

The Daily Item

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Lynn, Nahant Beaches Get DCR Grants For Summer Activities

Organizations in Lynn and Nahant are among the recipients of more than \$300,000 in grants to support free beach events and programs this summer.

The grants were awarded Saturday by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Department of Conservation & Recreation's (DCR) Better Beaches program.

A total of \$25,200 went to groups in Lynn and Nahant, with the funds going to the Demakes Family YMCA, North Shore Juneteenth Association, Prevent the Cycle, Girls Inc. of Lynn, Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach, the Town of Nahant and the Nahant American Legion Post 215. The money will also help support Plein Air Painting, Bike to the Sea, Inc., and organizations that will host concerts, workouts, a block party at Red Rock park, a beach cleanup and painting classes.

The grants come as in-person public programming resumes on the region's beaches from Nahant on the North Shore to Nantasket on the South Shore. They will benefit 67 organizations and creatives to support 150 free beach events and programs in nine communities.

In 2020, the program awarded more than \$200,000 in grants to 22 organizations that ran creative, virtual and socially-distanced summer programs during the pandemic. Twenty-five percent of the grants went to provide safety equipment and support as organizations faced the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and worked to keep their beaches safe and open.

Save the Harbor has invested nearly \$1.5 million to support free beach events and programs since it began its Better Beaches Program partnership with DCR in 2007.

This year's Better Beaches Program grants will bring free concerts, beach parties, circus performances, DJ sets, yoga and fitness classes, art classes, kayaking and paddle boarding, movie nights, pedicabs, mobility mats, beach wheelchairs and more to the region's waterfront neighborhoods and beachfront communities of Lynn, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.

"The Better Beaches Program events are as diverse as the communities that host them," said Sen. Brendan Crighton of Lynn, co-chair of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission. "But one thing they all have in common is that they bring communities together to enjoy our region's public beaches. Thank you to Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and DCR for working together to strengthen our beachfront communities and waterfront neighborhoods."

"Save the Harbor is committed to increased equity and improved access in all our programs and on our beaches," said Chris Mancini, executive director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. "Thanks to the support of House Speaker Ron Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka, the Baker-Polito administration, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and all our program, community and funding partners including Harpoon

Brewery and JetBlue, it is going to be a great summer on the beach."

Funds to support the program come from a legislative appropriation to the Department of Conservation & Recreation and include \$50,000 in proceeds from the Virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash, which will be awarded to organizations and creatives who empower, amplify and invest in community members of color and improve beach access for people with disabilities.

"It is exciting to have so many new organizations on board this year," said Maya Smith, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's community engagement manager. "I am certain that they will bring new visions, new voices, more food choices, more accessibility and a more diverse audience to the beach."

DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery shares in this enthusiasm.

"Our green and blue spaces are priceless locations and the betterment of these natural, cultural and recreational resources continues to be a priority for DCR and the Baker-Polito administration," said Montgomery. "I look forward to seeing Better Beaches programs that are accessible to many, work to achieve our shared goals and carry on DCR's mission to protect, promote and enhance the Massachusetts state parks system."