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STUDENT TEAMS TO ARRIVE IN LONG BEACH FOR 2011 INTERNATIONAL PLASTIC POLLUTION SUMMIT

LONG BEACH, Calif., February 25, 2011 – In just two weeks, more than 100 teens from around the world arrive in Long Beach to work on solving the problem of plastic pollution. Representing 14 countries, these students and their advisors will come together March 11-13 for the Algalita Marine Research Foundation 2011 “Plastics Are Forever International Youth Summit.” Once here, they will be immersed in a comprehensive educational program designed to engage, mentor, and activate youth leaders across the United States and abroad in developing and launching action-oriented solutions to reduce plastic waste in their home communities.

“Plastic pollution is a global issue and judging by the response of teams attending our Summit, this environmental problem has taken center stage in even the most remote corners of countries,” said Marieta Francis, Algalita’s Executive Director. “Teen-agers everywhere are concerned, energized and using their imaginations and creativity to develop innovative solutions.”

The Summit’s focus will be on plastic pollution in the marine environment. However, some participating students, notably those from Team India 275 and the Kenyan Lions from Nairobi, have witnessed firsthand the impact of plastic pollution on inland animals and wildlife. In parts of India, sacred cows have been seen ingesting plastic trash and in Nairobi National Park plastic bags and bottles make their way into the rivers and streams passing through human settlements surrounding the area.

Team members of Monterey Peninsula Plastic Pollution Initiative from Carmel, California propose to raise awareness of plastic pollution through cooperative education efforts with Monterey Bay Aquarium, which welcomes 3 million visitors each year. The Pax Terra team from Newport, Rhode Island has established monthly events where members of the local community come together for family fun nights and learn about environmental issues.

“Although regional scenarios differ, all students attending the Summit see the proliferation of plastic pollution as a threat to a healthy lifestyle and are committed to making a difference,” Francis said.

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“At the Summit, they will participate in an intensive program led by notable environmentalists and media experts to learn more about plastic marine pollution as well as develop their leadership, public speaking, and communications skills.”

Attendance at the Summit has been made possible for several teams through the generosity of organizations such as the Johnson Ohana and Sea•thos Foundations.

“Education and awareness are a major focus for the Sea•thos Foundation and this is the perfect outlet,” stated Nick Behunin, Sea•thos Foundation founder. “We’re excited to be a supporter of the Plastics Are Forever International Youth Summit by sponsoring the Indonesian team. There are more than 240 million people in Indonesian and half of them are under the age of 29. Youth is our future and Sea•thos is dedicated to working with Indonesia and the rest of the world to spotlight these issues.”

More details about the teams and the Youth Summit can be found at: www.plasticsareforever.org

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READ MORE - For additional information about Algalita Marine Research Foundation, Captain Charles Moore, and to learn more about our mission, outreach programs, and research projects, please visit www.algalita.org or call 562.598.4889.