

Welcome to the Estuary Echo

Young explorers are building confidence, discovering the estuary, and developing lifelong connections to the water.

This summer, The WaterFront Center is celebrating strong interest in our Junior Summer Programs as more families choose hands-on learning, outdoor adventure, and meaningful time on the water.

Learning, Exploring and Growing on Oyster Bay Harbor

Inside This Issue:

- A summer of discovery
- The harbor is a classroom
- Caring for CHRISTEEN and IDA MAY and more



Connecting Our
Community



Educating
Future Stewards



Enjoying & Protecting
our Estuary

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A Summer of Discovery

The WaterFront Center's summer programs invite young people to experience Oyster Bay Harbor through sailing, marine education, fishing, woodworking, and hands-on exploration.

For some participants, summer begins with the excitement of steering a sailboat for the first time. Others arrive ready to investigate the animals and habitats of the estuary, build a wooden pond yacht, or develop their fishing skills. Each program offers a different way to connect with the water.

On the docks and aboard our boats, participants learn how to communicate, solve problems, and take responsibility for themselves and their teammates. These experiences help young people build confidence while developing skills that can stay with them long after the summer ends.

From first-time sailors to returning participants, every young person is encouraged to learn at an appropriate pace and take the next step in their waterfront journey.

Launching The Estuary Echo!

The Estuary Echo is The WaterFront Center's twice-yearly journal, sharing stories of impact, community, and stewardship from Oyster Bay Harbor.

Important Dates



Oyster Bay Cup Regatta:
Saturday, September 12, 2026



Last Day of Camp:
August 14, 2026



Annual Benefit Party:
October 1, 2026

Stay in Touch



thewaterfrontcenter



info@thewaterfrontcenter.org



516-922-7245



1 West End Ave, Oyster Bay



Learn about
Ways to Give



* Our Mission:

Connecting people to the water through education and recreation.

Jonathan Zaskorski Named Sailing Director

The WaterFront Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Jonathan Zaskorski as its new Sailing Director. Jonathan, who has served as the organization's Director of Waterfront Operations over the past year, brings extensive sailing experience, strong leadership, and a deep commitment to expanding access to the water.

A native of Port Washington, Jonathan was first introduced to sailing at Sea Cliff Yacht Club. His passion for the sport grew through competitive sailing at the Saratoga Lake Sailing Club and Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. After graduating, Jonathan spent five years working in the financial technology industry in Manhattan before returning to Oyster Bay to pursue his lifelong passion for sailing and maritime work full-time.

Among his proudest accomplishments are restoring and racing his 1969 Hinckley 38 sailboat with his father and earning a third-place finish in the 2024 Newport to Bermuda Race aboard Coucou, an Express 37. He has also competed in numerous coastal and offshore races throughout the Northeast, further strengthening his experience as both a skipper and crew member.

Since joining The WaterFront Center, Jonathan has already played a key role in advancing our sailing programs.

He has been heavily involved in the J/105 Junior Big Boat Program and High School Sailing, working closely with students to build skills, confidence, and encourage competition, as well as a lifelong connection to sailing.

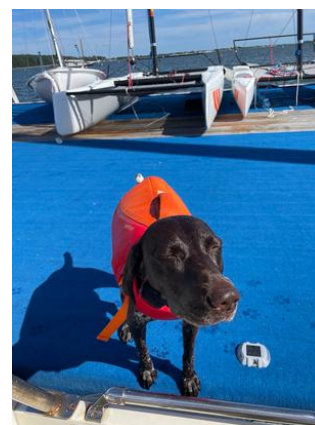
"Jon has already demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication during his time as Director of Waterfront Operations... His experience as a sailor, mentor, and educator, combined with his passion for our mission, makes him the ideal person to lead our sailing programs into the future."

—George J. Ellis, Executive Director

In his new role as Sailing Director, Jonathan will oversee all sailing programs, including youth instruction, junior racing, adult sailing, community sailing, and waterfront operations. He is passionate about making sailing accessible to all and is committed to providing meaningful on-the-water experiences for participants of all ages and backgrounds.

