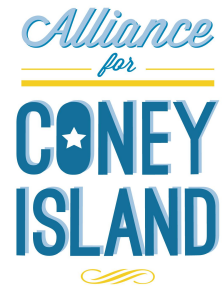


Alliance for Coney Island  
1323 Surf Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11224  
AllianceForConeyIsland.org



Media Contact: Alexandra Silversmith  
Executive Director  
Alexandra@AllianceforConeyIsland.org  
718-637-7957

For Immediate Release:

### **CONEY ISLAND ANNOUNCES 2021 AMUSEMENT OPENING AFTER 18 MONTH CLOSURE**

*Coney Island is ready more than ever for the 2021 season!*

---

**Coney Island, April 5, 2021**– With only 5 days away from the official start of the new season, Coney Island is excited to welcome visitors back to the amusement attractions for the first time since 2019. After the mandated closure for the entirety of the 2020 season due to COVID-19, the Coney Island Amusement District took a devastating hit financially and the businesses are eager to open their doors and welcome visitors back.

“We are extremely grateful to finally be given the opportunity to show the public that we can operate our parks safely for guests,” said **Dennis Vourderis, Co-Owner of Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park.**

“It is incredibly exciting to finally have Luna Park in Coney Island filled with guests and joy after a very challenging year. We are tremendously grateful for all of our frontline workers, the heroes who have saved countless lives and continue to help our community heal; for all of our team members who have been waiting since October 2019 to welcome back our guests; and for our community that is so vibrant and resilient,” said **Alessandro Zamperla, President of Central Amusement International.**

On Friday, April 9th, **Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park** and **Luna Park in Coney Island** will open their gates to the public, with limited capacity and new COVID guidelines for guests to follow including advanced reservations which can be made on their websites prior to visiting the parks. The decades-long tradition of the “Blessing of the Rides” ceremony will take place on the boardwalk in front of Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park beginning at 10:00 AM followed by a speaking program and ribbon-cutting ceremony. **(The ceremony and ribbon-cutting are for the press and invited guests only).** Following the opening ceremony, Deno’s will be providing free rides on the Wonder Wheel for 100 front-line workers including EMT, FDNY, NYPD, and staff from Coney Island Hospital. “2020 marked the first time in 100 years that the wheel has not spun. While it was a devastating time for many, we are excited to welcome back guests and celebrate the life and passion of our parents and grandparents’ hard work who dedicated their lives to providing Coney Island with a warm welcoming amusement park on the Boardwalk. We hope to see everyone this season!” **said the Vourderis Family, owners, and operators of Deno’s Wonder Wheel Amusement Park.**

At 11:00 AM, ceremonies continue with the Annual *Egg Cream Christening* at the **Coney Island Cyclone** presided over by Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams and Alessandro Zamperla, President and CEO of Central Amusement International. Following the christening ceremony at the Cyclone, Luna Park in Coney Island will be providing 500 wristbands to frontline workers from the local Brooklyn community and their families.

Guests heading to opening day will be a part of history celebrating the first rides on the 101-year-old Wonder Wheel and

have the opportunity to experience new rides at Luna Park in Coney Island including six new attractions for children, ranging from swings and coasters to racing games. The new rides include Circus Candy, Fire Patrol, Rainbowwheel, AeroMax, Grand Prix, and Mini Mouse. Later this summer, Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park will be debuting a new family-friendly steel suspended rollercoaster, the "Phoenix" located on West 12th Street. As a symbol of perseverance, fitting for 2021, the Phoenix will allow riders to feel like they are soaring through the air at 34mph at heights of 68 feet.

