

East Boston

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Annual Harpoon Shamrock Splash Set for March 11

By John Lynds

Each year, hundreds of area residents brave the frigid waters at the M Street Beach in South Boston to help raise money for free activities at Constitution Beach in East Boston, as well as other state beaches from Nahant to Nantasket.

This year's 7th Annual Harpoon Shamrock Splash will kick off on the Southie beach on Sunday, March 11, at 10 a.m. Last year the Shamrock Splash was able to raise \$3,500 for Eastie organizations that support free events on Constitution Beach through the Better Beaches Grant program.

Last summer both the East Boston YMCA and the Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH) were recipients of the grant with the YMCA receiving \$2,500 and NOAH receiving a grant for \$1,000 respectively.

The grants were able to allow the YMCA to again hold its annual "Beach Kick-off Day" on Constitution Beach to raise awareness about their summer food service program. The event featured face painting, sand castle contests, sports, games, arts and crafts, music, and an opportunity for community members to meet with organizations that offer programs on Constitution Beach during the summer. The grant also supported the YMCA's late season movie night, campfire night, and beach activities for local youth.

Over at NOAH the grant money was used again for free kayaking at Constitution Beach all summer long. Last summer, the free kayaking program at the beach run by NOAH's Youth Crew had more than 3,190 participants. That number coupled with the kayaking regatta and other waterfront boating events showed that over 3,300 boaters were on the water last summer in Eastie.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's Bruce Berman said the Harpoon Shamrock Splash began in 2011 to jump start free events and activities on the region's public beaches. In 2017, the Harpoon Shamrock Splash raised more than \$55,000 to support nearly 100 free beach activities in Eastie, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, South Boston,

Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.

"There is simply no better way to celebrate the end of winter than with a quick dip in the cool clean water of Boston Harbor followed by a refreshing Harpoon and burgers on the beach with your friends," said Berman, who has splashed each year since the event began. "Sure, you will be cold for a few minutes but the warm feeling you get from raising funds for a great cause will last all year long."

The cost of to participate is only \$25 and does not only includes entry into the annual Splash but a beer, a burger, a Harpoon Koozie, and the chance to win round-trip flights on JetBlue for best costume and biggest fundraiser.

"We're grateful for the fact that we get to do what we do – make great beer – because of the support of our friends and neighbors. So when we have a chance to return the favor, especially with a group like Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, we're happy to do so." said Harpoon Brewery President Charlie Storey. "I'm not as happy about jumping in the frigid water – but, as Bruce says, the cause (not to mention the food and beers!) make it all worth it."

To participate you can register today at www.shamrocksplash.org.