**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 20-22, 2024: 87th Annual Solvang Danish Days, California's Premier Danish Heritage Festival, Returns with Æbleskiver, Axe Throwing, LEGO®, Parades, Free Entertainment, Beer, Wine, and Foodie Experiences**

***-- Non-Profit Solvang Danish Days Foundation Announces 2024 Event Plans to include Return of Two-Day LEGO Building Competition and Æbleskiver Eating Contests --***

**July 25, 2024 – Solvang, CA – California's premier Danish heritage festival**, **"Solvang Danish Days"** (www.SolvangDanishDays.org), returns with a **three-day event weekend line-up Friday through Sunday**, **September 20**, **21**, **and 22**, **2024**. The **2024 Solvang Danish Days theme** – **"*Det Dansk, Det Dejligt*"** *("It's Danish, it's delightful!")* – will be celebrated during this year's event which honors the 1911 establishment of Solvang by Danish-Americans.

The 2024 edition of Solvang Danish Days will once again offer attendees a Danish immersion experience – without the flight to Europe – while helping to preserve Solvang's authentic Danish heritage. Danish Days guests looking to "live like Vikings" throughout the event weekend have the opportunity to purchase a "Dane For A Day" VIP ticket bundle (*only available online*), while those looking to gain quicker entrance to the Saturday and/or Sunday Æbleskiver Breakfasts may purchase online tickets for the Breakfasts in advance. ***Advance, online tickets for the Æbleskiver Breakfasts and Dane For A Day ticket packages *are* currently on sale.***

Since Solvang Danish Days' modest beginnings in 1936 when the festival debuted to commemorate the village's 25th anniversary, the event has set out to celebrate Solvang's Danish heritage with authentic food, music, dancing, parades, live entertainment, and family activities. In 1946, a reporter from then-influential *The Saturday Evening Post*, visited Solvang during Danish Days and the resulting article, which appeared in January 1947, put Solvang on the proverbial tourism map. The article stated, in part, "Solvang…a spotless Danish village that blooms like a rose in California's charming Santa Ynez Valley. Old country charm and customs have been successfully fused with the American way of life. Nowadays…the quaint village is busy living up to its affectionate name, 'Little Denmark.'"

Solvang Danish Days has since surpassed 86 annual celebrations, and continues to mix "old country charm and customs" with a more modern "way of life" through its varied activities that blend nods to Danish-American traditions with present-day festival staples, while still showcasing everything Danish.

The weekend's varied offerings include activities for all ages ranging from fan-favorite food events surrounding Æbleskiver, the iconic Danish pastry rounds; to a Danish-style beer and wine garden serving Danish import, Carlsberg beer, alongside local brews,

wines and festival eats; to an axe throwing arena; interactive history lessons at the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art; story time sessions with Hans Christian Andersen; to a guided Solvang Food Tour; and, an Old World artisanal crafts marketplace.

Solvang Danish Days boasts plentiful free entertainment with three parades, Danish folk dancers and musicians performing at locations all over town, plus afternoons and evenings of free, live concerts on the Midgaard Pavilion Stage in the middle of downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Viking Beer & Wine Garden. Solvang Danish Days 2024 will, once again, also offer family-friendly pass-times including the popular, and shaded, LEGO tent in Solvang Park, and an expanded Kid's Korner with face painting, activities, and games.

Returning to this year's event: The two-day Solvang Danish Days LEGO Building Competition. Onlookers may watch the creative process as three of California's top brick builders compete against each other with their own, supersized takes on three of Solvang's prized windmills. Builders will be located in Solvang Park; competition runs Saturday and early Sunday.

Also returning to Solvang Danish Days is the pastry-fueled, all-ages Aebleskiver Eating Contest, which will take place on both Saturday and Sunday at 11:30 AM, crowning a 2024 victor able to consume the highest count of aebleskiver in just five minutes, all *hands-free*.

