

What is Oktoberfest?

By D. Aguiar

The original Oktoberfest is an annual Bavarian festival that takes place annually in Munich Germany. The tradition dates back to 1810 as a celebration of the marriage of the crown prince of Bavaria, later King Ludwig, to Princess Therese. What a party right? A beer fest in honor of the nuptials. Since 1810, Oktoberfest has grown and been celebrated worldwide by avid beer enthusiasts, donned in dirndls and lederhosen.

New Bedford's Oktoberfest tradition began in 2006 and was a collaborative effort of the newly formed non-profit organization, the South Coast Business Alliance. The SCBA was formed as an answer to business networking events for young professionals who wanted to do more than exchange business cards. The group was comprised of business owners and professionals (all under thirty years old at the time) who loved their South Coast community and who understood what kind of difference giving under-privileged children a hand could make. They didn't want to just write checks. They were ready to roll up their sleeves and step into action.

In the beginning, good-will efforts included rebuilding the Boys & Girls Club's boxing ring. Not only did they provide funds for the materials, they volunteered their time on weekends and after work, in order to demo and rebuild something that kids in the community could utilize to keep them off the streets after school. In 2006, the collaborative minds envisioned a beer fest that could raise money that they'd later pour right back into the community. As a 100% volunteer organization, the SCBA is able to take all fundraising proceeds and offer support and grants to organizations that align with the group's mission, to serve the most at-risk youth of our community. Providing

opportunities for today's youth would only serve to strengthen the South Coast for generations to come.

The SCBA has been proud to host an annual Oktoberfest which has brought thousands of people to the table and biergarten. It's a fun event that showcases local music, local food and local brews. The tickets are **\$15 in advance** and \$20 at the door. All proceeds continue to support local organizations. Examples of that support include the Bristol County Children's Advocacy Center, Friends of Jack, Gnome Surf, Dennison Memorial, Girls on the Run and the Boys & Girls Club just to name a few. For more beneficiaries and examples of where your donation goes, visit Southcoastbusinessalliance.org. Join us October 2nd at City Pier 3 for the 15th annual Oktoberfest and help us continue our mission of investing in our youth.