Beyond The WaterFront Center, Jonathan enjoys ice hockey, cooking, reading, and spending time with his dog, Daphne.

The WaterFront Center looks forward to Jonathan's continued leadership and vision as the organization expands its sailing programs and inspires the next generation of sailors.



His first mate Daphne, is excited for her new position as official Dock Greeter

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GEORGE BAKER

Helping expand access, education and meaningful experiences on Oyster Bay Harbor.



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Summer Spotlight

The Harbor is a Classroom

Oyster Bay Harbor offers lessons that cannot be contained within four classroom walls.

Through The WaterFront Center's marine education programs, students investigate the estuary, observe local wildlife, compare habitats, and learn how the health of the harbor affects the wider community.

Hands-on activities invite students to look closely and ask questions. What lives beneath the surface? How do tides shape the shoreline? What can local species tell us about the health of the ecosystem?

By experiencing these lessons directly, students begin to understand that the harbor is not simply a beautiful backdrop. It is a living system that deserves their curiosity, attention, and care.



Program Spotlight

Woodworking is back

Woodworking at The WaterFront Center is back this summer, bringing hands-on learning, creativity, and the pride of building something from scratch. In partnership with the Wooden Boat Shop of Oyster Bay (Formerly known as The Christeen Corp.) campers will use real tools to construct pond yachts while developing focus, confidence, and problem-solving skills.

This returning favorite offers more than a finished project—it gives young makers a sense of accomplishment and a meaningful connection to waterfront craftsmanship.



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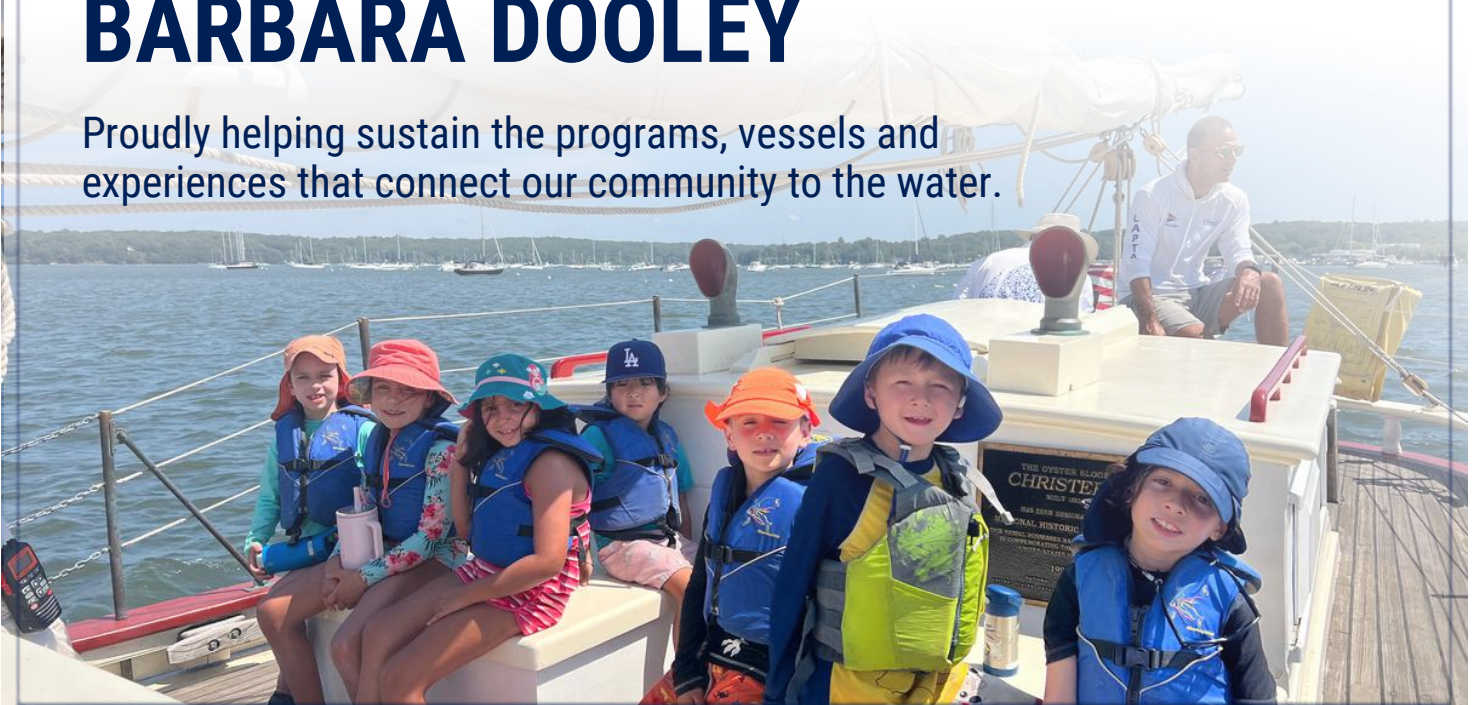