Since the 1960s, Solvang Danish Days has been presided over by each year's Danish Maid, a tradition that remains an honorable accomplishment for each of the Maids appointed by the Danish Days Foundation Board members to become a specific year's Danish Days "royalty." Solvang's Danish Maids serve as goodwill ambassadors during their year of service, making public appearances to promote Solvang and the City's spirit of Danish hospitality.

The **2024 Danish Maid** is **16-year-old Kaeley Reid**, a Solvang resident whose Danish roots stem from her maternal grandfather, Hans "Farfar" Birkholm (1946-2019), who was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. Hans moved to Solvang with his family in 1957 where he met his future wife, Kaeley's grandmother, Denise "Nisie" Birkholm (1951-2018). Hans and Denise raised three children in Solvang, including Kaeley's mother, Karine Birkholm-Reid, who was the 1998 Danish Days Maid.

Kaeley's grandparents, Hans and Denise Birkholm, were instrumental in the organization and growth of Solvang Danish Days. Hans was one of the original Solvang Danish Days Foundation Board Members, and Denise was credited with numerous duties which kept the festival running each year, until she passed away in 2018. Kaeley's family has been involved in Danish Days weekend for decades, and she experienced her first Danish Days festival when she was just nine months old.

"As this year's Danish Maid, I can't wait to represent Solvang and present our Danish history and culture to both locals and visitors, some of which travel from all over the world to join in our annual Danish Days festivities," said Kaeley Reid, Solvang's 2024 Danish Maid. "I am happy to give back to the community I hold so dear and most importantly, I will be honoring the memory of my grandparents, who left me too soon. I know they will be smiling down on me."

Solvang Danish Days 2024 is sponsored in part by the City of Solvang, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, Visit the Santa Ynez Valley, the Red Viking Restaurant and Olsen's Danish Village Bakery. Additional sponsors will be announced as the event weekend approaches.

The **preliminary 2024 Solvang Danish Days event weekend schedule** will be available **online at www.SolvangDanishDays.org**; select event weekend highlights are listed below this release.

More information about Solvang Danish Days including a brief history of the event, parade applications and complete contact information, is also available at **www.SolvangDanishDays.org**. **Solvang Danish Days** is **on Facebook** and **Instagram** at **facebook.com/SolvangDanishDays** and **@DanishDays**.

Questions, media requests for interviews and/or photos, may be directed to Anna Ferguson-Sparks, Stiletto Marketing, at 1.877.327.2656 or Solvang@stilettomarketing.com.

**About the Solvang Danish Days Foundation**

In early 1995, the Solvang City Council approached Santa Ynez Valley residents from long-established, local Danish families and other interested groups about possibly setting up a non-profit foundation – Solvang Danish Days Foundation – to formally plan and organize the increasingly popular, annual Danish Days festivities. The original Solvang Danish Days Foundation board members were Ken Andersen, Brenda Anderson, Hans Birkholm, Max Hanberg, Howard Petersen, David Rasmussen and Henry Skytt. The current Foundation members meet throughout the year to ready each year's celebration. Sponsors and volunteers for the event are always welcome; please contact the Foundation for more information.

###

**Solvang Danish Days 2024 – *Preliminary* Event Weekend Highlights***

***-- FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024 --***

**4:00 PM – 7:00 PM: Free Concert** – Catch local band, Sean Wiggins & lOne gOat, performing live on the Midgaard Pavilion Stage in Parking Lot 2, in downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Danish Days Viking Beer & Wine Garden. All ages welcome; *must be 21 years or older to enter Viking Beer & Wine Garden*. Concert is free and open to the public.

**4:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Axe Throwing** – An axe throwing arena in downtown Solvang. Public invited to give axe throwing a try; must be thirteen (13) years of age or older to enjoy. Ages 13-17 need to have a parent or guardian present. Closed-toe shoes required. Axe throwing continues Saturday and Sunday.

