



Orange County
Coastkeeper
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Kids Ocean Day: Orange County Students Take Action to Protect Ocean Life

After a beach cleanup, students took their “stand in the sand” by forming a giant sea horse and “SUSTAIN LIFE” message

COSTA MESA, CA – After learning about the importance of a healthy marine environment, approximately 750 students took action at a huge beach cleanup event at Huntington State Beach on the morning of May 26th.

As part of the 17th Annual Kids' Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup, Orange County youth were joined by over 7,500 students at six locations along the California coast. The event is in honor of World Oceans Day (June 8).

After the cleanup, the students took part in an aerial art exhibition. They formed a sea horse with native eelgrass and spelled out “SUSTAIN LIFE,” referring to the need for people to keep marine life healthy. This message also reflects the U.N. Millennium Development Goal to ensure environmental sustainability.

Orange County Coastkeeper coordinated the program locally by giving assemblies at each school and organizing the May 26th event. “Sustainability is a big concept to grasp, even for adults,” says Briana Madden, Education Director at Coastkeeper. “Through Kid’s Ocean Day, we challenge students to support a healthy balance of ocean life by changing their own behaviors. After seeing how human actions can impact marine life, they want to protect it in any way they can.”

Participating Schools:

- Edison Elementary – Anaheim
- Lord Baden Powell – Anaheim
- Schweitzer Elementary – Anaheim
- Whitaker Elementary – Buena Park
- Simmons Elementary – Garden Grove
- Anderson Elementary – Garden Grove
- Handy Elementary – Orange
- Pio Pico Elementary – Santa Ana
- Franklin Elementary – Santa Ana



"The children who participated in this event are sending us a message," said Bonnie Neely, Chair of the California Coastal Commission. "Ocean life is under threat from so many sources. The recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a tangible reminder of the ocean's vulnerability. It is up to all of us to help sustain life in the ocean - life on earth depends on it." The Coastal Commission coordinates the program statewide and provides financial support from the Whale Tail License Plate Fund.

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Orange County Coastkeeper was founded in 1999 to protect and preserve our region's marine habitats and watersheds through education, advocacy, restoration, research and enforcement. Coastkeeper interacts with thousands of primary school students, citizens, and visitors at public events. For three years, Coastkeeper's WHALES Program has given hundreds of high school students the opportunity to become "Watershed Heroes" through field experience and professional interaction. For information on Orange County Coastkeeper and its programs, visit www.coastkeeper.org.

The Malibu Foundation for Environmental Education and the California Coastal Commission started Kids Ocean Day in Los Angeles in 1994, and expanded the program to Orange County in 2003. The program focuses on reaching children in underserved and inland schools. Prior to the cleanup, the program includes a series of school presentations that cover how the storm drain system connects neighborhoods to the ocean and addresses the need for litter reduction.

The California Coastal Commission is the statewide coordinator of the Kids' Adopt-A-Beach Cleanup, the year-round Adopt-A-Beach program, and Coastal Cleanup Day. All of these programs are funded by the generous support of the Whale Tail License Plate Fund. Over 189,000 plates have been sold since 1996, raising nearly \$15.7 million dollars for marine education and protection. For more information about the California Coastal Commission's programs and how to buy a Whale Tail Plate, call (800) COAST-4U or visit www.coastforyou.org.

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