to anyone who has not tried it yet.

- **Emmett Soldati** is a small business owner, activist, and proud townie who was born and raised in Somersworth, NH. As the owner of Teatotaller Cafe, a queer hipster oasis in Somersworth and now Concord, Emmett spent the last decade working to connect and uplift the community he knows and loves — his hometown. As a relatively new skater, he's excited to participate in this year's event that highlights our community's shared values of inclusion and acceptance.

- **Cynthia Mead Whitcomb** is honored to participate in this great community gathering. She believes that no matter where you are personally, the common factor of skating, with all levels and ages of participants, is so welcoming and soul-soothing. The sense of family and support gained for you to be the best you can be with smiles, on ice, and with the community. Cynthia is skating in memory of Wayne, her husband, who passed away a year ago.

“We are excited to bring this 4th Seacoast Skating with the Stars to the community, an event that not only highlights the joy of skating and bringing people together in winter, but also serves to highlight diversity and inclusion in this very special place that we live,” says Douglas Webster.

The six volunteer contestants learned their routines in December and have been coached by Webster. Contestants spend two weeks before the show practicing with their IDI professional partners.
"The event will be hosted by Webster and the three celebrity judges are Olympic pair skaters: US Hall Fame member JoJo Starbuck; legendary World Champion Randy Gardner from the celebrated team of Tai and Randy, and the return of Sheryl Franks, who will be judging this event for the fourth time."

“Seacoast Skating with the Stars is a wonderful event celebrating the local community,” said Lawrence J. Yerdon, President and CEO, Thomas W. Haas Endowed Chair. “Strawbery Banke is grateful for the continued partnership with Ice Dance International in making the Museum and Labrie Family Skate at Puddle Dock Pond a year-round destination for the community to learn, gather, and preserve.”

This event has been funded in part by the New England States Touring program of the New England Foundation for the Arts, made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts Regional Touring Program and the six New England state arts agencies. Additional support from a community engagement grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**About Strawberry Banke Museum:**
Strawberry Banke Museum, in the heart of downtown Portsmouth, NH, is a 10-acre history museum interpreting history, from Indigenous history to the present day, through historical houses on their original foundations, heirloom gardens, traditional crafts, and costumed roleplayers who share the stories of the families who lived in the authentic waterfront neighborhood of Puddle Dock. The Museum welcomes visitors, members, and schoolchildren for daily programs, exhibits, skating, and signature special events throughout the year. Strawberry Banke Museum is funded in part by grants from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts & National Endowment for the Arts; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom; the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program. For more information and a complete calendar of events, please visit StrawberryBanke.org.

**About Ice Dance International:**
Established in 2014 as a non-profit organization and based in Kittery, Maine, Ice Dance International (IDI) has built its local, US, and global image through live and virtual performances and its educational programs. IDI exists to showcase and promote ice dancing as an internationally recognized performing art form. With a professional company and board of directors of figure skaters and choreographers including World, Olympic, and National champions, IDI brings ice dance performances of the highest caliber to communities across the United States. To learn more about Ice Dance International, the company’s winter residency at
Strawbery Banke, and the programs the company is doing across New England, visit, IceDanceInternational.org.