

For Immediate Release

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**Star Light, Star Bright,
The Liveliest of Grand Illumination Nights
The Founders Inn and Spa Ushers in the Holidays with
Festivities for Everyone in the Family**

Virginia Beach, Va. (October 23, 2007) – Making spirits bright is at the heart of the Grand Illumination as The Founders Inn and Spa ushers in the holiday season with thousands of brilliant lights, horse-drawn carriage rides, festive music, a forty-foot Christmas tree and more, Saturday, November 24, 2007, starting at noon. The culminating lighting ceremony starts at 6:00 p.m. With a turn of the switch, The Founders Inn and Spa turns into a Christmas wonderland as The Virginia Symphony performs from the Presidential Balcony. Admission is free. Call 757-366-5700 or visit www.foundersinn.com for reservations.

“It will be a breath-taking and merry time for children and adults alike. Our guests will enjoy an assortment of activities suitable for everyone whether they are members of a family, a couple on a date, a group of girlfriends or co-workers,” says Ellen Ruane. “Our staff is ready to put on a show, delight our guests and have a fantastic holiday season!” she adds.

What could be a more fitting way to absorb an atmosphere of holiday spirit than an authentic, antique carriage and horses with sleigh bells? Illumination Day, tickets go on sale at noon – children \$6.00, adults \$9.00 - and rides last from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Carriage rides are also available Fridays and Saturdays, December 1 thru December 24, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Holiday decorations inside and out of The Founders Inn and Spa will astound everyone. A majestic, forty-foot, live Christmas tree seems to dance with gold angels to the songs of local choirs. A Christmas tree forest displays the charitable spirit of area businesses; each tree, decorated by a select business, benefits local non-profit organizations.

Strolling entertainment amuses passersby throughout the fanciful day. Children are invited to visit the big guy himself, Santa, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Pictures are available for a nominal fee.

New this year, is the Christmas jazz concert featuring the area's best jazz musicians. Tickets are available through our reservations (include number) and during the illumination activities; the music begins at 7:00 p.m.

The Founders Illumination Buffet serves holiday favorites all day, from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

The holiday events schedule is as follows:

Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner

Thursday, November 22, 11 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Turkey, stuffing and all the makings of a sumptuous holiday meal

Reservations required - \$36.00

Horse-drawn Carriage Rides

Fridays and Saturdays (December 1 – December 24), 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The driver, outfitted in top hat and overcoat, offers a friendly nod and hands you a blanket as you cherish the glow of the season from the seat of an antique carriage.

\$6.00 child, \$9.00 adult

Colonial Holiday Dinner at Swan Terrace

Fridays and Saturdays in December (thru December 22nd), 5 p.m – 9:30 p.m.

Taste the flavors of the season as Swan Terrace's award-winning chefs prepare a holiday buffet feast for the senses.

Reservations required - \$34.00

Breakfast With Santa

Saturdays and Sundays in December (thru December 23), 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

What better way to celebrate the season than to share a meal with the jolly elf in the red suit?

Reservations required - \$19.00 child, \$24.00 adult

Holiday Brunch

December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Gathering around the table for a wonderful meal is a seasonal tradition.

Reservations required - \$21.00

Presidential Sunday Brunch at The Founders Inn and Spa

December 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Combining a Founders Inn favorite with the spirit of the season.

Reservations required - \$26.95

Teddy Bear Tea

December 8, 15, 22, 3:00 p.m.

The magic of the season comes to life as children sip Christmas tea with a new best friend. Each child receives a commemorative Teddy Bear to keep!

Reservations required - \$28.00

Holiday High Tea

December 2, 16, 5:00 p.m.

Celebrate in elegant style when our traditional Sunday Tea takes on a holiday twist.

Reservations required - \$30

Swan Terrace Christmas Eve Dinner

December 24, First seating 5:30 p.m., last seating 7:30 p.m.

An annual treat, Executive Chef Joe Elliott prepares his famous holiday buffet accompanied by live, season-appropriate music.

Reservations required - \$36.00

Evening With Santa

December 23, 6:00 p.m.

Children, all dressed in their holiday pajamas, will snuggle up in blankets to hear Santa Claus read *The Polar Express*. Children indulge in milk and cookies, and take home a commemorative bell.

Reservations required - \$15.00 children

The Founders Christmas Brunch

December 25, 11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Let our culinary experts do the cooking for you with our traditional holiday buffet in the famous Virginia Ballroom.

Reservations required - \$36.00

Swan Terrace New Year's Eve Dinner

December 31

Early seating, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., enjoy a three-course menu - \$55.00

Late seating, 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., enjoy a five-course menu, dancing, live entertainment and champagne toast - \$75.00

MORE

[About The Founders Inn and Spa](#)

Boasting old-world charm and the finest southern hospitality, The Founders Inn and Spa provides the appeal and warmth of a country inn, accented by beautiful antiques and historic artifacts, with a new \$5 million full-service resort spa, grand scale pool featuring a circular slide and interactive fountains, luxurious amenities and award-winning cuisine. The Inn's 240 guestrooms and suites include High Speed Internet access, generous workspace and views of 26 landscaped acres. Select rooms include gas fireplaces, and views of the lake and formal gardens. The Founders Inn and Spa is located at 5641 Indian River Road in Virginia Beach near exit 286B off Interstate 64 East. For reservations and additional information, please call 800-926-4466 or visit www.foundersinn.com.

Benchmark Hospitality manages The Founders Inn and Spa, as well as three other Virginia properties: Lansdowne Resort near Leesburg, a suburb of Washington, D.C.; and Virginia Crossings Resort in Richmond.

Benchmark Hospitality International, an independent hospitality management company based in The Woodlands (Houston), Texas, operates resorts, conference centers, hotels and condominium resorts both domestically and internationally. For locations of Benchmark Hospitality properties and for additional information, visit Benchmark's Website at www.benchmarkhospitality.com.

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