The **Brooklyn Cyclones'** 20th Anniversary season will mark their first as a member of the newly established High-A East League. While the season starts on May 4th, the Brooklyn Cyclones home opener is set for May 18th at 6:30 PM when they take on the Hudson Valley Renegades (New York Yankees). "The 2021 season is going to be exciting for a lot of reasons," said **Cyclones Vice President Steve Cohen**. "It will be over 600 days since our last game by the time we take the field on May 18th, so that by itself will be exciting for our entire organization. With our season now starting in May and running through mid-September will be able to have almost twice as many games and still provide the same family-friendly, affordable entertainment with great giveaways and fireworks shows that people have come to expect when they come to see the Cyclones play." The ballpark is expected to begin the season with a capacity of 20% based on health and safety guidelines established by New York State. Single-game tickets will start at \$18 for the 2021 season and will be available in the weeks ahead.

New and exciting things are happening at the **New York Aquarium**. Open 365 days a year, the aquarium is home to thousands of beautiful exotic fish and marine animals, and the newly opened **Spineless!** exhibit. Featuring many species of bizarre and beautiful invertebrates including an incredible giant Pacific octopus, moon jellies, cuttlefish, and the world's largest living arthropods – the Japanese spider crab. Plus this month, for the first time ever, the New York Aquarium will be featuring lion's mane jellyfish in this exhibit. With tentacles that can grow up to 120 feet long, they are the largest species of jelly in the world! So make sure you add a trip to the Aquarium to your to-do list and be mesmerized by these giants of the sea. "We are excited about the coming season and are thrilled that our neighbors in the amusement district will be able to re-open," said **Craig Piper, WCS Director of City Zoos/Interim NY Aquarium Director**. "The Coney Island community is a historic part of the New York City experience and the neighborhood businesses have struggled through the pandemic. We are all looking forward to this important step toward normalcy."

"After a long and painful year of social isolation, New Yorkers are eager to get back to the boardwalk and enjoy a Nathan's hotdog under the Wonder Wheel and Cyclone," said **U.S. Senator Charles Schumer**. "I've fought hard in Washington to deliver tens of billions of dollars to shore up the local economy, support our small businesses, and speed vaccinations so we can safely re-open the parts of New York like Coney Island that make our city so special. As a native son of Brooklyn who grew up a short B36 bus ride away in Sheepshead Bay, I'm proud to see this quintessentially New York attraction open this year and I will continue to support the community's recovery and revitalization for years to come."

"Opening season on Coney Island means that spring is finally here and summer is right around the corner," said **U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**. "This has been an incredibly difficult year, but with the reopening of Coney Island's attractions comes signs of joy and relief. Coney Island's rich history has created countless memories and smiles for New Yorkers and visitors alike. Deno's Wonder Wheel will be able to celebrate its delayed 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which opened in 1920 and safely welcome back guests to bring out the kid in all of us."

"COVID-19 has ravaged America, shuttering small businesses and leaving millions of Americans without employment. The Coney Island amusement district is an important economic engine in the Southern Brooklyn Community and suffered last year due to its closure. The safe reopening of Coney Island will not only provide a needed economic boom for the region but should spread joy throughout the City as the beloved sights, sounds, and smells of summer return," said **Congressman Hakeem Jeffries**.

"Coney Island's opening is a surefire bellwether of brighter days ahead," **said Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been.** "The amusement park's safe reopening will bring back critical jobs and visitors to the area, allowing Coney Island to serve as both an iconic destination and an economic engine."

"The Coney Island amusement rides are synonymous with summer in Brooklyn, and their closure last year was a painful blow for all of us. We are thrilled to see the amusement district come back better than ever, which will revitalize the local economy and allow visitors to enjoy the unique attractions with their friends and families. I also want to extend a special congratulations to Deno's Wonder Wheel on its delayed centennial celebration. We can't wait to visit this summer!" said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.**

*"There is a certain feeling when the amusement district is open. It's in the smell of the cotton candy, the sounds of laughter, it is in the joy on the faces of thousands of children. It has been a rough 18 months for our community, and I am beyond ecstatic for April 9<sup>th</sup> when we safely reopen Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park and Luna Park in Coney Island. We are bringing back hundreds of jobs and much needed economic activity to our vibrant and diverse community. I want to extend a huge thank you all of the people who helped us finally open our gates – we look forward to celebrating, as a community, this monumental day and finally be able to rejoice in the 101<sup>st</sup> year of the iconic Wonder Wheel"* **said Alexandra Silversmith, Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island.**

