

Patch

Boston

Sabrina Suros | September 2, 2021

The Ollie Puts Kid's Safety First on Carson Beach



The South Boston Neighborhood House is the first area group to receive free life jackets, beach wheelchairs and mobility mats to improve beach safety and access at Carson Beach as part of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Better Beaches Program.



Theron Wallis with daughter Sylvie enjoying a floating swim chair at a recent Better Beaches Program event. For more information about borrowing beach accessibility equipment at Carson Beach, contact the South Boston Neighborhood House.

Kids and families who take part in beach festivals, play dates and family fun days hosted by the South Boston Neighborhood House on the cleanest urban beaches in the nation know that the water at DCR's Carson Beach is clean and safe for swimming.

However, many youth development and community organizations don't have easy access to life jackets and other equipment like beach wheelchairs and mobility mats that improve safety and access to these spectacular urban natural resources.

This summer, thanks to a grant from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Better Beaches program and support from the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association and the Boat US Foundation, the Ollie was the first of several Boston area organizations to receive free life jackets, beach wheelchairs and mobility mats, making it easier for kids of every age and people of all abilities to safely enjoy a day at the beach or on the water.

"Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's sustained support has been a real life saver for us during these challenging times," said Kathy Lafferty, Executive Director of the South Boston Neighborhood House. "We share their commitment to beach and boating safety, and accessible beaches for everyone regardless of their ability."

"Beach safety and access for kids and people with disabilities are critically important to me personally and to our community," said Representative David

Biele of South Boston, who serves on the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and was instrumental in securing funds for this year's free Better Beaches program. "Thanks to the Ollie, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and DCR for stepping up and making it happen."

"Each year Save the Harbor/Save the Bay invests more than \$200,000 to support free events and activities that bring thousands and thousands of kids and families back to the beach, onto the harbor and out to the harbor islands. They include beach festivals, kid's play days, kayak instruction, fishing, circus performances, and educational pop-ups at DCR's Carson Beach," said Chris Mancini, Executive Director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. "All of these free programs are tons of fun. We want to make sure that swimming, fishing and boating are also safe and accessible to everyone."

Over the course of the summer, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and their program partners at Triangle, Inc. distributed hundreds of life jackets to youth development and community groups from Nahant to Nantasket, as well as mobility mats to groups in South Boston and the North Shore and the South Shore serving people with disabilities.

These investments would not be possible without the support of the Baker/Polito Administration, the Department of Conservation & Recreation, House Speaker Ronald Mariano, Senate President Karen Spilka, as well as

Metropolitan Beaches Commission Co-Chair's Senator Brendan Crighton of Lynn and Representative Adrian Madaro of East Boston, the Legislative leadership and community members of the Commission and the South Boston delegation," said Mancini. "We truly appreciate their support."

Mancini took a few moments on the beach to thank the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association and the Boat US Foundation for their support, and to thank Save the Harbor's Better Beaches program and policy partners and event sponsors, including Harpoon Brewery, JetBlue, the Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, P&G Gillette, National Grid, Comcast, Beacon Capital Partners, Mix 104.1, Boston Centers for Youth & Families, The YMCA of Greater Boston, The Daily Catch, Boston Event Specialists, the Blue Sky Collaborative, and Keezer Sportswear for their support, as well as the nearly 1,000 individuals who contributed to the support of the Virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash.

To find out more about the South Boston Neighborhood House, visit their website at <https://sbnh.org/> and follow @southbostonneighborhoodhouse on social media

To find out more about free events on Boston Harbor or your favorite beach, visit Save the Harbor's website at www.savetheharbor.org and follow @savetheharbor on social media.