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Love: Forever Hearts Stamps Great for Expressing Valentine's Day Wishes

High-resolution images of the stamps are available for media use only by emailing: michele.l.martel@usps.gov or freda.g.sauter@usps.gov

RICHMOND, VA — The Postal Service will dedicate this year's Love stamps in Richmond, the capital of the state with the slogan, "Virginia is for Lovers." The first-day-of-issuance ceremony for the limited edition Love: Forever Hearts stamps will be held Thursday, Jan. 22 at 11 a.m. at the [Virginia Museum of Fine Arts](http://www.virginiamuseumoffinearts.org). The event is free and open to the public.

"Although the Greeks first associated the heart with feelings of love and romance, heart symbols can be traced back to pictograms from before the last Ice Age," said U.S. Postal Service Capital Metro Area Vice President Kristin Seaver. "Today, the heart is everywhere. It can be found in religious art, pop culture, greeting cards and so much more, but the meaning remains the same — love — the universal language of the heart. Our Forever Hearts stamps reminds people of the power of everlasting love. In that spirit, we hope the stamp will help you send all of your cards and letters to those you care about with a special touch of love and cheer.

Moreover, there is nothing like the feeling of receiving a love letter in the mail or a valentine from that special someone. But remember, these stamps can be used year-round because love never goes out of season or style."

Scheduled to join Seaver in the dedication will be [Virginia Tourism Corporation](http://www.virginiatourism.com) President and CEO Rita McClenny; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Director Alex Nyerger; and Forever Hearts Art Director, Antonio Antonio Alcalá of Alexandria, VA.

Combining artistic vision with a symbol of undying affection, the 2015 Forever Hearts stamps depict the ancient association between eternal love and the heart. Lacy lettering in the shape of a heart spells out the word "Forever" on two stamps. One design features red lettering on a white background; the other is reversed, with white lettering on a field of red.

Artist Jessica Hische created the lettering that forms the heart, first drawing her design by hand and then finishing the stamp art digitally.

The Heart Design

A religious symbol, a motif in art, an expression of affection or support — today the heart is everywhere, not only at Valentine's Day, but also year-round. It signifies romantic love as well as love of people, places, or ideas. In the 1970s, a campaign to increase tourism in New York famously substituted the heart symbol for the word "love" in its slogan, a trademarked logo that spawned imitations around the world. Scores of businesses and organizations use the heart as part of their logos. Heart designs are carved onto furniture, etched onto jewelry, sewn into quilt patterns, and fashioned into sculpture. In February, the heart is found on everything from cookies to cards to kids' clothes.

The traditional colors of red and white would be appropriate for valentines, wedding invitations, baby announcements, anniversary cards, party invites or any occasion that calls for a classic, timeless stamp. Jessica Hische created the stamp images under the guidance of Art director Antonio Alcalá. As Forever stamps, the Love: Forever Hearts stamps will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Background on the Stamp Artist

Growing up in Hazleton, PA, Hische always knew she wanted to be an artist. Her first professional drawing project was a mural for a restaurant in her hometown. She went on to study graphic and interactive design at the Tyler School of Art at Temple University in Philadelphia, graduating with a B.F.A. in 2006.

Hische began her career as a graphic designer in Philadelphia before moving to New York City to pursue her passion for illustration. A freelance designer since 2009, her clients have included Penguin Books, *The New York Times*, American Express, Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM) America, and McSweeney's. Hische also worked closely with director Wes Anderson to create the title design and credits for the film *Moonrise Kingdom*.

Using color and whimsy, Hische infuses a unique style into her typographical designs. "A friend of mine described it once as 'equal parts design, typography, illustration, brown sugar, and heavy cream,'" she said. "I create letterform-focused artwork that always has a homemade warmth to it."

Hische's projects for the U.S. Postal Service also include [Sealed With Love](#) (2013), and [Love Ribbons](#) (2012). She lives in San Francisco.

Background on Stamp Designer

Antonio Alcalá served on the [Postmaster General's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee](#) from 2010 until 2011, when he left to become an art director for the U.S. Postal Service's stamp development program.

After working as a book designer and freelance graphic designer, Alcalá opened Studio A in 1988. Since then his studio has won awards of excellence in design from local, national, and international design institutions including AIGA, *Print*, *Communication Arts*, and *Graphics*. His clients include: the National Gallery of Art, Library of Congress, National Portrait Gallery, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Geographic Society, Folger Shakespeare Library, the Phillips Collection, and Smithsonian Institution.

Alcalá is an adjunct faculty member of the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, DC, and founder of the design education program DesignWorkshops. He serves on the board of the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association and is a past president of the Art Directors Club of Metropolitan Washington. The AIGA DC Chapter selected Alcalá as its 2008 AIGA Fellow. His work is represented in the AIGA Design Archives and the Library of Congress Permanent Collection of Graphic Design.

Alcalá graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in history and from the Yale School of Art with an M.F.A. in graphic design.

Purchasing Stamps

Customers may purchase the stamps at usps.com/stamps, the [Postal Store](#), at 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) and at Post Offices nationwide or visit ebay.com/stamps to shop for a wide variety of postage stamps and collectibles.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

Love: Forever Hearts Stamps
Postmaster
Richmond Post Office
1801 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23232-9996

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, customers are charged 5 cents each. All orders must be postmarked by March 9, 2015.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are nine philatelic products for this stamp issue.



588524, [Framed Art](#), \$29.95.



- 588506, [Press Sheet with Die cut](#), \$58.80 (print quantity 1,000).
 588508, [Press Sheet without Die cut](#), \$58.80 (print quantity 1,000).



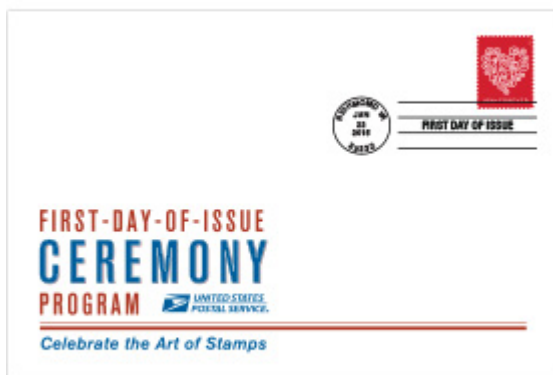
- 588510, Pane of 20 stamps and [Digital Color Postmark Keepsake](#) (set of 2), \$13.95.



- 588516, [First-Day Cover](#) (set of 2), \$1.86.



588521, [Digital Color Postmark](#) (set of 2), \$3.28.



588530, [Ceremony Program](#), \$6.95.

588531, Stamp Deck Card, \$0.95.

588532, Stamp Deck Card with Digital Color Postmark, \$1.99.

Many of this year's other stamps may be viewed on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), via Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps).

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