

## **PRESS RELEASE**



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### **HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SUPERSTORM SANDY AT TWO-DAY SEASIDE SUMMIT**

***Sandy Hook Beaches, Trails, and Marshes Become Outdoor Classrooms at  
Clean Ocean Action's Student Summit – May 21<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>th</sup>***

**Sandy Hook, NJ** – Over 600 middle school students and teachers, from 20 schools in Northern and Central New Jersey joined scientists and volunteer teachers for a day of learning on the beach at Clean Ocean Action's two-day Annual Spring Student Summit held on Tuesday and Wednesday. Students experienced hands-on marine environmental education by participating in six learning table activities and twelve interactive fieldtrips. The beaches, trails, and marshes of Sandy Hook served as the outdoor classroom for the seaside symposium. This year, the round-table activities and interactive fieldtrips are tied to the ecological effects of Superstorm Sandy.

"Superstorm Sandy may be very confusing to young people," said **Cindy Zipf, Executive Director of Clean Ocean Action**. "The Student Summit provides an unprecedented educational opportunity to help them see and learn about Mother Nature's unique systems to cope with storms. Our goal is to help youngsters understand the need for better protection of our coastal environment to reduce the risks from future storms," explained Zipf.

Students participated in six hands-on learning table activities, which included live horseshoe crabs, identifying seashells, studying invertebrates, observing a model of nonpoint source pollution, and learning the effects of litter in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy on the marine environment. Students also participated in an activity showcasing the importance of dunes. Students from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology, a Monmouth County vocational high school located on Sandy Hook, served as peer teachers at the activity workstations.

In addition, naturalists and other education professionals led students in twelve field activities throughout the park. Students used seine nets to collect and identify common marine species of Sandy Hook Bay and learned about key bird species and the important role of Sandy Hook in bird migration. Students also participated in a beach cleanup, tested water quality, learned fishing & surfing techniques, traversed trails with park naturalists, and learned about beach profiling.

“During the Summit, students get out of the classroom and become scientists” stated **Tavia Danch, Program Manager of Clean Ocean Action**. “The Summit inspires students with a sense of stewardship that is necessary for protecting the environment in the future,” said Danch.

“Student Summit is an opportunity for my students to interact with the environment in a way that I can’t give them inside the classroom,” said **Diane Jansson, Teacher at St. Andrews School** in Clifton, NJ.

“Hands-on citizen science is the best way to connect students to the coast. This year is particularly important with the window of opportunity for education that Superstorm Sandy has made possible,” said **Kathleen Gasienica, dedicated volunteer educator of Clean Ocean Action**. “It is very obvious that the water, humans, marine life and habitat are all connected. Thanks to COA's Student Summit, hundreds of students will have a firsthand experience that will help them be better stewards of this precious environment,” added Gasienica.

The 2013 Spring Student Summit was made possible by donations from private foundations, businesses, and citizens, including Provident Bank Foundation.

“Clean Ocean Action's Student Summit offers students an excellent opportunity for hands-on learning outside the classroom and provides inspiration for an ongoing appreciation of our country's precious natural resources,” said **Jane Kurek, Executive Director of The Provident Bank Foundation**. “We are pleased to contribute toward the program's ongoing success,” she added.

***The following schools participated in the Spring Student Summit:***

**May 21 Participating Schools:** Timothy Christian (Piscataway), Asbury Park Middle (Asbury Park), Carl Sandburg Middle (Old Bridge), Colin Powell Elementary (Union City), Lincoln Elementary (Caldwell), Long Branch Middle (Long Branch), Memorial (S. Hackensack), Our Lady of the Lake (Verona), Sacred Heart School (Morris), Saint Jerome (W. Long Branch), South Orange Middle (S. Orange), St. Joseph Regional (Newton).

**May 22 Participating Schools:** Academy Middle (Jersey City), Joao Antao (Elizabeth), Long Branch Middle (Long Branch), Memorial (Washington), Newark Christian (Newark), Passaic Art and Science Charter (Passaic), St. Andrew the Apostle (Clifton), The OLC School (Jersey City)

***About COA's Student Summits:***

For 25 years, Clean Ocean Action's Summits have reached over 15,000 students in New Jersey, expanding learning beyond the classroom. The Summit program presents students with an interdisciplinary marine and environmental education experience that complements the NJ Science Standards.

COA invites northern and central New Jersey public and private schools to the Spring Student Summit, which is held in mid-May at Sandy Hook. The Fall Student Summit takes place in early October, at Island Beach State Park for southern public and private schools. Schools are mailed applications prior to the Summits and are accepted based on the application and availability.

For information on additional COA educational programs or events, visit [www.CleanOceanAction.org](http://www.CleanOceanAction.org) or call COA's Main Office at (732) 872-0111.

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