

Sandy Castle's second attempt breaks Guinness World Record

At 38.17 feet, castle sets new world record on Point Beach shore

By Kimberly Mollo — *Published in The Ocean Star, Nov. 1, 2013*

POINT PLEASANT BEACH — Sculptor Ed Jarrett proved the old adage true this week — “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”

On the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Sandy — Tuesday, Oct. 29 — Guinness World Records adjudicator Philip Robertson visited Mr. Jarrett and his massive sand castle creation on Jenkinson’s beach to certify the new record.

Standing tall at 38.17 feet, the “Sandy Castle 2013, Second Edition” bests the previous record by just a few inches, and has now entered the record books as the world’s tallest sand castle.

Mr. Jarrett accepted the award for his castle in front of dozens of spectators, who huddled around the gigantic sand spectacle during the chilly late afternoon to watch a little piece of history unfold.

“Thank you to everyone who supported us these past seven months and stuck with us when things were looking grim — you are all incredible and we are Jersey strong,” Mr. Jarrett said.

As hinted in its name, the “Sandy Castle 2013, Second Edition” was not Mr. Jarrett’s first attempt to break the world record on the Jersey Shore.

Earlier this year, Mr. Jarrett, of Maine and currently residing in Point Pleasant Beach, and his friend, Alan Fumo, a Point Pleasant Beach High School graduate and currently of Island Heights, worked with a team of volunteers for months to build what would become the first “Sandy Castle 2013.”

He aimed to build the tallest hand-packed sand castle ever created — a record Mr. Jarrett actually had already held since his construction of a 37-foot, 10-inch-tall castle in Connecticut in 2011.



Photo by Kimberly Mollo

Setting out to best his own record, he and volunteers worked feverishly throughout the summer on Jenkinson's beach. However, the first attempt went south and, ultimately, did not measure up.

Boardwalk construction work and other Hurricane Sandy-related restoration projects shook the sand castle throughout its creation, causing hairline fractures within the structure of the castle, Mr. Jarrett said. The fractures were caused by vibrations from work such as the driving of boardwalk pilings into the ground and bulldozers pushing sand on the beach.

The first Sandy Castle fell just three feet short of the record, but the overall project soared in its larger goal of helping the local area recover from the storm that gave the castle its namesake.

The Sandy Castle project has so far generated more than \$50,000 for the Hometown Heroes' fund to help Hurricane Sandy victims.

Mr. Jarrett raises the funds by charging visitors an admission fee of \$1 to take a gander at the massive castle — only the top of the Sandy Castle is visible from the boardwalk and the rest of the beach, so people must pay the admission if they want to walk through the enclosure and see it in its entirety.

All proceeds garnered from admission fees are put into a nonprofit foundation Mr. Fumo started, called The Sandy Castle Foundation, which then goes out to Hometown Heroes.

Mr. Fumo acts as the organization's founder, while Mr. Jarrett served as the sand castle sculptor. The longtime friends originally met while attending Johnson & Wales University, in Providence, R.I.

Mr. Jarrett has always tied his sand castle creations to charitable work and good causes. The previous record-holding castle sculpted by Mr. Jarrett in 2011 in Connecticut benefitted five charities — the Save Walton Pond project at Winding Trails, Special Olympics Connecticut, Gifts of Love, New Horizons, and the University of Connecticut Children's Cancer Fund.

Inspiration came for his next creation when he and Mr. Fumo got back in touch in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

Mr. Fumo said his old friend had called to check up on him after viewing footage of the hurricane's destruction while he was living in Maine. Mr. Jarrett, who had only been down the Shore on two occasions, said Mr. Fumo was the first one to bring up the idea of a Jersey Shore sand castle.

Mr. Fumo approached Jenkinson's about two weeks after the storm hit with the idea, and the beach owners were happy to help, he said.

Jenkinson's gave the duo a 130-by-80-foot piece of beach in front of the aquarium for the project.

At the end of the summer, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the first Sandy Castle, despite its record miss. Undefeated, Mr. Jarrett vowed to try again, working through the fall to erect a second castle that would make the record books.

That included ensuring it was a completely hand sculpted castle, without help of machinery. The castle also could not have internal structures or binders to support it, and had to be sitting on level ground.

Just in time for the anniversary of the hurricane whose victims he is raising money for, Mr. Jarrett, with the help of numerous volunteers from the area, reached his goal and stood before an applauding crowd on Tuesday afternoon. Behind him, “Sandy Castle 2013, Second Edition” towered up to the sky as spectators posed for pictures in front of it with friends and family.

The second attempt is a holiday themed castle, featuring giant pumpkins surrounding it on the sand below. The castle is topped with a tall spire, which helped ensure the record height.

According to the foundation, 4,500 volunteers, including 2,500 children, lent a helping hand in constructing the world’s tallest sand castle.

Mr. Jarrett also volunteers his time to build his sand castles for charity. He set his first Guinness World Record for the Tallest Sandcastle in 2003 when his creation standing 29 feet, four inches tall in Falmouth, Maine broke the record previously held in Finland. Since then, he has broken his own record three times.

For more information about Sandy Castle, visit www.sandycastle2013.com. Sandy Castle is also on Facebook [Jarrett’s Castle], Twitter @JarrettsCastle, and Instagram @tallestsandcastle.

“Sandy Castle 2013, Second Edition” will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Nov. 3.

Donations to Hometown Heroes are encouraged and commemorative T-shirts and baseball caps are available for purchase.

Hometown Heroes is an incorporated organization founded in 2008 to provide assistance to the community at large.

Hometown Heroes’ main purpose is to foster an environment of goodwill, generosity and encouragement by supporting local communities when unexpected needs arise during a crisis without discrimination towards an individual’s ethnicity, gender, and age.

The organization provides an opportunity for all to give back to the community through professional assistance, financial assistance, and advocacy. Hometown Heroes helps those in need to find a solution to a problem that at the time appears overwhelming. Visit www.usahometownheroes.org for more information.

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