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From the President



WENDY WHEELER, President,
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and Youth Development

Service-Learning in Action Cleans Up California Coast

We're thrilled to announce that our *Collective Leadership Works* initiative is off to a strong start! Last month, on September 19, the California Coastal Commission hosted their annual Coastal Cleanup Day - and students in the Monterey Bay Aquarium's [WATCH](#) program took the lead in organizing and running a cleanup of the wetlands surrounding their school, Pajaro Valley High School.

For 25 years now, Coastal Cleanup Day has enlisted California citizens in protecting some of their state's natural resources: hundreds of miles of coast and countless inland wetlands and watersheds. This year, nearly 70,000 volunteers at over 800 sites across the state collected over 900,000 pounds of debris (trash and recyclable material).

Pajaro Valley High School, itself located in the heart of the Monterey Bay wetlands, is an official site for the annual cleanup day. This year the WATCH youth organizing the site decided to target their peers in their recruitment; 67 local high school students, as well as Pajaro Valley High School teachers and the Watsonville city mayor turned out for the event.

According to the Aquarium, volunteers collected less debris at the site this year than in years past - a decidedly positive result. WATCH students plan to incorporate lessons from the cleanup into their year-long projects - exploring, for example, the effect of plastics (a strong shower in their garbage bags) as marine debris or the effect campus litter may have on the coasts as it moves downstream.

Learn more about [California's Coastal Cleanup Day](#). Learn more about the Innovation Center's latest service-learning initiative, [Collective Leadership Works](#).

Activity of the Month: Mapping the Sectors of Involvement

Community work is strengthened when we involve a rich mix of people and organizations in our efforts. However, in recruiting partners for community work, we too often look only to the usual suspects- companies, corporations, and formal volunteer organizations. These are strong partners to enlist, but we should also consider the many informal sectors and networks that are also a part of our communities - recreational sports leagues, parent networks, high school clubs, even social media networks like those on Facebook. This activity encourages you to include all sectors of your community in your work, not just the most obvious. [Read more...](#)

Partner of the Month: Monterey Bay Aquarium's WATCH Program

Since its opening in 1984, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, located on the Monterey Bay in Monterey, California, has been a favorite fieldtrip for San Francisco Bay Area school children of all ages. Every year, over 80,000 students traipse the Aquarium's watery halls, teacher and parent chaperones in



tow. For a day, they have the opportunity to interact with the plants, animals, and ecosystems introduced in their science class textbooks. Through the Aquarium's exhibits - underwater forests of California Giant Kelp, sea otters, touch-pools with tidal marine life, jellyfish, even the occasional Great White Shark - students are, if only for the day, inspired by the science in their everyday lives and local California community. But what if the Aquarium were more than just a field trip? What if it could share the inspiration that comes from hands-on learning to empower an entire community to environmental conservation? A simple idea, but a big one no doubt - for in this simple idea were the roots of one of the Aquarium's most successful initiatives to date: Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats, better known as WATCH. [Read more...](#)

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