

“A Blast from the Past:” Mister Magic’s ice cream truck creates memories for Riverdale Park residents

By: Camila Velloso



If you hear the tunes of Popeye the Sailor Man around Riverdale Park, ice cream lovers rejoice – Mister Magic is on his way!

It’s no surprise that Mister Magic’s antique 1960 ice cream truck turns heads as it drives down the streets. The white and red truck – adorned with ice cream cones above the windshield that light up and flash after sundown – is the same ice cream truck from Mister Magic’s childhood.

“I used to chase this truck when I was a kid and I told the owner, ‘I want this truck one day,’” Mister Magic said. “I tried to keep it the same style as it was back in the ‘60s and fully restored it to bring back to the golden years of yesterday for the residents of Riverdale Park. It’s a blast from the past!”

Mister Magic’s truck is not the only vintage thing about his business – his Strawberry Sundae, made with soft serve ice cream and homemade jam, is an original 1950s recipe, and a crowd favorite.

“People constantly ask, ‘How do you make the strawberry sauce?’” Mister Magic said, “and I reply, ‘That’s the magic secret!’”

Now in his 28th year selling ice cream, Mister Magic is still making memories for the community.

Doug Jarman, who came up with the moniker “Mister Magic” after a childhood love of magic, also entertains his customers with skills from his earlier career as a professional magician.

“I like to do magic tricks for the kids when they come up to the truck,” he said. Waving his magic wand, Mister Magic makes sprinkles appear on kids’ ice cream cones. “Their eyes will light up!”

For resident Sarah Wayland, Mister Magic’s ice cream business is one of her favorite things about living in Riverdale Park. She’s watched her two sons grow up on Mister Magic’s ice cream.

“They would hear that Popeye the Sailor Man theme and they would run out the door and get some ice cream,” Wayland said. “It’s just been part of their lives forever, which is nice.”

In his nearly 30 years of business, Mister Magic has operated his truck multiple days a week between the months of March and October.

His daily routine has also remained remarkably constant, working from sunup to sundown on the days he takes his ice cream truck out.

By 8 o’clock in the morning, he’s out the door and in the grocery store buying fresh fruits and produce for his frozen treats, including banana boats, milkshakes, strawberry sundaes, hot fudge, ice cream cones with sprinkles and much more.

“Whatever I sell one day, the very next morning, I’ve got to replace it,” Mister Magic said.

And by noon, he’s in his truck ready to make his first round, stopping only at 9 p.m.

During the summertime, residents can book Mister Magic’s ice cream truck for parties and other special events. And on his months off in the winter, Mister Magic works on maintaining his truck, replacing the brakes and checking the motor.

Mister Magic is especially proud that he takes every precaution to ensure his customers' safety.

He uses a school bus-like stop sign when children are crossing the street and has his truck certified every year by the Prince George's County Health Department.

"I want to have the cleanest ice cream truck in Prince George's County," Mister Magic said. With the help of his wife, Mister Magic cleans and sterilizes his truck every day. "That's how you get the best tasting ice cream out there!"

As for one of his favorite perks of the job, Mister Magic enjoys seeing customers that have grown up with his ice cream bringing their own families to visit.

"Golly, I've had customers who come up to me with little children and they say, 'Do you remember me? I used to buy ice cream from you when I was 12 or 13 years old. And now I'm bringing my kids to you.'"

"So, I've been around a long time," Mister Magic said with a laugh.

"I'm just building memories for everybody because one day I'm not going to be here and I just hope that magic lives on."