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For Immediate Release

San Diego County Students Take Active Role in Celebration of World Ocean Day

Students send a clear message about ocean health

SAN DIEGO, CA – More than 8,000 kids across California celebrated Ocean Day by hitting the beach for the 16th Annual Kids' Ocean Day Cleanup. Cleanups stretched from California's Northern to Southern borders, from the rocky shores of Humboldt to the wide sandy beaches of San Diego.

Nine hundred elementary school students from San Diego's South Bay cleaned up Coronado City Beach this morning, removing hundreds of pounds of trash and recyclables from the beautiful Coronado beach.

After the cleanup, the students gathered into a 260 foot by 260 foot human aerial art formation on the sand, creating a giant turtle crawling on the beach surrounded by the plea "Save Our Ocean".

As the helicopter hovered overhead taking photos, the mood became serious and the students realized the importance of their role in the art. When asked what the message was that they were sending, one student said "Don't litter!" His mother, Ruby Armstrong, said "I thought it was great! We picked up mostly cigarette butts and plastic."

The cleanup sent a very important message connecting the problem of trash in the world's oceans to the proliferation of litter in neighborhoods. The California Coastal Commission reports that 80% of the trash in the ocean comes from inland areas through storm drains and waterways such as rivers. This trash is especially dangerous for the animals that inhabit the ocean and beaches, as animals often mistake garbage for food or become entangled in it, causing injury as well as death [source: [California Coastal Commission](#)]. Greenpeace reports that 50% to 80% of dead sea turtles have been found with marine debris in their stomachs [source: [Greenpeace](#)].

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"The children who participate in this event have learned about the problems facing the ocean and have come to the beach to lend a hand," said Bonnie Neely, chair of the California Coastal Commission. "They are helping the ocean by removing trash from the beach that would otherwise become marine debris. These kids are part of the solution, and through their aerial art they are sending a message that the ocean is in trouble and we all need to do our part to save it," she said. The Coastal Commission coordinates the program statewide and provides financial support from the Whale Tail License Plate Fund.

In the months prior to the cleanup participating students received a school presentation to learn about urban storm drain systems and ocean ecosystems. "The Kids' Beach Cleanup is an impressive program. After learning about sources of ocean pollution, children immediately have the opportunity to take action, clean the beach, and send a powerful message of stewardship to the residents of San Diego County," said Pauline Martinson, executive director of ILACSD.

Interested individuals, groups and businesses can help improve our ocean's health year-round by volunteering to adopt a beach. Since 1999, ILACSD has organized the countywide Adopt-A-Beach program. "Adopters" commit to cleaning a selected beach or inland area three times a year. ILACSD provides all the necessary supplies as well as sign recognition in most areas. To learn more visit www.adoptsd.org or call 1-800-237-BLUE.

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Digital pictures are available; please contact I Love A Clean San Diego at (619) 291-0103 or education@cleansd.org.