**4:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Viking Beer & Wine Garden** – Outdoor beer and wine garden; supports the Solvang Danish Days Foundation. Viking Beer & Wine Garden continues Saturday. (*Guests must be 21 years of age or older to purchase alcoholic beverages.*)

**7:30 PM: Torchlight Parade** – Free for participants, all ages welcome, candles will be provided. Route begins at Alisal Road and Laurel Avenue, strolling south down Alisal

Road and ending at the Midgaard Pavilion Stage (*in Parking Lot 2, downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Danish Days Viking Beer & Wine Garden*).

**8:00 PM: Opening Ceremonies in Solvang Park** introducing the 2024 Danish Maid, Kaeley Reid. Velkommen Street Dance follows with Danish dancers performing to live music.

***-- SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2024 --***

**8:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Æbleskiver Breakfast** on Copenhagen Drive between First and Second Streets, $10.00 per person (with Danish sausage, $12.00). Tickets available online in advance, or at the event entrance.

**9:00 AM: Old World Artisans Marketplace –** Demonstrations and artisan hand-crafted items including Scandinavian arts & crafts, woodworking, papercutting (*papirklip*), rosemåling, fabric art, jewelry, pottery, and the ever-popular Danish Sisterhood Booth. An open-air Nordic shopping district of finely crafted items, on First Street.

**10:00 AM – 4:00 PM:** Expanded **Kid's Korner** featuring the popular LEGO® tent, in Solvang Park, plus ***Luna's Jumps attractions*** on First Street (*11:00 AM-7:00 PM*).

**10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Solvang Danish Days LEGO Building Competition –** Watch the creative process as three of California's top brick builders compete against each other with their own supersized takes on three of Solvang's prized windmills. Builders will be located in Solvang Park. (*Building continues Sunday morning.*)

**10:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Living History Days** at Elverhøj Museum of History & Art (1624 Elverhoy Way; www.Elverhoj.org). Exhibits come to life during this free, interactive history lesson for all ages. Craftspeople, artisans, and storytellers demonstrate their skills and entertain visitors. Snap a selfie at the Viking photo stop stocked with costumes and props.

**10:30 AM & 1:00 PM: John and Ashley Clark, Hans Christian Andersen Storytimes –** Young and old alike will enjoy listening to hours of tales from Denmark's favorite author. Saturday readings: 10:30 AM at the Hans Christian Andersen Museum (at The Book Loft), 1:00 PM at the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art.

**11:00 AM – 9:00 PM: Axe Throwing –** An axe throwing arena in downtown Solvang. Public invited to give axe throwing a try; must be thirteen (13) years of age or older to enjoy. Ages 13-17 need to have a parent or guardian present. Closed-toe shoes required. Axe throwing continues Sunday.

**11:30 AM: Free Æbleskiver Eating Contest –** Contest will be held in the Midgaard Pavilion in Parking Lot 2, downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Danish Days Viking Beer & Wine Garden. All ages welcome for this five-minute competition.

**12:00 PM – 4:00 PM: Guided Solvang Food Tour –** Led by Santa Barbara's 'Eat This, Shoot That!', discover the best comfort food, hidden watering holes, and artisan shops in downtown Solvang while learning about the local history. Tour includes 8-9 tastings and foodie locations, bites, and sips – with a professional tour guide – while learning foodie photo tips and tricks using your smartphone's camera. Details available at: eatthisshootthat.com/tours/solvang (*Advance ticket purchase is required.*)

**12:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Viking Beer & Wine Garden –** Outdoor beer and wine garden; supports the Solvang Danish Days Foundation. (*Guests must be 21 years of age or older to purchase alcoholic beverages.*)

**2:30 PM: Danish Days Parade –** Includes the Solvang Village Band atop the Carlsberg Beer Wagon, floats, equestrians, Village Dancers and *more*. Line-up starts at 1:30 PM on First Street, between Molle Way and Oak Street; parade begins by turning east on Copenhagen Drive, then north on Alisal Road, west on Mission Drive, south on Fourth Place, east on Copenhagen, south on Second Street, finishes at corner of Oak Street near Solvang City Hall. NO CHARGE to participate in the parade; applications are available at www.SolvangDanishDays.org/contact-us.

