

Meaningful Engagement



Looking Back on 25 Years



Healthy Youth & Healthy Oceans

odyssey NEWS

Meaningful Engagement in a Sea of Virtual Connections

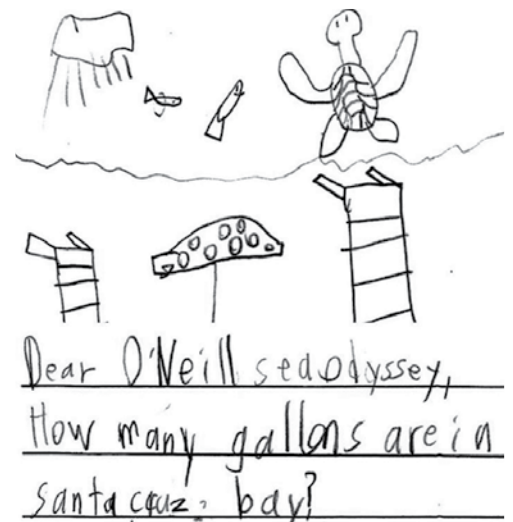
Is it possible to increase our connections even though we are farther apart? Yes, we believe we can, we have, and we will continue to do so. As our program has been modified and shifted entirely from in-person to virtual, we have seen increased engagement from our local teachers, we have the potential to serve more schools, and we have formed partnerships with educators across the Pacific Ocean and all over the nation. All of this coming from O'Neill Sea Odyssey, an organization who has the words "hands-on" written boldly in our mission statement. We are learning a lot, being humbled by our transformation, and feeling optimistic for the future.

We temporarily suspended our in-person programming beginning on March 16th, 2020. We were proud to employ our part-time, seasonal marine science instructors throughout the spring season in spite of the closure. We pivoted to a remote learning model, working alongside school districts to provide captivating and

interactive marine science education from a distance. Thanks to the patient guidance of our friends and supporters at Santa Cruz County Bank, we obtained a PPP Loan to offset some of our unexpected expenses.

76% of OSO teachers reported at the end of the spring semester that they used our resources every single week and that they loved lessons that got our youth moving, drawing, and thinking creatively and positively. Lessons included weekly scientific illustration challenges, learning how to tie various nautical knots critical to Skipper and boat crew careers, ocean-themed yoga and poetry readings, and sustainable environmental service projects that could be completed safely at home.

Our distance learning efforts continue this fall semester. After surveying and speaking with many of our teachers, we learned that the most helpful approach would be for OSO staff to do a virtual "takeover" for one hour, with live teaching. We are currently implementing hour-long programs that include discussions about (*'Meaning' cont.*)



A letter from Charlie, age 9, a new Ocean Pen Pal with O'Neill Sea Odyssey.

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Life Lessons from a Lighthouse

BY BRIDGET AND TIM O'NEILL



We are so appreciative of our many O'Neill Sea Odyssey supporters, like you, who have kept us inspired during this challenging year. Like everyone, we've been adjusting and responding to the many unforeseen changes that have come our way, and have been taking the time to stretch out of our comfort level, gain new skills, and grow our impact. We've been grateful to hear from so many of you, checking in, offering kind words of encouragement, letting us know how much you value outdoor and marine science education. We want to assure you that we are hanging in here and adapting, and we are buoyed by your support.

We had big goals in motion this year for enhanced hands-on and in-person learning, which included an expanding team of talented instructors and an upgraded boat with easier access and roomier learning spaces. But 2020 had other plans for us, and we are finding many silver linings in these stormy seas. While things may have shifted, one always remains true; our commitment to our students and their ocean science education.

We're taking life lessons from the Walton Lighthouse, which sits just across the water from our Shoreside Education Center in the Santa Cruz Harbor. The lighthouse is steady, bright, and always there. It provides consistency and a point to look for and towards, even on the roughest of days. We've been providing online learning content, our own material and resources from reputable partners, which is science standard-aligned and dependable. Our teachers let us know that they keep their eyes peeled for our communications. We've been hosting virtual classes and field trips, hoping to ease the burden of the long and arduous work day of our hardworking educators while creating an engaging science program to inspire our youth. We get to witness the small victories; the lightbulb

moment of a student exploring plankton for the first time underneath a microscope and recognizing the abundance of life in just one drop of seawater, the excited chatter as classes learn about career pathways in marine science and sustainability, the creative environmental service projects individuals are dutifully completing at home to make their watershed and planet just a little bit better off. As a result of virtual learning, our program is more open and accessible than ever before.

We've been here through the good and the bad, and, just like the lighthouse, we will still be here to welcome our learners for many years to come. We know that we have you to thank for that! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for coming together and rallying around environmental education, and for continuing to give your time, your generous donations, and your hopeful energy to O'Neill Sea Odyssey. ♦

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Leave a Legacy to Connect Kids to the Ocean

Diane Rejman, a long term donor and friend to O'Neill Sea Odyssey, became a Legacy Donor and has named O'Neill Sea Odyssey as a beneficiary in her will:

"O'Neill Sea Odyssey is such a wonderful program! I've always been happy to support it. I'm very glad to leave a Legacy for them. I love what it brings to the lives of children, especially those who have never seen the ocean, which is something everybody should see at least once. I am stunned every time I meet an adult visiting Santa Cruz seeing the ocean for the first time. I'm also impressed with the marine science education the children receive."

