



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Reviewed by Wmm
General Manager

Date 8/14/09

DATE: August 14, 2009
TO: General Manager
FROM: Public Education and Recycling Manager
SUBJECT: Report on Public Education, Recycling and Litter Activities

District Hosts Tours for Ocean Guardians Science Camp

For the second year, the Monterey Regional Waste Management District (District) hosted tours and activities for the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Young Women in Science Ocean Guardians Camp in late July. The focus of this summer's camp was marine debris. The tour and interactive activities the middle school students received at the District helped tie all the elements of their week-long curriculum together. The attached article from the Santa Cruz Sentinel covers the Camp activities in more detail. The Monterey County Herald also wrote a nice article, which is also attached. The District was pleased to partner with the Aquarium and the City of Monterey to again host the Ocean Guardians.

Report from CRRA Conference

The California Resource Recovery Association (CRRA) Annual Conference was held August 3-5. Two strong themes delivered at the conference included: the importance of reuse in minimizing waste and the positive impact recycling and waste reduction can play in minimizing the generation of greenhouse gases. I presented a paper on "Social Networking and Viral Marketing" which examined how internet sites like Facebook offer a low cost outreach tool to inform and engage your community.

Campaigning for Fans on Facebook

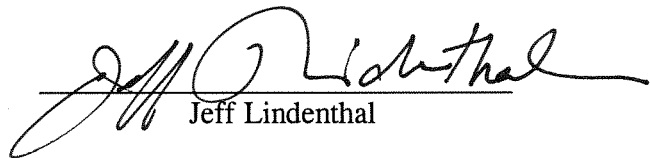
We have been conducting a campaign to increase our base of "fans" on Facebook for the two District pages we have created: Monterey Regional Waste Management District and Last Chance Mercantile. Our Last Chance Mercantile page is now approaching 600 "fans". An interesting aspect of this "social networking" site is that it provides a forum to engage people with an interest in our programs. "Fans" of the site can post their own photos and comments so it is not just a one-way method of delivering information like a conventional newsletter or report. We are finding this is a low cost and effective strategy to share information about our programs with the local community in virtually "real time". Unlike the time it takes to publish a newsletter, photos and information can be posted almost instantaneously. We have been using the site to promote the home compost and reusable lunch box competitions at the Monterey County Fair. Please take a look at our pages on Facebook by typing in Last Chance Mercantile or Monterey Regional Waste Management District at www.facebook.com.

Litter and Marine Debris

Several local non profit organizations are sponsoring the Mayors' Ocean Summit on Friday, August 28th at West Marine in Watsonville. The event is co-chaired by local mayors Dan Cort, Chuck Della Sala, Sue McCloud, Ralph Rubio, and Joe Russell. This forum will focus on "protecting the ocean and building economic growth while managing California's environmental challenges". The theme at the Monterey County Fair this year is "Reel in the Fun". For children's day on August 12th, the District is sponsoring a "Reel in the Marine Debris" activity where children can fish litter out of a wading pool to win a prize while learning that most of the pollution in the ocean originates as litter on the land. The next meeting of the District's Litter Abatement Task Force is August 19th, 2 p.m. at Supervisor Potter's office.

Strategic Planning Impact

4b Program focus on public awareness, increased diversion of organics and commercial wastes, proper management of hazardous & prohibited materials, litter abatement, & sustainability.



Jeff Lindenthal

Attachments

Monterey Bay Aquarium girls' camp educates and entertains

By Kelly O'Connor
Posted: 07/31/2009

MARINA -- A new wave of "ocean guardians" complete training today and are ready to take on the task of ocean conservation.

"I am going to reduce, reuse, recycle and tell my family everything I have learned this week," said 13-year-old Yesenia Valdivia of Watsonville. "I want to teach other kids about conservation and the ocean."



Valdivia was one of 39 middle school girls from Santa Cruz and Monterey counties to partake in the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Young Women in Science Ocean Guardians Camp this week.

During the week, aquarium workers took the girls on a variety of tours, on land and sea, to educate them about how to keep the ocean clean. The camp culminates today, when the girls ask local businesses to reduce waste.

"We are giving the girls the tools to empower them to make positive decisions about how to help," said Genevieve Arredondo, a camp leader. "This program is successful because they want to learn, and they share that information."

And they teach the message in a fun environment. While aboard the research vessel the Derek M. Baylis on Tuesday, Capt. Dave Robinson told the girls how he worked on the efforts to ban polystyrene foam in Santa Cruz and Monterey. He stressed the importance of keeping non-biodegradable material out of the ocean.

"We learned a lot about how garbage affects the animals in the ocean because a lot of them eat it and die," said Jocelyn Mercedes Garcia, 13, of Watsonville. "I want to help them, to try to recycle everything and collect garbage."

Their kayak trip this week wasn't just a leisurely paddle around the bay either. While the girls had fun, volunteers taught them how to discuss the positive aspects of conservation when presenting them to organizations.

"It all comes together in the end," said Angela Hains, an aquarium spokeswoman. "The youth programs try to give a long-lasting impression."

On Thursday, Jeff Lindenthal led a tour of the Monterey Bay Waste Management District facility in Marina, showing the girls the value of reducing waste, reusing items, recycling recyclables and composting biodegradable materials.

