

Heal the Bay Surfrider Club



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Samohi Students Advance to State Science Fair and Adviser Wins Earth Month Teacher Hero Award Grand Prize from Wyland Foundation

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April 14-16, 2011, Samohi students Zachary Gold, Winston Lee, and Jesse Gomer competed in the Microbiology category of the LA County Science Fair held this year at the Pasadena Convention Center. Students submitted two-and-a-half years of data on ocean water quality, specifically fecal indicator bacteria, in the Santa Monica Bay. The rookie team, advised by Marine Biology teacher, Benjamin Kay, and sponsored by Surfrider Foundation, took second place and will advance to the state fair in early May. The students' findings corroborate the results of previous studies by Heal the Bay – spikes in potentially harmful bacteria occur predominantly during wet weather, posing an elevated risk to beachgoers. The students also found that open beaches without a storm drain are not necessarily cleaner than beaches directly in front of storm drains, suggesting contaminated runoff spreads easily at the spatial scale investigated - 0.5 miles between beach sites. The students' research also raises concern about studies that commonly evaluate only one ocean sample per site, since the students discovered large variation in bacterial levels among replicate samples taken from the same site.



Samohi students Winston Lee (left) and Zachary Gold (right) standing beside their science fair display

Junior Winston Lee was awarded an Earthwatch Institute Student Fellowship courtesy of Dr. Peter and Helen Bing valued at \$3000.00 to travel to an exotic location and conduct research alongside expert field scientists. "I'm interested going to Greece to study dolphin populations," Lee said. Seniors Zachary Gold and Jesse Gomer graciously nominated Lee for the single-person award given to their science fair team.

At the ceremony, Marine Biology teacher and science fair adviser, Benjamin Kay, was also awarded the Earth Month Teacher Hero Grand Prize of \$5000.00 by the Wyland Foundation, Toyota, KCAL / KCBS, and AES. Earlier this month, Kay was one of 30 Southern California teachers honored for using creative, innovative ways to encourage K-12 pupils to work toward a cleaner, more sustainable world. He was nominated by his Samohi house principal, Ms. Renee Semik. Kay and world-renowned muralist and artist, Wyland, will be interviewed live on KCAL / KCBS April 20 at 2pm. More information about sustainable student projects can be found at www.teammarine.blogspot.com, www.teammarine.org, and <http://bluewatertaskforce.blogspot.com/search?q=santa+monica+high+school>.



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Winston Lee and Zachary Gold interviewed by judges at science fair



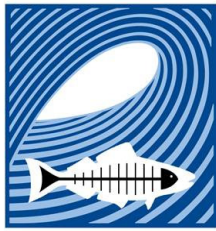
Winston Lee and Jesse Gomer honored at award assembly



Wyland whale painting completed with children from science fair



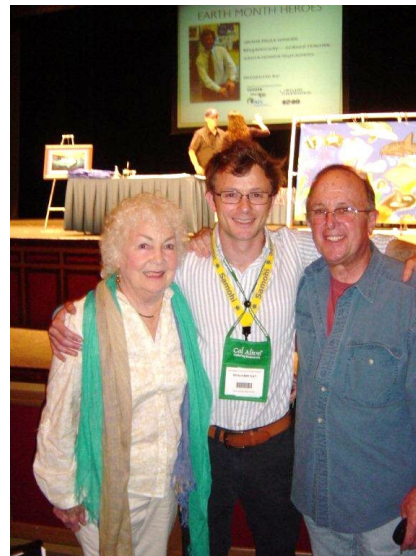
Benjamin Kay with acclaimed artist, Wyland (left) and foundation VP Steve Creech (right)



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Rhonda Glasscock of Toyota (left) and Wyland (middle) present 5K grand prize to Benjamin Kay



Benjamin Kay with parents, Fay and Bob Kay



Wyland (right) and Benjamin meet at Earth Month kick-off event in Redondo Beach March 31



Wyland whale mural on AES building in Redondo Beach