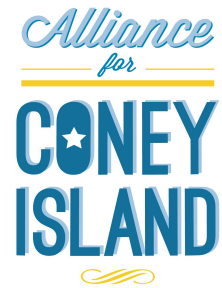


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For Immediate Release:

Alliance for Coney Island announces the opening of the Amusement District and Attractions — right on the Brooklyn waterfront

Coney Island, March 23, 2018 – Coney Island has always been a “must see” destination for visitors and locals and this year will be sure to deliver.

While Sunday, March 25th marks the *official* opening ceremony of the season, those looking to get in on the fun a little earlier can head to Coney Island on Saturday, March 24th. This year **Luna Park** has partnered with New York City Girl Scout Troop 6000 to offer a free wristband to guests all day long on March 24th as a *pre-season* special in exchange for a \$5 donation towards the Girl Scouts. Troop 6000, launched in 2016 at a single family shelter, is a Girl Scout troop specially designed to serve the thousands of girls living in the New York City Shelter System. “There is no better time of the year than opening weekend in Coney Island. We are excited to offer free admission to all park goers this year in exchange for a donation to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC and Girl Scout Troop 6000. Opening Day signals the beginning of the season, and it will be especially fun this year as we help to support girls throughout the city.” **said Fernando Velasquez, General Manager of Luna Park.**

“We are beyond excited to be opening this Sunday with the ceremonial blessing of the rides and egg cream christening of the Cyclone as the annual tradition continues. Our opening, despite the recent snowstorm, is a sure sign that it is Spring and Coney Island is ready for locals and tourists to come enjoy all we have to offer in our ever expanding iconic amusement district” **said Alexandra Silversmith, Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island.**

On March 25th, the *one and only* Coney Island will officially open its doors as the Amusement District gears up for another season. The celebration begins at 10:45am at **Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park** with the “*Blessing of the Rides*”. The family-owned park started this annual tradition which includes a salute to the flag presented by the Ceremonial Unit of the FDNY, a ribbon cutting ceremony and free admission to the park for a local organization. The event, now hosted by park owners Dennis and Steve Vourderis, will mark the 98th Anniversary of the Wonder Wheel. “Deno's Wonder Wheel Park and the entire Vourderis Family is delighted to host the opening ceremonies for the 2018 season in Coney Island this year. Coney Island continues to amaze and delight millions of visitors and this season is already looking fantastic. We look forward to seeing you all soon.” **said Dennis Vourderis, Owner of Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park.**

At 11:00am, opening day ceremonies continue with a speaking program including remarks from local elected officials, followed by the Annual *Egg Cream Christening* at the **Coney Island Cyclone** presided over by Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. "Coney Island is truly the People's Playground. For more than a century, experiences at our sensational seaside attractions have defined the lives of millions of children and families in Brooklyn and beyond. The future of fun along the historic Riegelmann Boardwalk couldn't be brighter, and I cannot wait to see more memories made in the amusement season ahead." **said Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams.**

"I am proud to help welcome another amazing season of thrills in Coney Island. Millions will come from every corner of our city and far beyond to enjoy the growing list of family-friendly activities, eats, and experiences. I look forward to a fun and safe Coney Island season." **said Council Member Mark Treyger (47th District).**

"I'm thrilled to join the Alliance and our historic partners for what is sure to be another successful season here in Coney Island. This is one of the most exciting annual events to take part in, as we know this is the beginning of warmer weather and fun ahead. I hope everyone in New York gets a chance to visit and support one of the most premier summer destinations in the State," **said State Senator Diane J. Savino.**

"Year after year, Coney Island grows stronger as both a destination and a neighborhood," said **NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett.** "The de Blasio Administration is investing in everything from new amusements on the boardwalk to new affordable housing for residents. We thank the Alliance for Coney Island for its critical work across the neighborhood and we can't wait to see what next year brings!"

Opening day in Coney Island brings about excitement not only for the visitors, but for the attractions as well. "We work all year round to think of ways to deliver guests with a memorable experience when visiting Coney Island. We're excited to be able to bring back our staple events like Friday Night Fireworks, Flicks on the Beach, the Talent Show and Sand Sculpting Competition to name a few, while also introducing new and exciting events like the Coney Island Music Festival in addition to partnering on community events to really bring everyone together." **said Cindy Godla, Events and Marketing Manager of Alliance for Coney Island.**

While visitors may have to wait until later in the season to enjoy some of the bigger events, there is still plenty to see and do on opening day. Concluding the opening day ceremonies, the first 98 guests in line for the Wonder Wheel and 100 guests for the Cyclone Roller Coaster will be able to ride a piece of history for free and other area favorites like **El Dorado** and **Brooklyn Go-Kart and Mini Golf** will be open and ready for businesses.

