

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SAMOHI's Team Marine, and Heal The Bay Surfrider Club
Kick Off Weekend Events**
– Focus is on Protecting and Celebrating the Ocean and the Earth



September 14, 2009 – Santa Monica, California. Santa Monica will be host to multiple events on September 19-20, 2009, which highlight environmental responsibility. The programs include Coastal Cleanup Day and the Roots and Shoots International Day of Peace – a program of the Jane Goodall Institute.

On Friday, September 17, starting at 4pm at Santa Monica High School, students from SAMOHI's Team Marine and the Heal the Bay Surfrider Club will hold a “Ban the Bag” march. The effort will be the fifth march in two years, led by Santa Monica High School’s eco-conscious students, to raise awareness and educate the public about the environmental and health implications of single-use plastic bags and bottles. Students have also testified in front of the Santa Monica City Council to request a ban of single-use plastic bags.

City Council has taken notice. Though the City drafted an ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags, pressure from the plastic bag industry prompted the Council to table their final decision regarding the ban. Instead, Council voted to begin an environmental

review to assess the direct impact of single-use plastic bags. The decision to implement the review was made in January 2009, but the review is yet to be completed. According to Team Marine advisor and Santa Monica High School Marine Biology teacher Benjamin Kay, "We still need to let City Council know that action must be taken. We need to make our voices heard so the process will keep moving forward."

"As long as people rely on single-use plastic bags and bottles," warns Santa Monica High School's Team Marine Captain, Megan Kilroy, "our ocean is going to suffer. Plastic debris constantly washes into the storm drains and onto our beaches, endangering the marine eco-system. The fish eat the plastic and we eat the fish. People need to realize that this problem affects everyone. If we don't stop abusing plastic and look to alternatives soon, even more of our ocean will become a toxic soup, destroying our greatest natural resource."

"It's so rewarding to show the community that the youth does care about the environment and wants to see plastic bags banned," states Celina Stilphen, President of the Heal the Bay Surfrider Club. "It hurts the environment when we use oil, a non-renewable resource, to make single use products, such as plastic bags, that never biodegrade," adds club member Katie Robowtham. "Plastic bags are choking our planet," states senior Raphael Mawrence. "In the U.S., where over 300 billion bags are produced, we only recycle five percent of those bags. If we wish to preserve the health of our planet, we must change our addiction to plastic."

Efforts of Santa Monica High School students have garnered the attention of cable television giant, Nickelodeon, who will chronicle the students' march and beach cleanup efforts in an upcoming television special about teens who are making a difference for the environment.

For more information about Coastal Cleanup Day and Heal the Bay:

<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html>

<http://www.healthebay.org/volunteer/ccd/2009/about.asp>

For more information about the Jane Goodall Institute and Roots and Shoot's Day of Peace:

<http://www.janegoodall.org/event/california-roots-and-shoots-day-peace-0>
<http://www.rootsandshoots.org/c>

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