**3:30 PM – 10:30 PM: Free Concerts** featuring live performances on the Midgaard Pavilion Stage in Parking Lot 2, in downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Viking Beer & Wine Garden. All ages welcome (*must be 21 years or older to enter Viking Beer & Wine Garden*). Concerts are free and open to the public. Out Of The Blue performs 3:30 PM-6:00 PM; The Molly Ringwald Project performs 7:30 PM-10:30 PM.

***-- SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2024 –***

**8:30 AM – 12:30 PM: *Æbleskiver* Breakfast** on Copenhagen Drive between First and Second Streets, $10.00 per person (with Danish sausage, $12.00). Advance tickets available for sale at solvang-danish-days-2024.eventbrite.com.

**9:00 AM: Old World Artisans Marketplace –** Demonstrations and artisan hand-crafted items including Scandinavian arts & crafts, woodworking, papercutting (*papirklip*), rosemåling, fabric art, jewelry, pottery, and the ever-popular Danish Sisterhood Booth. An open-air Nordic shopping district of finely crafted items, on First Street.

**10:00 AM – 12:30 PM: Solvang Danish Days LEGO Building Competition –** Watch the conclusion of the creative process as three of California's top LEGO builders compete against each other with their own, supersized takes on three of Solvang's prized windmills. Builders will be located in Solvang Park. Judging of the builds begins at 1:45 PM on Sunday, followed by a 3:00 PM winner announcement for the best build, which will occur during the Solvang Danish Days Closing Ceremony.

**10:00 AM – 2:00 PM: Axe Throwing –** An axe throwing arena in downtown Solvang. Public invited to give axe throwing a try; must be thirteen (13) years of age or older to enjoy. Ages 13-17 need to have a parent or guardian present. Closed-toe shoes required.

**10:00 AM – 3:00 PM:** Expanded **Kid's Korner** featuring the popular LEGO® tent, in Solvang Park, plus ***Luna's Jumps attractions*** on First Street (*10:00 AM-3:00 PM*).

**10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Living History Days** at Elverhøj Museum of History & Art (1624 Elverhoy Way; www.Elverhoj.org). Exhibits come to life during this free, interactive history lesson for all ages. Craftspeople, artisans, and storytellers demonstrate their skills and entertain visitors. Snap a selfie at the Viking photo stop stocked with costumes and props.

**11:00 AM & 1:00 PM: John and Ashley Clark, Hans Christian Andersen Storytimes –** Denmark's favorite author reads hours of tales. Sunday readings: 11:00 AM at the Hans Christian Andersen Museum (at The Book Loft), 1:00 PM at the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art.

**11:30 AM: Free Æbleskiver Eating Contest –** Contest will be held in the Midgaard Pavilion in Parking Lot 2, downtown Solvang, adjacent to the Danish Days Viking Beer & Wine Garden. All ages welcome for this five-minute competition.

**12:00 PM – 2:00 PM: Free Concert** – **Terry & The Ripleys** perform live in the Solvang Park Gazebo.

**2:00 PM: Children's Parade –** Parade begins at Atterdag Square (corner of Atterdag Road and Copenhagen Drive) and meanders down Copenhagen to Solvang Park. All children and families are welcome to join this event; no charge to participate, and costumes are encouraged.

**3:00 PM: Danish Days Closing Ceremony** in Solvang Park – The 2024 Danish Days Maid closes the festive event weekend, with a live music performance to follow.

******* *All events listed here are subject to change or cancellation.*

The 2024 Danish Days Maid, Kaeley Reid, is pictured here: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/jdbn1bddlghn0mj0k4mr9/AMRYubj5s0SN68dVOZq0OlA?rlkey=fdumo5qhd52e485sbb0z2xp0a&st=t3zmxc4k&dl=0 (<--- *2024* ***portrait photo credits*** *to Mike Mesikep*)