The **New York Aquarium** is open as it is still undergoing an exciting transformation for the summer. Visitors can see hundreds of beautiful exotic fish and playful marine mammals daily from 10:00 am - 4:30 pm, before the Summer of 2018 opening of the much anticipated, brand-new, state of the art exhibit, **Ocean Wonders: Sharks!** The 57,000-square-foot exhibit, will feature sharks from around the globe and the amazing wildlife and habitats in our very own New York waters.

For those looking to grab a bite to eat while enjoying the fun, all your favorite boardwalk concessions will be open this weekend as well. **Coney Cones, La Famiglia Pizzeria, Nathan's Famous, Paul's Daughter, Place to Beach** and **Tom's Restaurant** are all back and ready to serve up some delicious eats.

“While the original Nathan’s Famous restaurant opened in 1916 is open year round, our Nathan’s Boardwalk location has reopened for the season! Be sure to look for special offers and promotions throughout the season,” **said Phil McCann, Senior Director of Marketing at Nathan’s Famous.**

Other local eateries will be cooking up special opening day offers like **Applebee’s Grill & Bar**, who will be dishing out Free Kids meals with the purchase of an adult entrée , with venues **Gargiulo’s Restaurant, Grimaldi’s, Steeplechase Beer Garden, Totonno’s, IHOP** and **Surf City** who are currently open for businesses. For something a little sweet, **It’s Sugar, Lunatics Ice Cream, Rita’s Italian Ice** and **Williams Candy** can be sure to fulfill any sweet tooth.

Those looking to have a few drinks can enjoy options like **Kitchen 21** with their impressive 82 foot bar serving 32 different beers, boardwalk favorite **Ruby’s Bar and Grill** or the **Coney Island Brewery**, who is now offering daily tours at 2PM, 4PM and 6PM that provide guests with guided tastings, 8 rotating taps and new specialty cans to go.

On opening day guests can also grab some great Coney Island memorabilia at boardwalk stores and boutiques like **Brooklyn Beach Shop**, which starting on March 25th will be open daily from 11am to 4pm or those looking for something more eccentric can stop by **Lola Star**.

Brooklyn’s favorite baseball team, The **Brooklyn Cyclones** will throw their first home pitch of the 2018 season on June 16th, but starting Wednesday April 25th, the team will be offering reduced ticket prices for the new season. Making the most affordable baseball team in New York City, even more friendly for your wallet!

Live entertainment lovers are sure to enjoy themselves at the 5,000 seat **Ford Amphitheater** which will host a mix of concerts, family shows and sporting events this year ranging from rock legends Primus to the 1960’s chart toppers The Turtles. Concert tickets are on sale now at Ticketmaster.com, but select shows are available at a discounted rate of \$20 with coupon code CONEY. This open-air venue, which is the first of its kind in the Tri-State area, offers guests year round entertainment with being connected to Kitchen 21, formerly the Child’s Building. After an extensive renovation on the *first* large-format stand alone restaurant in the country, still holding its 1923 era beauty, the newly remodeled **Kitchen 21** offers show goers dining options from grab-and-go to an elegant sit-down experience with views overlooking the Coney Island amusement district.

2018 will also mark the 36th year of the biggest party in Coney Island! A must-see on everyone’s bucket-list, the legendary, iconic and *very* eccentric **Mermaid Parade** will fill the streets of Coney Island with mermaids and sea creatures on June 16th as we celebrate the “official unofficial” start of summer.

Coney Island History lovers will be able to visit the **Coney Island History Project** which will be free of charge from 1:00 PM -6:00 PM on March 25th. They invite visitors to take in some of our amazing history with their display of artifacts, photographs, maps and more of Coney Islands colorful past.

The amusement attractions will open on weekends through Memorial Day, and will be open every day during Spring Break April 2nd to 6th. Starting Memorial day week, the famed Coney Island Beach will be open to the public and the amusement attractions will go into a full 7 day-a-week operation.

To plan a trip to Coney Island and stay up-to-date on all events, 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.

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