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Get in our "Down the

A Best Day for some kids in Long Branch this weekend

by Kevin

Friday July 18, 2008, 3:06 PM

The Best Day Foundation was only started earlier this year in California, but they have already spread a lot of joy and stoke for special needs children by getting them on waves, and giving them a full day at the beach they might not otherwise get.

Now, Best Day is branching out to the Jersey Shore with a chapter in Sea Bright, and they will hold their first event this weekend at Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park.

On both Saturday and Sunday, volunteers will surf, body board, kayak and do other fun beach activities with special-needs children from the Sea Bright area.

The group, started in Santa Cruz, Calif., has these really cool wave-riding boards for children with disabilities - which you can see in the video on their webpage, www.bestdayfoundation.org. (Click the View The Action button.)

Best Day was formed by Max Montgomery and Brooks Lambert, long time volunteers and board members of Ride a Wave, a similar organization which is locally-focused on beach days for kids in Santa Cruz each summer.

"Being a part of Ride a Wave has had such a positive impact on my life that I want to offer that same opportunity to communities around the world," said co-founder Lambert.

Lambert and Montgomery envision Best Day chapter, "anywhere there's an ocean and a group of passionate individuals who wish to share their love of the ocean with kids with special needs."

Best Day's Sea Bright chapter to be spearheaded by locals Alexis Leaman, a special education teacher, and Lake Downham, a Coast Guard rescue swimmer and life-long surfer.

"The idea of enabling children with special needs to participate in activities that they normally would never get the chance to experience, like surfing, body boarding, and kayaking, was exciting to us," Leaman said. "We wanted to have a large part in bringing that experience to children on the East Coast."

The local community has rallied around Leaman and Downham, providing financial and in-kind sponsorships and a number of enthusiastic volunteers, they say.

The group also received a recent shipment of tandem surfboards, life vests, helmets, body boards and other safety equipment donated by Ride a Wave, and Best Day is bringing a team of twelve skilled volunteers from Santa Cruz to help staff the events and train the crew for this weekend's event.

Among this weekend's visitors will be big wave California surfer Johnny Bowling. "There's nothing I'd rather help someone with more than surfing," he said in a statement. "The ocean has been one of the most positive forces of growth, challenge, and empowerment in my life, and I'd like to share that with the world."

Best Jersey Shore Listings >>

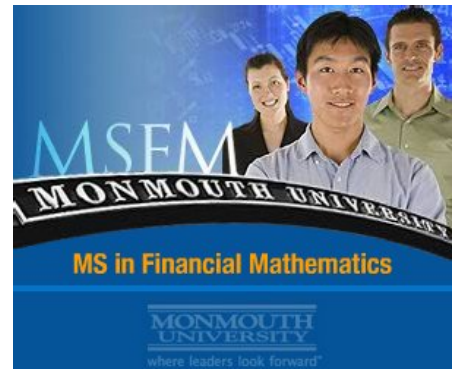
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A Best Day for some kids in Long Bran...

I - Kevin talking here - have been reading about Best Day and Ride a Wave for several days now and I can't think of a better way to help children with disabilities. I plan to volunteer with this group in the future.

If you would like to as well, or you have or know of a child who could benefit from Best Day, a non profit, contact them at their [website](#) - where you can volunteer, sponsor or donate online - or at 1.800.309.2815.

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