"As a testament to the resilience of our community, we will reopen our historic amusement district, a vital Southern Brooklyn economic engine, thanks to the joint advocacy and partnership with the Alliance for Coney Island, Senator Savino, and Congressman Jeffries. Even with a reopening date, our small businesses are still struggling and they need relief now. I will continue to fight for them as we celebrate opening day at the historic Riegelmann Boardwalk. The season of thrills is coming back at Coney Island once again. I wish everyone a safe and fun year at the People's Playground," **said Council Member Mark Treyger (Bensonhurst, Coney Island, Gravesend, Sea Gate).**

"The Coney Island opening is an annual tradition bringing in the summer season, so this is a bittersweet moment of finally bringing back some normalcy. Although we're not out of the woods yet, we are giving some continued hope to our struggling community. I look forward to a fun and safe season." **said State Senator Diane Savino.**

"I am relieved that after the year of uncertainty faced by the amusement park operators in my district that the doors will be reopening in the coming days," Assemblymember Mathylde Frontus said. "It is welcome news not only for the park businesses but for those who will get to enjoy the iconic and unique destination that is Coney Island in a safe manner." **said Assemblymember Mathylde Frontus.**

"Coney Island is one of the jewels in the crown of New York City. The safe reopening of Coney Island's attractions is a win for this neighborhood and commercial corridor," said Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Small Business Services. "SBS will continue to offer a variety of resources to support Coney Island's small business and local eateries." **said Jonnel Doris, Commissioner of New York City Department of Small Business Services.**

"The pandemic has put a strain on Coney Island's Amusement District and the small businesses along the Boardwalk," **said New York City Economic Development Corporation Acting President, Rachel Loeb.** "This reopening marks a milestone as we continue to rebuild our economy. After such a long winter, we're thrilled the reopening of the People's Playground will bring relief for businesses, create new memories, and put smiles back on the faces of New Yorkers."

Other area favorites like **El Dorado** and **Brooklyn Go-Kart and Mini Golf** will be open and ready for business starting at noon.

For those looking to grab a bite to eat while enjoying the fun, all your favorite boardwalk concessions will be open this weekend as well. **Coney Cones, Al Cavallino, La Famiglia Pizzeria, Nathan's Famous, Paul's Daughter, and Tom's Coney Island**, are all back and ready to serve up some delicious eats.

Other local eateries in the area such as **Gargiulo's Restaurant, IHOP, Nathan's Famous, Pete's Clam Stop, and Surf City** are currently open for business. For something a little sweet or a caffeine pick-me-up, **Auntie Anne's, Carvel, Cinnabon, IT'SUGAR, Lunatics Ice Cream, Red Mango, Starbucks, and Williams Candy** will all be open and ready to welcome in the spring visitors.

Those looking to have a few drinks can enjoy favorites like **Ruby's Bar and Grill** or the **Coney Island Brewery**, which underwent a recent expansion that tripled them in size and now offers vegan food options. And visitors looking to grab some great Coney Island memorabilia to round out their day can shop at boardwalk stores and boutiques, the **Brooklyn Beach Shop, Coney Island Beach Shop, and Lola Star**.

The amusement attractions will be open on weekends through Memorial Day. Starting Memorial Day weekend, the amusement attractions will go into a full 7 day-a-week operation.

To plan a trip to Coney Island and stay up-to-date on all events, make sure to visit **ConeyIslandFunGuide.com**. Sign up for our weekly newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, **@ConeyIslandFun**.

#### **Alliance for Coney Island**

The not-for-profit Alliance for Coney Island, Inc. is a private-public partnership dedicated to continuing the year-round revitalization of Coney Island. The Alliance represents local businesses, nonprofits, and the community, with support from the New York City Council, the Brooklyn Borough President, and New York City Economic Development Corporation. More info at [www.AllianceforConeyIsland.org](http://www.AllianceforConeyIsland.org).

###