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Elise Harmon - Globe Correspondant | June 11, 2015

Hull, Quincy groups receive funding for free beach activities



The Harpoon Helps Cupid Splash event was the main source of funding for many of this summer's programs.

When people watch flares turn the water red in late July during the Hull Lifesaving Museum's Harbor Illumination, most won't be thinking about where funding for the ceremony came from. Neither will the children playing, competing, and enjoying the outdoors at the Friends of the Wollaston Beach Kids Fest in August.

But this year, these programs and more than 30 others will receive grants from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Better Beaches Program. The nonprofit distributed more than \$200,000 to more than 35 groups in beachfront communities to fund free events.

"The program started eight years ago," said Bruce Berman, a Save the Harbor spokesman, "and what we've learned is that people really

love the beach."

Three programs in Hull and two in Quincy received Better Beaches Program grants.

The Hull Nantasket Chamber of Commerce received \$2,000 for its Endless Summer Waterfront Festival on Nantasket Beach in September. The festival offers food from local restaurants, live music, eating contests, and other free activities. Also in Hull, the Friends of the Paragon Carousel received \$1,500 to support Friday morning story time, and the Hull Lifesaving Museum received \$8,000 for the Harbor Illumination.

In Quincy, the Friends of Wollaston Beach group was awarded \$2,500 for the Kids Fest, and Quincy Asian Resources was awarded \$10,000 for

a beach party.

Other communities receiving grants include Lynn, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, and Dorchester.

"Even a modest investment in free events and programs" is really effective, Berman said. "If you give these groups a few tools, they can really run with it."

In past years, the Better Beaches Program gave out about \$30,000 to half as many recipients.

The main source of funding was the Harpoon Helps Cupid Splash event, at which fund-raising participants run into the chilly springtime water dressed in their best "cupid" attire. This year's event on March 21 raised more than \$40,000 for Save the Harbor.

This year, additional funds came from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation, increasing the total amount of grant money by more than 600 percent.

"Hopefully, this summer will be so spectacular that both the legislative and executive branches of government will think we can keep doing it," Berman said. "We spent \$5 billion cleaning up the water . . . so a couple hundred thousand to promote free programs seems worth it to me."

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