



Local Athletes Jump in 2021 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Howard County, MD: November 1, 2021 - When the 95th Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade steps off on November 25 in New York City, over 100 jump rope athletes from across the country will participate in the pageantry of the Parade. Featured in the Parade will be jumpers representing 25 teams from 21 states throughout the nation.

Included among the jumpers will be local athletes from *Kangaroo Kids: Cassie Baldwin, Emma Breznak, Isla Gleeson, Michael Laper, Jenna Meek, Mason Meek, John Moses, Foster Sariscak, Evelyn Smallidge, along with their coach Nicole Meek.*

This will be a return to the traditional Parade throughout Manhattan, after last year's virtual parade that kept the Parade record intact during the pandemic. Organized by the Heartbeats Jump Rope Team in Cleveland, Ohio, the group will appear under the acronym J.U.M.P. (Jumpers United for Macy's Parade). Jump Rope is a competition sport that has been featured on television on NBC's "America's Got Talent," ESPN Sports, Fox Sports, and other programs.

These outstanding athletes will showcase their talent in the Macy's Parade alongside giant character balloons, celebrities, floats, marching bands, performance groups, and clowns. This will be the fifth time for this group to appear in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. It will be the first or second time for athletes on the *Kangaroo Kids*.

Jumpers will arrive in the Big Apple on November 23 with much anticipation and excitement for the Parade. This troupe of athletes will come together, not to sightsee or shop, but to practice. Jumpers will be performing many tricks and skills in unison as they jump their way along the parade route to the delight of visitors and New Yorkers who will line the streets 20 deep and fill windows and balconies along the streets overhead.

Starting from Central Park, the athletes will be jumping the entire 2.8 mile course that winds through New York City in front of a huge spectator crowd and millions of viewers of the NBC live telecast of the Parade. To jump the entire distance, the athletes have to be in peak physical

condition. Months of practice will culminate with the cadenced steps that will be seen across the country live from New York City. What an adrenalin rush!

After arriving in at the fabled Herald Square in front of the Macy’s Flagship Store, the group will be featured in a live one-minute segment broadcast on NBC national television with an estimated 50 million viewers. This choreographed TV routine, built around the 112 athletes performing a complex inter-connected double-Dutch matrix, flanked on both sides by a single-rope routine, will include national and world jump rope champions. This group traveled to Cleveland, Ohio for a practice over Labor Day weekend, where they spent the two days in intense rehearsals to synchronize their movements and interaction.

Coach Pam Evans of the Heartbeats team submitted the application to Macy’s for the Parade participation. This is a very competitive selection process, where only a very few performance groups are added to the Parade each year by Macy’s. Members of the Heartbeats team designed and choreographed both the routine for the Parade route and the NBC one-minute live television segment from Herald Square.

Athletes were invited from jump rope teams across the country to join the ensemble, each paying their own way to New York City. Included in the group will be many athletes who have earned recognition as national and international champions. All of the athletes have been practicing for months in their local community with their team to learn the routines, and prepare and build their endurance for the Parade.

Members of JUMP are male and female, ranging from 12 to 26 years old. Jump Rope routines feature gymnastics and dance moves, all done while jumping a rope. Athletes build great foot skills, tremendous upper body strength, powerful endurance, and superior coordination.

What began in 1924 as a holiday parade has become an iconic event that is now recognized as America’s Parade. Along with other performance groups, J.U.M.P. is ready to share its talent and bring joy to all those watching on the streets of New York or tuning in live with loved ones at home. In all, over 4,000 volunteers from Macy’s stores across the country help to coordinate the more than 10,000 participants.

Broadcast nationally by NBC, this is the official kick-off to the holiday season. Be sure to tune in at 9:00 a.m. (EST) on Thanksgiving Day morning and watch the J.U.M.P. athletes from all across the nation in the Macy’s Parade.

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