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SOUND CIRCLE STEWARD

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Proudly helping sustain the programs, vessels and experiences that connect our community to the water.



Marine Education & iNaturalist

This past winter, The WaterFront Center's Marine Education team took their learning beyond the classroom and onto the water, documenting local species in the West Harbor estuary and during marine animal dredges aboard our historic vessel, IDA MAY. Using iNaturalist, a global community science platform, our educators recorded observations of marine life even in the colder months — helping build a clearer picture of the biodiversity that thrives here year-round.

iNaturalist allows anyone to upload photos of plants and animals, learn what they've found, and contribute valuable data used by scientists, educators, and conservation groups around the world. Observations made by The WaterFront Center team are publicly available, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the species encountered during our programs and fieldwork. It's a great way to see what's living beneath the surface of Oyster Bay and how our education programs connect participants directly to the local environment.



*Horseshoe Crab with Bdelloura Candida
(an ecotsymbiotic flatworm)*

We invite our community—students, families, sailors, and nature lovers alike—to explore our observations and join in. Together, we can turn everyday discoveries into meaningful science—one observation at a time.

How to Join iNaturalist:

- Download the iNaturalist app or visit www.inaturalist.org.
- Create a free account.
- Snap a photo of any plant, animal, or marine creature you find.
- Upload it with location details—iNaturalist will help you identify it.
- Follow The WaterFront Center's observations to see what others have discovered and contribute to our local biodiversity project!



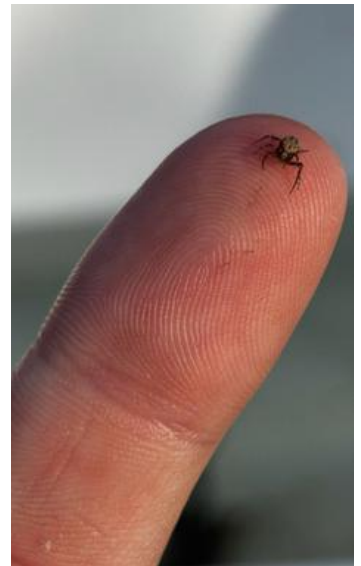
Bay Nettle



Purple-Brown Urchin



Sea Gooseberry



Tan Crab Spider

FEATURED COMMUNITY SUPPORTER



SCHIFF FOUNDATION

2025 IMPACT ON THE WATER

Every program creates another opportunity to learn, build confidence and develop a lasting connection to Oyster Bay Harbor.

1,310

JUNIOR SUMMER PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

6,648

EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3,547

HISTORIC VESSEL EXPERIENCES

380

ADULT SAILING BOOKINGS



Junior Summer Program figures reflect unique participants. All other figures reflect 2025 bookings or program participation records.

Summer Camp Spotlight

Fishing on the IDA MAY

Captain Mike, a lifelong fisherman with decades of experience off the North Shore, is inspiring the next generation of anglers, teaching them the essentials: Choosing bait and rigs, feeling a strike, setting the hook, identifying local species, and learning about the unique ecology of West Harbor. Campers are learning about Oyster Bay's maritime heritage and seeing how the community's working boats shaped the region.

They are practicing methods such as bottom fishing, chumming, drift fishing, and trolling, and are developing proficiency in tying knots. We provide everything but the fish!

