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Lady Liberty Enlightens the World

New museum brings in more visitors to the Gift Pavilion on Liberty Island

By **Debbie Eisele**
Managing Editor



The allure of the Statue of Liberty draws not only U.S. citizens, but international residents alike. She stands as a symbol of freedom and hope to all, yet located on the grounds of this national icon, are other opportunities for visitors to engage and yes, learn. This free-standing museum focuses on three main points: accessibility, education and sustainability.

Once visitors tour the museum, they can memorialize the trip by shopping in the Gift Pavilion on Liberty Island, which offers an incredible experience for global appeal. Jose Sepulveda, vice president of retail for Evelyn Hill Incorporated shared some information into the new museum and the success and offerings of the Gift Pavilion.

The new museum is 26,000 square feet. It is available to everyone who visits the park and celebrates the history of the Statue of Liberty and immerses the viewer inside Lady Liberty's rich past and her influence throughout the years.



The retail team includes: Senior Buyer Nancy Cam, President Brad A. Hill, Apparel Buyer Joanna Sadowska, Graphic Designer Marta Skrzynska and Vice President of Retail Jose Sepulveda.

museums&MORE: How long have you been with the organization?

Jose Sepulveda: This is my 33rd year working for Evelyn Hill Incorporated. Not one day has passed where I am not in awe knowing I work on Liberty Island beside the Statue of Liberty.

MM: How big is the shop on Liberty Island? What about Ellis Island?

JS: The Gift Pavilion located on Liberty Island is approximately 6,000 square feet and offers everything from your basic t-shirt to

the not-so-basic and intricately detailed 4-foot Statue of Liberty replica. The Ellis Island gift store is under 2,000 square feet, and both stores are decorated in different styles. The Gift Pavilion offers a more contemporary New York-themed store featuring bright colored displays and plenty of natural lighting. The Ellis Island gift store offers a more turn-of-the-century feel, featuring dark woods and faux antique fixtures.

MM: The Statue of Liberty museum recently opened. How has that affected business on both islands?

JS: The new museum opened to the public on May 16, 2019.

It's a little too early to determine how this new addition to the park will affect our business, however we are delighted the visitor has other opportunities to explore and learn about Lady Liberty.

MM: What is the size of the new museum and what can visitors expect to see?

JS: The new museum is 26,000 square feet. It is available to everyone who visits the park and celebrates the history of the Statue of Liberty and immerses the viewer inside Lady Liberty's rich past and her influence throughout the years. The state-of-the-art building offers the visitor with exhibits like the Embracing Liberty Gallery, which tells the story of Bartholdi and many

others who helped in her creation. In addition, the museum offers the visitor with an up close view of the Statue's original torch which she held for 100 years before it was replaced in 1986.

MM: Do you hire part-time or additional employees at certain points in the year?

JS: We hire full-time and part-time employees all year round.



Plenty of seasonal employees are hired during the summer months to keep up with the increase in visitation.

MM: Where do you source your products for the gift shop?

JS: A fun part of the job for me and my retail buying team is in-product development. We help in designing an item from its initial inception all the way through the sampling process and into our shops. Many of our ideas come from sourcing new merchandise with vendors at gift shows or directly with the manufacturer.

MM: What are some of the best-selling items that you carry for each island's respective shop?

JS: Some of our best-selling items at the Gift Pavilion are enjoyed by adults and kids alike, like the timeless foam crown and the wind-up dancing liberty toy. The Ellis Island guide book seems to be customers' top choice at the Ellis Island gift store.

MM: How do you keep displays fresh in the shops? Do you change them up often?

JS: We freshen up our displays as we see fit, sometimes as frequently as monthly, to help in offering the latest trends or the most popular items at that time. We design all of our signage in-house to communicate sales and promotions to our customers quickly and effectively. **m&M**