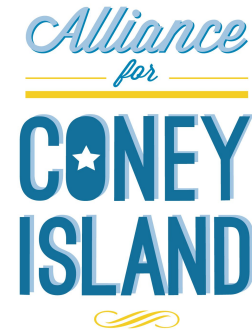


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For Immediate Release:

**CONEY ISLAND ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE 2019 NEW YEAR'S DAY POLAR BEAR PLUNGE
DONATIONS TOTALING OVER \$60,000!**

The historic event aimed to raise funds to support the Coney Island community

Coney Island, March 25, 2019 – The Coney Island Polar Bear Club has announced donations totaling over \$60,000 to local nonprofits in the Coney Island community. To further their commitment to partner with community-based organizations, the Polar Bear Club has awarded a total of 9 organizations who demonstrate community leadership ranging from advocacy, educational resources, and youth engagement. The generous donation is a result of proceeds raised from the 115th Annual New Year's Day Polar Bear Plunge in Coney Island which had more than 3,500 registered participants, a record-breaking year in both attendance and fundraising.

"The Coney Island Polar Bear Club is proud to be able to offer support to these worthy organizations in the Coney Island Community. We wish to thank all of our New Year's Day Plunge participants who donated so generously to make this possible and hope to see them all again on New Year's Day 2020 for another plunge in the frigid Atlantic," said Dennis Thomas, President, Coney Island Polar Bear Club. One of the largest donations was made to the **New York Aquarium** which received \$20,000. The donated funds will help support the New York Aquarium's local conservation initiative, the New York Seascape program. Specifically, the money will help fund the Seascape's work studying the region's whale and shark populations, restoring healthy populations of alewife herring and American eels to local waterways, and building a local marine conservation constituency in Coney Island, which will help keep New York's waters safe for wildlife and people. In addition, the fundraising partner, the **Alliance for Coney Island**, received \$24,000 which will support their free summer events such as the weekly Friday Night Fireworks, job recruitment events that help connect Brooklynites to job opportunities in Coney Island, and advocacy for improvements to the Coney Island community. Other community-based organizations like **Coney Island USA, Coney Island History Project, Coney Island Brighton Beach Open**

Water Swimmers, the NY State Marine Education Association, NYC Parks Foundation, and Parachute Literary Arts received donations ranging from \$500 - \$10,000. The **Coney Island YMCA** was awarded \$3,000 for their summer camp scholarship program. The scholarship program allows several children from the community to attend camp over the summer to engage in activities that will enhance their social skills, help keep their academics on track, keep them physically active, and challenge them to learn new things every day.

“We are proud and excited to have been the fundraising partner for the historic 115th New Year’s Day Polar Bear Plunge. This year was phenomenal and record-breaking in all aspects and we are ecstatic to put our donation to good use to continue providing free events to Coney Islanders and visitors,” said Alexandra Silversmith, Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island.

“A big thank you to the Polar Bear Club and all of the participants in this year’s event,” said Jon Forrest Dohlin, WCS Vice President and Director of the New York Aquarium. “This money will help our scientists study and protect our local marine ecosystems and the wildlife found in our waters around New York...including the Polar Bears found in Coney Island!”

To plan a trip to Coney Island and stay up-to-date on all Coney happenings, make sure to visit **ConeyIslandFunGuide.com**, sign up for our weekly newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, **@ConeyIslandFun**.

Alliance for Coney Island

The not-for-profit Alliance for Coney Island, Inc. is a private-public partnership dedicated to continuing the year-round revitalization of Coney Island. The Alliance represents local businesses, nonprofits, and the community, with support from the New York City Council, the Brooklyn Borough President, and New York City Economic Development Corporation. More info at www.AllianceforConeyIsland.org.

The Coney Island Polar Bear Club

The Coney Island Polar Bear Club is the oldest winter bathing organization in the United States. We swim in the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island every Sunday from November through April. Since 1903, we have been hosting a public New Year’s Day Plunge for all brave souls to welcome the New Year. While the event is free, we do encourage plungers to make a donation to our charity sponsors. In the past decade, the Club has raised over \$500,000 to support charities. This year we are supporting the NY Aquarium, the Alliance for Coney Island and local non-profit community organizations in the Coney Island Community.



All the awardees.
Photo credit: John Delaney/WCS



Photo credit: Daniel Turkewitz



Photo credit: Daniel Turkewitz



Photo credit: Daniel Turkewitz



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