

‘Mississippi in the Park’ - and Sugaree's - return to New York on June 6

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A beloved Southern tradition is set to return to the banks of the Hudson River in the coming weeks as the Mississippi Society of New York City announces the 2026 revival of its signature cultural celebration, *Mississippi in the Park*.

The annual event, which has become a gathering place for Mississippians living in the Northeast, will take place Saturday, June 6, at Pier 64 in Hudson River Park from noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Organizers say this year's theme, "Family Reunion," reflects the spirit of connection, nostalgia, and Southern hospitality that has defined the festival since its inception. Designed to showcase the heritage and culture of the Magnolia State, the free public event transforms a slice of Manhattan into a Mississippi-style picnic complete with music, Southern cuisine, and community traditions.

Attendees can expect a taste of home from renowned Mississippi institution Sugaree's Bakery, which will serve its signature Southern layer cakes again this year.

“This event is really a bridge between our heritage and our lives here in New York,” said Scott Barton, a board member of the Mississippi Society of New York City. “It’s an opportunity to reconnect with old friends, meet like-minded people, and introduce others to the future and culture of Mississippi.”

The Society has selected Mississippi native and New York-based artist Gracey Massengill as the official 2026 artist for the event. Her winning artwork, inspired by Southern family gatherings, McCarty-style pottery, sweet tea, and fried chicken, will headline promotional materials and serve as the visual centerpiece of this year’s festivities. Massengill, known for her whimsical oil pastel works that evoke “childlike wonder,” said the piece celebrates the warmth and nostalgia of Southern family reunions.

Board member DeAnne Applewhite said the event offers an opportunity to challenge misconceptions about Mississippi while celebrating its unique identity.

“The Big Apple is not too big for us Southerners,” said Applewhite. “I hope people leave understanding that there’s an essence and soul to Mississippi that simply can’t be replicated. Any light shone on Mississippi should be a bright one.”

Organizers say this year’s festival lineup blends classic Mississippi traditions with the creative energy of New York City. Brooklyn favorite Pies ‘n’ Thighs will add a local twist with classic, ginger, and hibiscus sweet teas. The afternoon will also feature a live music lineup showcasing Southern-inspired talent, including singer-songwriter Daniella Katzir, pop-rock performer Thompson Newkirk, blues-rock artist Alex Cano, and indie-rock band Social Creatures, featuring Mississippi native Patrick Roach on drums. Traditional picnic contests, including the fan-favorite “Best Southern Dessert” competition, will round out the festivities.

The gathering has also become an important networking and reunion space for Mississippi alumni communities, drawing graduates from Ole Miss, Mississippi State University, Southern Miss, and other colleges across the state who now call the Northeast home.

The Mississippi Society of NYC encourages attendees to bring picnic blankets, friends, and family for an afternoon celebrating Mississippi music, food, art, and culture in the heart of Manhattan.

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