



Clean Ocean Action
18 Hartshorne Drive, Suite 2
Highlands, NJ 07732
732-872-0111
www.CleanOceanAction.org



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CONTACT: Catie Tobin, *Marine Science Education Coordinator*

(201) 965-1285

Lauren Brajer, *Communications & Program Coordinator*

(973) 580-1575

Thousands Marshal for Clean Beaches

Clean Ocean Action's 31st Annual Beach Sweeps Shows Deep-Rooted Jersey Pride

Coastal New Jersey —Spirits were high today from 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM as nearly 4000 volunteers donned gloves and work shoes for Clean Ocean Action's (COA) 31st Annual Beach Sweeps at over 70 Jersey Shore sites from Essex to Cape May County. Dedicated volunteers spent the day cleaning, collecting and calculating the debris removed from each site. The data produced from this event is publicized in an annual report that provides a deeper exploration into the pollution issues throughout the Jersey Shore.

Only 75 volunteers were present at the inaugural Beach Sweeps event held in Sandy Hook in 1985. This number is a pale comparison to the 1100 that attended the Sandy Hook site during today's Beach Sweeps. The consistent increase in number and fierce energy of COA's volunteers is proof that this is one staple event in the community that won't be going anywhere!

"The Beach Sweeps never cease to amaze me! Volunteers from the tall and the small to the young and the old, are an inspiration for us to continue to do what we do. COA's daily work is to provide and protect our oceans, bays, waterways and beaches," said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action**. "Volunteers from schools, churches, businesses, organizations, corporations and teams continue to get 'down and dirty' rid our beaches of the litter that has accumulated all winter. This year was no different, volunteers are even resolved to make personal changes in their daily lives in order to reduce ocean pollution. In a perfect world we wouldn't need to come back for Beach Sweeps in the fall but until that happens, we will see you in October."

"Protecting and preserving the Jersey Shore and the ocean waters is an economic issue as well as an environmental issue. The activities that evolve around the Shore, such as fishing, boating, swimming and tourism, are key to the state's economy and provide many jobs," said **Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr.** "I applaud Clean Ocean Action and so many volunteers for their determination to keep our beaches safe and clean."

Data from today's Beach Sweeps is eventually combined with data collected from fall Beach Sweeps scheduled for October 22nd, 2016. The Beach Sweeps annual report identifies pollution problems and

educates citizens on the quantities and types of marine debris. Legislators will receive the cumulative data and use it to implement stricter litter bans and enforce laws to protect the marine environment.

"Seeing the community come together in order to better the environment is truly a beautiful thing," said **Catie Tobin, Marine Science Education Manager for Clean Ocean Action**. "This event is a chance for the general public to become a part of something much larger than themselves. Individuals are scientists for the day as they assist COA in collecting data that will eventually be utilized for scientific purposes. Beach Sweeps is a volunteer driven event – they are the beating heart of our program."

"Clean Ocean Action is an incredible organization that I have been lucky enough to work closely with for the past year," said **Kaylie Haberstroh, MAST high school student and Sandy Hook Site Coordinator**. "I've loved seeing so many people show up to the Beach Sweeps ready to make a change. What we are doing today is so important, and it's an honor to be helping COA with this event."

COA Beach Captains are the direct to the hub of volunteers and individual participates at each site. These captains lead the cleanup effort at each site and are an indispensable part to which we owe the overall success of the program.

"**The Surfrider Foundation, South Jersey Chapter** has participated in Clean Ocean Action's annual Beach Sweeps for many years. The Beach Sweeps are important because they catalog all the trash found along the beaches, helping people realize what is out there and causing problems. We hope participating inspires people to reduce their waste. This can be done easily by refusing single-use plastics like straws, bottles, cups and bags." **Beth Kwart, Ventnor City Beach Captain & Chair, Surfrider Foundation, South Jersey Chapter**.

Selected totals from Sandy Hook included: 7594 plastic pieces, 5799 food/candy wrappers, 5284 caps/lids, 2426 straws/stirrers, and 1539 cigarette filters.

Throughout Beach Sweeps, volunteers are encouraged to note any out-of-the-ordinary finds. COA labels these finds as "The Roster of the Ridiculous". Some of the items catalogued today included: CD of Christmas songs, electrical plug, screw driver, gasoline can, candle wax, medical bracelets, ball of twine, and a golf ball.

With gratitude, Clean Ocean Action thanks: **AVEDA, Bank of America, Comcast, KOHL's, and ShopRite for their 2016 Beach Sweeps Statewide Sponsorship**. The Spring Beach Sweeps are made possible by support from many generous sponsors.

"At Aveda, we care for the world we live in. Every April we celebrate Earth Month and for the past 8 years we have been focused on clean water projects around the world, to date we have raised \$38 million. Together in partnership with Clean Ocean Action they help us educate our Salon network, Experience Centers and guests on how they can take an active for protecting our water locally," said **Brenda Cragnolin-Salzano, Salon & Spa Development Partner with Aveda**. "This month we have worked closely to raise monies through lots of events: Catwalks for Water, Cut a thons, Beach clean ups, Walks for Water and so much more. We could have not made such an impact without COA's support."

"Beach Sweeps offers a unique experience for Bank of America volunteers to drive positive change in New Jersey," said **Bob Doherty, New Jersey President, Bank of America**. "The program empowers

participants to be part of the solution by helping to clean our local beaches, to build an even more thriving community for residents to enjoy.”

The 2015 Clean Ocean Action Beach Sweeps Annual Report can be downloaded here at cleanoceanaction.org.

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Clean Ocean Action's mission is to improve the degraded water quality of the marine waters off the New Jersey/New York coast. Clean Ocean Action will identify the sources of pollution and mount an attack on each by using research, public education and citizen action to convince public officials to enact and enforce measures which will clean up and protect the Atlantic Ocean.

Lauren E. Brajer

Communications & Program Coordinator

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