



## Long Island's Kick Off to Halloween - The County's Biggest & Brightest, Family-Friendly Halloween Event Returns to Old Bethpage Village Restoration

*The Magical, 30-Day Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze Presented by Catholic Health Includes Over 7,000 Artisan-Carved, Illuminated Jack O'Lanterns; 30+ Themed, Larger-Than-Life Exhibits; an Immersive Half-Mile Loop; Synchronized Lighting and an Exciting Original Soundtrack*

*Nassau County, NY, August 2023.* – Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and Historic Hudson Valley announce the return of The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze presented by Catholic Health, a 30-day immersive, family friendly Halloween experience, set at Long Island's historic 19th century village, the beloved Old Bethpage Village Restoration. Blaze: Long Island begins on Friday, September 22, 2023, and runs through Sunday, November 5, 2023. For tickets and event dates, visit [www.pumpkinblaze.org](http://www.pumpkinblaze.org). Advance ticket purchases are required.

"I am thrilled to extend a warm welcome to the Great Jack Lantern Blaze, returning to Nassau's historic Old Bethpage Village Restoration. This remarkable exhibit attracts tens of thousands of visitors from across Long Island annually and gives a nice boost to our local economy. Whether you're a Nassau resident or a visitor, we invite everyone to check out this unique experience and explore our vibrant downtown areas. Big thanks to Historic Hudson Valley for partnering with the County to host this iconic event again," said Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman.

The first Halloween themed experience of the season, and the county's largest Halloween event, Blaze is a tremendous artistic production developed by Historic Hudson Valley and its noted Creative Director Michael Natiello, who has appeared on HGTV, The Today Show, and other national programs. Blaze celebrates Long Island's rich history through thousands of illuminated jack o'lanterns and elaborate pumpkin sculptures hand carved by a team of local artisans. The larger-than-life themed exhibits

include 7,000 artisan-carved jack o'lanterns staged along an immersive half-mile loop, complete with synchronized lighting and an original soundtrack.

"What sets Blaze apart from other local Halloween-themed experiences is that parents can feel comfortable knowing it's family friendly, safe and a feast for the eyes!" said Rob Schweitzer, Historic Hudson Valley vice president. "Steeped in Long Island culture and history, we design our event so all ages can make memories along our candlelit, easily walkable pathway."

"We thank Nassau County for once again entrusting us to create Nassau's premier community Halloween event. Halloween is a full season of excitement and we're thrilled to offer an experience that's artistic, not scary, and celebrates the region in a non-commercialized way that supports education and preservation," continued Schweitzer.

Blaze presented by Catholic Health is offered in partnership with the administration of Nassau County Executive Bruce A. Blakeman and with additional support provided by Bethpage Federal Credit Union, I Love New York, and Four Points by Sheraton Melville Long Island.

With more displays than ever before, many of this year's exhibits pay homage to Long Island's rich heritage:

- The Long Island Hall of Fame – features pumpkin portraits of local Long Island icons Billy Joel, Joan Jett, Sue Bird, Dr. J and more!
- Bones Beach – a pumpkin-infused celebration of Jones Beach featuring pumpkin deep sea divers, a giant octopus, a humpback whale, turtles, a shark and a squid
- The Pumpkin Circus – a jack o'lantern carnival will come to life with acrobats, clowns, and a sideshow featuring a contortionist, strong man, Montauk mermaid, sword swallower, and a snake charmer
- The Pumpkin Planetarium – a spectacular exhibit celebrating Long Island's Vanderbilt Planetarium
- The Long Island Lighthouse – pays tribute to Long Island's Montauk Lighthouse
- The Old Bethpage Village Restoration's New York Mutuals Baseball Players – a Halloween tribute to this beloved 19th century baseball team
- And so much more!

Blaze provides the perfect backdrop for social media.

"The exhibits are very photogenic, highly artistic and of course extremely relevant for the fall season," said Michael Natiello, Creative Director, Blaze LI. "Our artisans work very hard to create magnificent sculptural installations, carved and built right on the Old Bethpage Restoration property. In addition to the initial 7,000 jack o'lanterns, over 800 new pumpkins are carved and added to the experience each week, some taking up to four hours each to design and carve!"

This year also includes live, nightly pumpkin carving by Blaze's expert team of pumpkin carving artisans and Café Blaze, an on-site café featuring fall treats from the well-known Jericho Cider Mill, as well as pumpkin beer and wine.

Historic Hudson Valley, which develops and produces the event in partnership with Nassau County, is a not-for-profit education organization that owns and operates National Historic Landmarks in New York's Sleepy Hollow region. Proceeds from ticket purchases support the preservation of Old Bethpage Village Restoration and the educational programming of Historic Hudson Valley.

First launched at Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. in 2005, Blaze has become a yearly tradition for families throughout the tri-state area and beyond, with nearly 2 million visitors since its inception.

Blaze has limited capacity and all admissions are by advance purchase timed ticket or FLEX anytime ticket. No tickets are sold on site. Online tickets start at \$29 for adults and \$19 for children 3-17 and are free for children 2 and under. For tickets and event dates, visit [www.pumpkinblaze.org](http://www.pumpkinblaze.org). The event is held rain or shine.

## **ABOUT HISTORIC HUDSON VALLEY**

Historic Hudson Valley, Westchester County's largest cultural organization, educates and entertains more than 325,000 visitors a year through school programs, tours of five National Historic Landmarks, and Halloween themed experiences, which have earned a national reputation as among the best in the country. Historic Hudson Valley has been producing Blaze for 19 years at its original location in the Hudson Valley at Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson.

## **ABOUT OLD BETHPAGE VILLAGE RESTORATION**

Old Bethpage Village Restoration is a living history museum owned and operated by Nassau County that provides guests the opportunity to step back in time to the island's agrarian past. The Village, which hosts the Long Island Fair in September, consists of homes, barns and other buildings dating back to 1765. Costumed interpreters describe life as it was in the 19th century and historic trade smiths demonstrate various trades.