

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Spread the Joy ... Forever**  
*The 2011 Hanukkah and Kwanzaa Holiday Stamps on Sale Nationwide Today*



*To obtain a high-resolution image of these stamps for media use only, email [roy.a.betts@usps.gov](mailto:roy.a.betts@usps.gov).*

NEW YORK — The Postal Service today issued two newly designed Forever stamps commemorating Hanukkah and Kwanzaa for mailing cards and letters during the upcoming holiday season.

“The U.S. Postal Service is proud to share the celebrations and traditions of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa with the people of the United States and the world,” said David Williams, vice president, Network Operations.

“We hope with these two new commemorative Forever stamps, we can spread the joy of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa on cards and letters across the nation this holiday season.”

Williams dedicated the stamps today at the American Stamp Dealers Association National Stamp Show.

Joining Williams were: James E. Lee, president, American Stamp Dealers Association; Wade E. Saadi, president, American Philatelic Society; Raschelle Parker, manager, Marketing, New York District, U.S. Postal Service; and Stephen Kearney, executive director, Stamp Services, U.S. Postal Service.

“This year, for the first time, all of our holiday stamps are being issued as Forever stamps,” said Kearney. “These popular stamps rank among our best sellers, with 1.3 billion being sold from October to December last year. That amounts to one in every 10 stamps we sell for the year. We hope to sell even more this

year and, remember, they last forever,” Kearney noted.

The eight days and nights of Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, begin on Dec. 20. During Hanukkah, family members gather each night during the festival to light candles on a special candleholder called a menorah. Other Hanukkah traditions include singing, the exchange of gifts, and the spinning of the dreidel, a four-sided top. Children typically use chocolate gelt (coins) to make bets on the outcome of each spin of the dreidel.

This stamp design is the fourth U.S. issuance to commemorate Hanukkah. The Postal Service issued its first Hanukkah stamp, a stylized illustration of a menorah, in 1996. A design featuring an ornate dreidel followed in 2004, and a photograph of a menorah with nine lit candles was first released in 2009.

Art director Ethel Kessler worked with graphic designer Suzanne Kleinwaks of Falls Church, VA, to create the stamp art. Bright colors express the joyful spirit of the holiday, and the eight shapes behind the letters spelling out “Hanukkah” symbolize the eight days and nights of the celebration. The second “k” appears on the silhouette of a dreidel. Each of the letters in this design is subtly tilted to mimic the movement of the dreidel as it twirls.

Kwanzaa, a non-religious holiday, takes place over seven days beginning each year on Dec. 26 and ending Jan. 1. Art director Derry Noyes worked with artist Daniel Minter to create a festive and highly symbolic design to illustrate a Kwanzaa holiday celebration.

Kwanzaa draws on African traditions and takes its name from the phrase for “first fruits” in Swahili, a widely spoken African language. Its origins are in harvest celebrations that occurred in various places across the African continent in ancient and modern times. These traditions were synthesized and reinvented in 1966 by Maulana Karenga as the contemporary cultural festival known as Kwanzaa.

The holiday is intended to be a celebration of seven principles — unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith — based on values prevalent in African culture.

The bold colors in the stamp art represent the colors of the Kwanzaa flag — green for growth, red for blood, and black for the African people. These same colors are repeated in the candles that celebrants light each night of the holiday. Minter’s stamp art focuses on a family celebrating the holiday at home, an important element of Kwanzaa.

This is the fourth stamp design issued by the U.S. Postal Service in celebration of Kwanzaa. The first Kwanzaa commemorative stamp was issued in 1997. New designs also were issued in 2004 and 2009.

Both the Hanukkah and Kwanzaa stamps are being issued as Forever stamps which make them good for one-ounce First-Class Mail postage forever.

The stamps go on sale today at Post Offices nationwide, online at [usps.com](http://usps.com) and by phone at 800-782-6724.

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark, Hanukkah Forever Stamp**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](http://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 larger envelopes addressed to:

Hanukkah Stamp  
Postmaster  
421 Eighth Ave., Rm. 2029B  
New York, NY 10199-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Dec. 14, 2011.

### **How to Order 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. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
P.O. Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

### **Philatelic Products**

There are four philatelic products available for this stamp issue:

- 576461, First-Day Cover, \$.88.
- 576465, Digital Color Postmark, \$1.60.
- 576491, Ceremony Program, \$6.95.
- 576499, Cancellation Keepsake (Digital Color Postmark w/Pane), \$10.95.

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark, Kwanzaa Forever Stamp**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [usps.com/shop](http://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 larger envelopes addressed to:

Kwanzaa Stamp  
Postmaster  
421 Eighth Ave., Rm. 2029B  
New York, NY 10199-9998

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The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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**Please Note:** For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>.

For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional on this issue, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 150 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$67 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 29th in the 2010 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency six consecutive years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.