



Back to the Bays

An initiative of Cornell Cooperative Extension | Marine Program

North Fork Polar Bears
Patricia Garcia-Gomez
Studiopgg.co@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact:

CAST
Cathy Demeroto
cdemeroto@castnorthfork.org

NORTH FORK POLAR BEARS Present **2nd Annual “*Splash for CAST*” Polar Plunge**

(North Fork, Long Island) On Sunday, **January 28, 2024**, the **North Fork Polar Bears**, a winter swim group of more than 130 members and growing, will host its **2nd Annual *Splash for CAST*** – a charitable cold-water plunge open to the public, taking place at **10:00 AM** at [Silver Sands Motel & Beach Bungalows](#) at 1400 Silvermere Road in Greenport. Check-in begins at 9:15am. Funds raised from the event will benefit the Center for Advocacy, Support & Transformation (CAST) and Back to the Bays, an initiative of Cornell Cooperative’s Marine program dedicated to preserving and protecting Long Island waters. CAST is a non-profit organization that has been helping low-income residents of the North Fork community meet their nutritional, energy, and educational needs since 1965.

Registration levels are \$25, \$50 and \$125. All participants will receive North Fork Polar Bears’ *Splash for CAST* branded merchandise and coupons to local businesses. Sponsorships are also available with various levels of giving opportunities and visibility, including mention on all promotional materials. To register, sponsor, donate, or fundraise, participants can visit this link: <https://CASTSplash2.givesmart.com>

To inquire about sponsorships, contact information is listed above for representatives for CAST and the North Fork Polar Bears.

Hot drinks will be onsite, as well as a beach fire to warm up before and after the dip. Participants can wear anything they’d like to the plunge – bathing suits, neoprene suits, swim gloves, swim booties, winter hats or swim caps. A towel or robe for after the plunge is suggested. The plunge will take place rain, shine or snow!

Over 200 plungers splashed for their community at the North Fork Polar Bears’ 2023 inaugural plunge, with over 200 people coming out to support them. This year, the North Fork Polar Bears are raising the stakes, aiming for 300 plungers to join in the frigid fun and raising \$75,000 in support of community, wellness, and stewardship of the clean and healthy waters.

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“This is a fun and invigorating way for everyone in our community to make a splash for CAST and Back to the Bays by supporting their important work – they do so much good for the North Fork and the incredible waters that bring us so much joy,” says Patricia Garcia-Gomez, co-founder of the North Fork Polar Bears.

"We are so grateful to the North Fork Polar Bears for bringing the community together to brave the cold for the benefit of our North Fork and Shelter Island neighbors in need who are struggling to make ends meet especially during the difficult winter months." stated Cathy Demeroto, CAST Executive Director.

Kimberly Barbour, CCE Marine Program’s Back to the Bays Director added, "We’re so excited to be included as a beneficiary of this year’s event. The proceeds generated from the plunge will support both CAST’s important work, and enable us to establish a new Back to the Bays Stewardship Site on the North Fork. At this new site we will work in partnership with the North Fork Polar Bears to restore essential marine and coastal habitat, establish a new spat-on-shell oyster reef, seed the bay with clams and scallops-and of course involve the public in these important environmental stewardship efforts."

ABOUT NORTH FORK POLAR BEARS

The North Fork Polar Bears are an informal group of like-minded cold-water enthusiasts who meet regularly to seek adventure, inspiration, calm and community in the cold waters of the North Fork. They are dedicated to community, physical and mental well-being, and taking care of the environments and waters that bring us all so much joy. All are welcome to join for daily or weekly plunges! IG: [@NorthForkPolarBears](https://www.instagram.com/NorthForkPolarBears)

ABOUT CAST

Founded in 1965, the Center for Advocacy, Support & Transformation (CAST) supports underserved and vulnerable populations to ensure food, shelter, education, employment, and health security. Its mission is to provide a safety net and promote self-sufficiency for North Fork and Shelter Island residents in need. The organization serves a diverse population, with dignity and compassion, including seniors, people living with disabilities, single mothers, veterans, children and the working poor. CAST’s vision is to build a community where every member is free from worry about basic necessities and has the opportunity to build a better future for themselves and their families. CAST meets basic needs, provides wraparound services, and offers a broad spectrum of education, workforce training, and arts and cultural programs for all stages of life. www.castnorthfork.org

ABOUT BACK TO THE BAYS

Back to the Bays, a Cornell Cooperative Extension initiative, is dedicated to preserving and protecting our waters, and providing a clean environment for our fish, fowl and plants while helping those who depend on our marine resources remain sustainable. Funding that comes through this year’s North Fork Polar Bears’ *Splash for CAST* will be dedicated to extending Back to the Bay’s work on the North Fork, and to creating local stewards of our beloved North Fork waters. <https://backtothebays.org/>

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