

Transcript Staff | June 17, 2021

Local Organizations Receive Beach Grants

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay is bringing the Boston Circus Guild, the Harbor Healing Wellness Program and mobility mats and beach wheelchairs to the Metropolitan Region's public beaches this summer as part of their Better Beaches Program Partnership with DCR.

On Saturday, June 12, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) awarded more than \$300,000 in Better Beaches program grants to 67 organizations and creatives to support 150 free beach events and programs in nine communities from Nahant to Nantasket in 2021.

This year's grant recipients for grants totaling \$11,500 included Friends of Winthrop Beach, Winthrop Chamber of Commerce and Friends of Belle Isle Marsh who will host events including Movie nights, campfires, Family Day at the Beach, and various other summer programs and projects.

In 2020, the Better Beaches Program awarded more than \$200,000 in grants to 22 organizations who ran creative, virtual and socially distanced summer programs during the pandemic. 25% 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 dollars to support free beach events and programs since they began their 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. "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."

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.

"Save the Harbor is committed to increased equity and improved access in all our programs and on our beaches," said Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Executive Director Chris Mancini. "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."

DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery shares Mancini's 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." These free events and programs would not be possible without the support of the Legislative leadership of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission.

"The Better Beaches Program events are as diverse as the communities that host them," said Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chair, Senator Brendan Crighton of Lynn, "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." Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chair Representative Adrian Madaro of East Boston agreed saying, "Free beach events and programs are critical to Bostonians and the region's residents who rely on these spectacular urban natural resources for recreation, especially during the pandemic."

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The success of this program would not be possible without the support of Save the Harbor's program partners and event sponsors, including Harpoon Brewery, JetBlue, Mix 104.1, The Blue Sky Collaborative, The Boston Foundation, The Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, Beacon Capital Partners, P&G Gillette, National Grid, the Daily Catch, and Comcast. "At JetBlue, we are committed to our community and fun is one of our core values," said Donnie Todd, Corporate Responsibility Liaison for JetBlue, who was an enthusiastic participant in this year's virtual splash. "More than 3,000 JetBlue crewmembers call Boston home; we cherish our harbor and proudly support Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the work they do on the region's public beaches."

Save the Harbor also thanks House Speaker Ronald Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka, the Baker/Polito Administration, as well as Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chair's Senator Brendan Crighton of Lynn and Representative Adrian Madaro of East Boston and the legislative and community members of the Commission for their support. They also thank the Baker-Polito Administration, the Massachusetts Legislature, their partners at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Boston Centers for Youth & Families, the YMCA of Greater Boston, and the hundreds of people who take part in the Harpoon Shamrock Splash every year, for their support as well.

"It is going to be a terrific summer, with terrific free events and programs that celebrate our diversity and resilience," said Bruce Berman, Director of Strategy & Communications at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. "After a very difficult year like no other, we are looking forward to seeing you all face-to-face on the beach!"

To learn more about Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the great work they do to restore, protect and share Boston Harbor, the waterfront, islands and the region's public beaches with all Bostonians and the region's residents, visit their website at www.savetheharbor.org and follow @savetheharbor on social media.