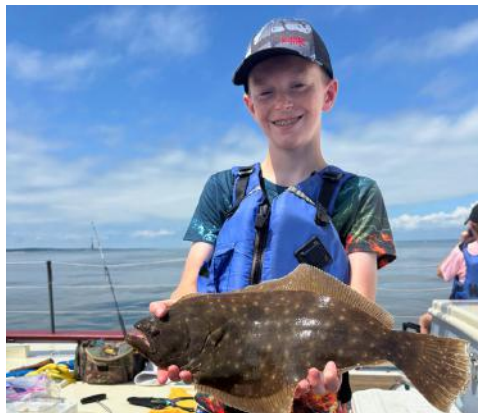
Beyond fishing skills, campers learn about tides, currents, ecosystems, weather awareness, and fishery regulations, preparing conservation-minded anglers for years to come.

The best part? Watching the kids catch their first fish. The amazement, shock, occasional fear, and excitement on their faces is remarkable.

Captain Mike also leads our private charters, where, depending on the season, local species are targeted such as Porgy, Black Sea Bass, Fluke, Bluefish, Snappers, and Striped Bass. The IDA MAY is comfortable for up to 20 anglers, and the WFC adapts the day to suit different groups' experience levels.



Captain Mike and Camper



The WaterFront Center's learn-to-fish program aboard IDA MAY entered its second season with strong participation.



EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

LOCAL TEACHERS SPENT THE DAY LEARNING ON OYSTER BAY HARBOR

In partnership with Nassau TRACT, educators experienced hands-on marine education they can bring back to their classrooms.

On May 15, 2026, approximately 30 local teachers from Oyster Bay, Glen Cove, Syosset, and other Long Island school districts spent a full day learning on and around Oyster Bay Harbor at The WaterFront Center.

Presented in partnership with Nassau TRACT, the professional development program gave teachers an opportunity to experience the same active, place-based learning that engages students during The WaterFront Center's marine education programs.

The day began with classroom instruction before participants headed outside to explore the harbor. Teachers walked to the docks, practiced seining, and closely observed local marine life.



Local educators explore Oyster Bay Harbor during a hands-on professional development program presented in partnership with Nassau TRACT.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➔

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Proudly supporting The WaterFront Center.

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT • CONTINUED

Teachers touched and examined some of the marine life found in the harbor while learning how these species contribute to the estuary's ecosystem.

The group also spent time aboard IDA MAY. Being on the water allowed the teachers to experience Oyster Bay Harbor from a different perspective and connect their classroom discussions with the living environment around them.

Throughout the day, teachers exchanged ideas and considered how hands-on environmental learning supports lessons in science, conservation, local history and stewardship.



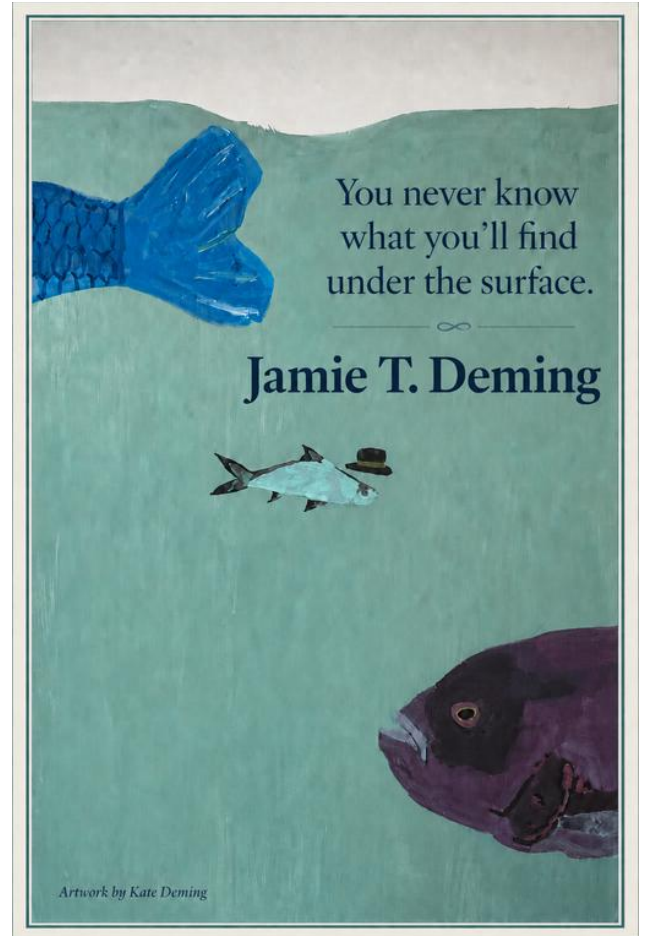
Participants continue their learning on the water aboard IDA MAY.