—Diane Rejman, OSO supporter ♦



Longtime O'Neill Sea Odyssey supporter and Legacy Donor Diane Rejman

Enrollment Form

- ☐ I have named OSO in my estate plan (we will contact you relative to recognition)
- ☐ I would like to talk to someone about a gift to OSO in my estate plan
- ☐ I wish to learn more about the OSO/Community Foundation's gift annuity program
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Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please send to OSO, 2222 East Cliff Drive, Suite 222; Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Looking Back on 25 Years and Looking Forward to the Next

In 2021, O'Neill Sea Odyssey will hit a major milestone in our history; our 25th anniversary as an organization. We're uncertain about what our celebrations will look like as we continue to navigate COVID-19, but we can ensure you that we will observe this momentous occasion no matter what!

As we look back on 25 years together, we fondly remember all of the contributions that have paved the way for what we have become today. It took a lot of hard work and a lot of collaboration and dedication from all of you! From starting off with just a few trial groups, creating a system for applications and serving hundreds of classes every year, remodeling our building into a high-tech and ADA accessible education center, assembling a team of skilled instructors and crew, honoring our passed loved ones who have left us a legacy we carry on with pride, ushering in a new wave of hybrid virtual learning and hands-on engagement, and monitoring the progress of protections for the Monterey Bay that we cherish. We know these next 25 years are crucial for the health of our planet and for our next generation, and we are up for the challenge.

As we prepare for this landmark, we are asking you to send us your memories. Email your stories, photos, videos, and quotes to rachel@oneillseaodyssey.org. We want to highlight what these 25 years have meant to you, too! ♦



Jack O'Neill welcomes Radcliff student board the Team O'Neill in 2009



(‘Meaning’ cont. from front cover) recent plankton samples and thrilling underwater footage of marine life, among other resources. All lessons are California and science standard-aligned. Our lesson plan is supplemented with weekly Thursday enrichments, our Ocean Science Series, which aims to further support our classes with live teaching about a wide variety of marine science subjects including navigation, ocean pollution prevention, animal migration, and careers in science and sustainability, among other subject areas.

We’ve also brought back some of the unhurried forms of education from yesteryear that have gotten lost over time, such as letter writing and snail mail! With the launch of our Ocean Pen

Pals program, we’ve received poetry, science reports, letters of appreciation, and marine-themed illustrations from pen pals in the Monterey Bay region and all over the country. We’ve noticed that when our learners slow down and appreciate their surroundings, new nature and science observations arise that otherwise may have been missed. Students are tidepooling, identifying migratory seabirds flying over their homes, noticing the creeks in their backyard, collecting plastic wrappers from the storm drains nearest their residences, and finding new gratitude for the wildness that has always existed immediately surrounding them.

We are proud of the dedication of our school teachers and of the flexibility of our students who embark on this distance educational journey

with us. We look forward to the day we can get on the water again, but in the meantime, we are not taking any of these powerful connections for granted.

If you would like to learn more about O’Neill Sea Odyssey’s virtual offerings, email lwalker@oneillseaodyssey.org.

If you have a community group, club, or local business that would like to receive a presentation about Monterey Bay, ocean science education, and pollution prevention efforts, email rachel@oneillseaodyssey.org ♦

Connecting the Dots: Healthy Youth and Healthy Oceans

In 2019, Kaiser Permanente, our long term supporters, funded O’Neill Sea Odyssey’s Healthy Ocean Stewards program, an initiative to help draw the connections between the wellbeing of individuals and the public to the environmental quality of the ocean and planet. Other key partners in this effort include the Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and, especially the County’s alternative education program. As heightened by COVID-19, we are not taking our healthy bodies and lungs for granted, and the ocean acts as the lungs for the planet, too. These educational programs illustrate how interconnected we all truly are. A clean coast, healthy ocean, and livable climate equals a thriving environment for wildlife and humans. Our students acknowledge the role they play in protecting their livelihood and



A virtual educational session about tobacco waste with experts Tara Leonard, Health Educator, and Councilwoman Martine Watkins, sponsored by Kaiser Permanente that reached 60 participants.

the welfare of others by the choices that they make and the ocean stewardship actions that they take.

In 2020, Kaiser Permanente has stepped up in a big way to respond to the needs of our community as a result of the pandemic. As their priorities

shifted, they continued to partner with O’Neill Sea Odyssey, and are now sponsoring our virtual education program and our new series of free, live-teaching lessons, our Ocean Science Sessions. These weekly lessons cover subjects such as tobacco waste and plastic pollution and how they impact our watershed and ocean, and careers in conservation and environmental health, among others.

“We are proud to support O’Neill Sea Odyssey’s virtual Ocean Science Series. This effort to bring virtual programming to local youth affirms OSO’s commitment to providing educational opportunities focused on ocean stewardship. Kaiser Permanente is thrilled to contribute to this virtual endeavor.”

—Joe Foster, Public Affairs Manager, Kaiser Permanente

To learn more about ways to support marine science virtual learning with O’Neill Sea Odyssey, contact rachel@oneillseaodyssey.org ♦

Thank You

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"We want to know that our gift to O'Neill Sea Odyssey is something that they can rely on. Donating every month ensures that OSO has consistent cash flow, even in the more challenging times and especially in a year like this one. People

tend to give around the holidays, which is great, but what about the rest of the year? We donate year-round because their work should be supported year-round and young people are always in need of ocean science education. We feel so proud to call ourselves Monthly Donors!" —Dee and Mark Tannenbaum

Become a monthly contributor today! Give our youth the tools they need to shape our sustainable future. Sign up online at oneillseaodyssey.org/support-us ♦



*Dee, Mark, and dog
Tanner Tannenbaum*

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