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-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

**Light up your day and experience a Swedish Christmas with
Lucia Fest and the Christmas Market
At the American Swedish Historical Museum
Saturday, December 8th, 2012 at 11:30am to 4:30pm**



Light, warmth and Christmas songs have been hallmarks of the Lucia celebration at ASHM since 1939. Each year families pour through the magnificent bronze doors of the museum to be greeted by the aroma of freshly baked pastries, meatball dishes and strong Swedish coffee. Stroll through the Christmas Market, or *Julmarknad*, where Swedish delicacies, crafts, decorations, and imported gifts may be purchased, before the musical entertainment begins. This year the market will include special vendors, Rosemaling by Christina, SEWphistocated, and Tomteland. The Swedish Christmas Café will also be selling your favorite sweet and savory holiday foods.

At 1 pm and 3 pm, the lights will dim and the doors will close for the duration of a performance of Swedish Christmas songs and dances, which are sure to warm your heart in the cold of winter. Children from toddlers to teens dressed in costume entertain the crowds, culminating with the procession of Lucia, wearing her crown of candles, surrounded by her white gowned attendants and star boys.

Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for ASHM members, and \$4 for children 4-12. Children under 4 are free. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance at www.americanswedish.org/calendar.htm. Call 215-389-1776 or email info@americanswedish.org for more information.

December 13th is not an ordinary day in Sweden; it is the day when Lucia celebrations take place all over the country. On this day thousands of young girls and boys emerge from the darkness of a Swedish winter day and gently silence the crowds with a procession of light. Lucia is a deep-rooted, loved and central Swedish holiday. The modern tradition of having public Lucia processions in the Swedish cities started in 1927 when a newspaper in Stockholm elected an official Lucia for that year. The initiative was then followed around the country through the local press. Today most cities in Sweden appoint a Lucia every year, just as schools pick a Lucia among the students and a national Lucia is elected. Often a Lucia is chosen within each household as well. On Lucia day people of all ages wake up early in the morning with one thing in mind; to light up someone's day. This long-awaited holiday symbolizes a move towards better and lighter times, while reminding us of the fact that Christmas is just around the corner.

The American Swedish Historical Museum is located in FDR Park at 1900 Pattison Avenue in South Philadelphia, five blocks west of the Sports Complex. The Museum is easily accessible from Route 95 or 76 and has free parking. For those taking public transportation, the Broad Street subway AT&T/Pattison Ave stop, or SEPTA's Route 17 bus is within walking distance of the Museum.

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