DAY AT A GLANCE

- Approximately 30 local teachers
- Oyster Bay, Glen Cove, Syosset and other Long Island districts
- Presented in partnership with Nassau TRACT
- Classroom instruction and seining
- Marine-life observation
- Time aboard IDA MAY

“
When teachers connect directly with the harbor, that experience can travel back to classrooms across Long Island.
”

BAY CIRCLE STEWARD



Teachers examine some of the species found within the harbor's estuary.

Caring for Our Maritime History

CHRISTEEN and IDA MAY connect today's visitors with Oyster Bay's working-waterfront history.

Built in 1883, CHRISTEEN is the oldest surviving oyster sloop in the United States. Each season, she carries passengers onto the harbor while sharing the story of the people, vessels, and traditions that shaped the community.



Custom wooden frames are built to support winter covers for each vessel.



IDA MAY continues that story by introducing passengers to Oyster Bay's shellfish heritage and the important relationship between the estuary and the local economy.



Keeping these vessels active requires careful seasonal preparation. Staff members, captains, crew, and volunteers work together to maintain equipment, prepare the vessels, and ensure that each passenger has a safe and meaningful experience.

Their work allows these vessels to remain more than historical objects. They continue to sail, teach, and connect new generations with the harbor.



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LANDSCAPE | DESIGN | MAINTENANCE

BIRD WATCHING ABOARD IDA MAY

Whether you are a seasoned birder or simply looking for a relaxing evening on the water, this tour offers the perfect mix of excitement, education, and natural beauty.

The WaterFront Center had the pleasure of partnering with CI Bird Sanctuary to host a special Bird Watching Cruise aboard IDA MAY.

With guidance from their experienced birding team and binoculars in hand, participants explored Oyster Bay Harbor while learning to identify local bird species. Throughout the cruise, the group spotted ospreys, cormorants, and great egrets. The highlight of the trip was the remarkable sighting of two bald eagles.

The cruise offered a relaxing and educational opportunity to experience the harbor from a different perspective while discovering the wildlife that depends on our local estuary.

Watch for more birding opportunities aboard IDA MAY.



Betty Tiska

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Betty Tiska, a beloved volunteer and cherished member of The WaterFront Center community.

Since 2007 Betty proudly served as crew aboard the 1883 oyster sloop CHRISTEEN. Betty joined as a non-sailor, but through her characteristic hard work ethic she became one of the most reliable crew members, volunteering well into her late 80s. During her last season, she had the most hours, reaching an incredible 164 volunteer hours (34 sails).

Betty also contributed her time and talent to the restoration of the IDA MAY and served as a board member of the CHRISTEEN Oyster Sloop Preservation Corporation, even fundraising for CHRISTEEN'S restoration in the 1990s. Few people had a longer or more meaningful connection to CHRISTEEN than Betty.

Betty will be remembered not only for her tireless work, but for the energy and warmth she brought to every gathering. Her spirited outfits at our Annual Oktoberfest celebration and Christmas parties will especially be missed. She had a gift for showing up fully and making everyone around her feel special.



Betty studied at CUNY Queens College and went on to work as the only woman drafts person at the Sperry Gyroscope plant in the 1950s and early 1960s. She later became a beloved fixture of newsletters and flyers for the Syosset Public Library, where she shared her creativity with the community for nearly five decades. Betty had a long tenure of public service. She volunteered with the Greater Long Island Running Club, the North Shore Sheltering Project, assisted with Oyster Bay's annual OysterFest, supported fundraising efforts for WLIW, and served as a lector and extraordinary minister at St. Edward the Confessor Church. Everywhere she gave her time, she brought warmth, humor, and boundless energy.

