

Buzzards Bay Swim...the race goes to the swiftest



Swimmers get ready to launch at Rodney French Boulevard! What a turnout!

Just 21 minutes and 12 seconds. That's how long it took Alex Gallant, 17, of Lakeville to swim 1.2 miles from the beach at East Rodney French Boulevard in New Bedford to Fort Phoenix Beach, Fairhaven. Gallant swam with his teammates on the Apponequet High School swim team Nicholas McKenna and Joshua Beck in the 21st Buzzards Bay Swim across New Bedford Harbor. This was Gallant's fourth Swim and second year in a row that he took the Fastest Swimmer trophy in the Men's Division.

"The conditions were perfect," said Morgan McCarthy. McCarthy, 25, came in first in the Women's Division at 21 minutes 46 seconds. This was McCarthy's fourth win in five years of Buzzards Bay Swims. McCarthy, a recent law school graduate, was on her college swim team at James Madison University in Harrisburg, Virginia.

Over 250 swimmers took to the water in five waves for the Buzzards Bay Coalition's annual fundraiser. The New Bedford-based Coalition is a non-profit organization that has been working to restore and protect the Bay's ecosystem since 1987. This year swimmers raised a total of \$140,000 for the event.

Matt Shenker of Pocasset, MA, was the top fundraiser at \$7,000 and also came in fourth at 21 minutes and 44 seconds. This was Shenker's tenth Swim.

"I was given a challenge," said Shenker. "A donor said he would contribute \$5,000 if one person could raise \$5,000, and \$10,000 if two people could each raise \$5,000."

"All of the funds go towards our programs," said Alicia Pimental, Coalition spokesperson. "The Coalition does educational programs in the schools, research and water quality monitoring, land conservation, and legal advocacy to protect the Bay. The major threat facing the Bay now is nitrogen pollution which causes algal blooms and loss of aquatic species."

Pimental said that the Swim keeps people on the water, "one of the best things about living on the Bay."

"It's a great cause," said Shenker.

Top Three Men's Division Times:

- Alex Gallant, 17, Lakeville, MA—21 minutes 12 seconds (2nd time first place)
- Nathan Gardner, 18, Nashua, NH—21 minutes 27 seconds
- Frank Wuest, 53, Boston, MA—21 minutes 32 seconds

Top Three Women's Division

- Morgan McCarthy, 25, Orleans, MA—21 minutes 46 seconds (5th time first place)
- Kirby Archeim, (no age given), Boston, MA—23 minutes 35 seconds

- Katia Sowers, 42, (no location given), 25 minutes 37 seconds

(Official Timekeeper: New England Timekeeping, Derry, New Hampshire.)

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