"We want to do away with the idea of waste and start thinking of it all as resources," said Lindenthal, as the bus left the recycling facility and headed toward the compost facility. "Our mission is conservation and this facility is central to that mission."

With their knowledge and experience, the ocean guardian camp girls on Thursday went to Old Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey to canvass local businesses, creating awareness about green business practices.

"It is part of my duty, as a person, to pay up for the things we have done to the ocean," said Claudia Chavez, 14, of Watsonville. "Most animals are on the border of extinction because of little things we could have prevented, and now we need to fix it."

Monterey aquarium science program: Teen girls get positive message

By Kathlyn Clore

It took a few minutes Thursday morning to realize Genny Arrendondo was repeating her instructions in Spanish to the teenage girls gathered outside the Monterey Regional Waste Management District facility in Marina.

That the entire week is conducted, rather unobtrusively, in Spanish and English is one of several unique facets of the Women in Science program. The summer day camp for teenage girls is run by the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

A bilingual educator at the aquarium, Arrendondo cheerfully engaged in warm-up games with the yawning teens clad in hoodies, skinny jeans and sneakers. They spent the day learning about recycling, composting and advocating for a new local law banning Styrofoam. "This way they're learning the new vocabulary, so the girls can share with their families at home what they've been doing all day," Arrendondo said. "It allows us to reach that much further with our message of conservation."

The program concluded its 10th edition Friday with a day at Monterey State Beach, where the girls went sailing to survey marine debris, kayaking and boogie boarding. "Our focus is not necessarily to hook them into science," said Kim Swan, director of programs for teens at the aquarium, "but to help empower them to make positive choices in their lives no matter what career they choose."

Good Choices

To participate in the Women in Science week, girls must have attended a previous camp at the aquarium. Last year, many of the girls attended Otter Camp, which had a focus on natural history and the food chain. To keep in touch with the girls during the school year, the aquarium education staff e-mails them and their families about local beach cleanups, classes they might consider taking or college scholarships.

Staff also meets with middle school science teachers in Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties to identify girls who might enjoy the program. "Every year we have a different theme. This week is the Ocean Guardians week," Swan said. "This focuses on helping empower students to make choices that are going to be good choices for the health of the ocean."

To make the camp more affordable, the aquarium provides lunch each day. It also charters a bus for the week, at a cost of around \$1,200 per day. The bus picks up girls from central locations in Watsonville and Salinas. Peninsula locals are dropped off at the aquarium before being bussed to the site of that day's activities. The cost to attend the Women in Science camp is \$200, but about 80 percent of the girls attend on scholarship. All are asked to pay at least \$25. "We have some girls who save their baby-sitting money so they can come," Swan said.

Girl Power

The all-girl nature of the camp is a powerful undercurrent throughout the week. Staff members and campers are all women. "I think it's more fun this way. You can communicate more. You're a girl too, so yeah, you can understand," said Aimee Castellon, a 14-year-old student at Soledad High School.

The women-only focus was evident when Kimberle Herring, an education coordinator at the Waste Management facility, held up an unused tampon, still encased in its cardboard applicator inside a paper wrapper.

Cardboard and paper will break down in a landfill, she said, but plastic applicators don't biodegrade. When they end up in landfills, they remain there forever. She asked the girls to imagine if all the women in their group threw away plastic applicators over their lifetimes. "They'll take maybe thousands of years to go away, we don't know how long," she said.

After a bus tour of the 450-acre facilities, the girls met for lunch in a small garden, swooping in on the contents of a dozen or so pizza boxes. Once the boxes were emptied, Herring demonstrated how the girls could recycle the non-greasy portions of the box while composting the parts of the pizza box that had food residue on them.

Afterward, Swan showed the girls how much waste they collectively generated. It amounted to a handful of items — nearly zero waste — which fit the goal the girls set for themselves the previous day.

Conservation Messages

During camp, the girls met at the conclusion of each day to set goals about what they wanted to learn and accomplish the next day. After Monday's lunch, which included bottled water for everyone, they asked the teachers to use reusable water bottles.

The aquarium provided steel water bottles. We try to choose conservation messages that are within their frame of control," Swan said. "We wouldn't focus on invasive species and trying to get boats to expel their ballast tanks before they enter the harbor. ... But we would concentrate on saying; you do have some influences over your parents when you're at the grocery store." The girls also learned about activism Thursday. They broke into small groups to canvass downtown Monterey businesses, providing owners with information and asking them to comply with a new Monterey law banning the use of Styrofoam take-out containers.

City of Monterey employee Lesley Milton presented information about the law, which goes into effect Aug. 16th, to the girls after lunch Thursday. "We had the girls go out last year when we had the new recycling program. The response was amazing," Milton said. "So we know we had to have them help us get the word out this year, too." Staff encouraged the girls to approach local business owners in a confident voice, providing them brochures to hand out. Most said later that it was the most difficult thing they did that day.

Aquarium staff member Amy Gunzelmann told her team of girls they'd "taken the next step up" while campaigning for compliance with the law. "That's a pretty big deal. You might have given information to one person who even if he doesn't use the information, he will tell his brother or another person. So just telling one person can go pretty far."

Monterey County Fair
"Reel in the Fun"
August 2009



"Reeling in the Marina Debris"

First Place and Best in Show