Betty passed away on January 23, 2026, at the age of 90, with her family by her side. She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.



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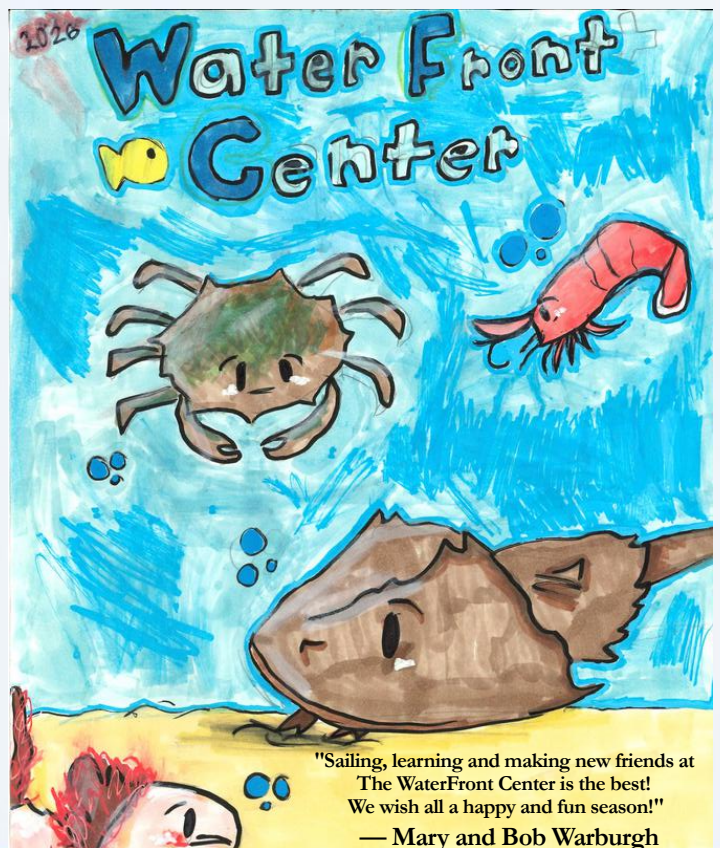
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WOMEN ON THE WATER

Confidence, Community, and Time at the Helm

This summer, women are taking the helm through The WaterFront Center's Women on the Water program.

The season began with a sunset kickoff on May 29, bringing participants together for an evening of sailing, connection and time on Oyster Bay Harbor. The program continues with weekly opportunities for women to strengthen their skills, become more comfortable aboard a sailboat, and enjoy the harbor in a welcoming environment.

Women on the Water is designed for sailors with different levels of experience. Some participants arrive ready to build upon skills they already have, while others are taking their first steps toward becoming more confident on the water. Each outing offers the opportunity to practice communication, teamwork, and decision-making, while learning from fellow sailors.

Just as importantly, the program creates a community. Participants encourage one another, share experiences, and discover that sailing can provide both a challenge and a welcome break from everyday responsibilities.

By creating more opportunities for women to participate in waterfront recreation, The WaterFront Center continues its mission of connecting people to the water through education and recreation.

Interested in joining? Skippers must complete and pass a WFC Check Out Sail before participating. Learn more at TheWaterFrontCenter.org.



Women on the Water participants build confidence, strengthen their sailing skills and enjoy an evening together on Oyster Bay Harbor.





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COMMUNITY RECOGNITION



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PROTECTING OYSTER BAY & COLD SPRING HARBOR

Our mission is to preserve, protect and
restore the ecological integrity and
productivity of the Oyster Bay/Cold
Spring Harbor Estuary and the
surrounding watershed.

Learn more about Re-Clam the Bay
and our other projects at:

www.friendsofthebay.org

**Re-Clam
the Bay**



WITH APPRECIATION



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HELP THE FUTURE OF OUR MARINE STEWARDS

Support from individuals, families, foundations and community partners helps sustain marine education, youth programs, waterfront recreation and the historic vessels that connect our community to the water.

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