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Early start for Bx. Week

BY BILL EGBERT

BRONX WEEK will come a month early this year.

To increase the number of schools involved this year, the annual borough fete is being pushed up to May 15-23, rather than its traditional date in late June.

"To make it easier for schools to participate this year, we've moved Bronx Week up to May, when student clubs and activities are still in full swing," said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

The yearly celebration of the borough features a parade, a week of activities highlighting different aspects of Bronx history and culture, a black-tie gala and a ceremony along the Grand Concourse's Bronx Walk of Fame to honor the achievements of native sons and daughters.

Push to include all schools

"This year's Bronx Week Parade will focus on Bronx kids," Diaz said, "and we're encouraging every school to march and to show off something that makes their school unique, gives their school community pride, or showcases their special school spirit."

Bronx Week organizers at the Bronx Tourism Council said every borough school has been invited to march in the parade.

The Bronx boosting will get underway even before Bronx Week. On Thursday, May 13, Diaz and Transportation Alternatives will host Bike To Work Day, and on Friday, the Business Initiative Corp. and the Bronx

Overall Economic Development Corp. will host the Bronx Bankers Breakfast.

Three official kickoff events are planned for opening weekend. Saturday, May 15, is Community Day at the New York Botanical Garden, with free admission, picnicking and entertainment. Also that day, the Bronx Council on the Arts will host the Bronx Artwalk, showcasing the Westchester Square area, with poetry, music and art exhibits.

Sunday, May 16, is Veterans Appreciation Day.

Bronx Week itself features theme days all week, starting with Community Awareness Day on Monday; Business Day on Tuesday; Art & Culture Day on

Wednesday; Youth & Senior Day on Thursday; Health Day on Friday and Environmental Day on Saturday.

Saturday evening will be the swanky, black-tie Bronx Ball.

The Grand Finale Celebration on Sunday, May 23, will start with the induction of Bronx-born greats to the Bronx Walk of Fame on the Grand Concourse. Then the party moves to Mosholu Parkway for the annual Bronx Week Parade, followed by the Bronx Food & Arts Festival and the Bronx Week Concert.

Last year's Bronx Walk of Fame honorees included singer Tony Orlando, "Scrubs" actress Judy Reyes and hip-hop innovator Grand Wizzard Theodore, inventor of the "scratch" and "needle drop" deejay techniques.

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