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Saving Coral Reefs One Video at a Time

Students from Kearny High School have teamed up with Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography to create videos that promote conservation locally and globally.

La Jolla, Calif. (May 24, 2018)—Can videos created by students help save coral reefs? Through an innovative partnership, the School of Digital Media & Design (DMD) at Kearny High School and Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego aim to find out.

Tenth graders from Kearny High School were paired up with scientists from Scripps Institution of Oceanography to investigate the global impacts of environmental change on coral reefs. The students produced video campaigns that are intended to inspire the public to protect coral reefs and to galvanize the next generation of ocean stewards. The student-made videos will be screened during the *Sea & Me* event at Birch Aquarium on May 29.

“The main priority of this project is to empathize with those who are unfamiliar with marine ecosystems, with an aim to engage underserved communities in the greater San Diego area,” said Heidi Schlageter, Kearny DMD digital arts teacher.

Inspired by the idea that local efforts can have a global impact, the students worked with Birch Aquarium’s husbandry staff and Scripps’ coral researchers to learn the role aquariums and public outreach play in understanding and communicating coral biology.

More than 70 students participated in teams of 3-4 for the year-long interdisciplinary project connecting english, history, science, and media classes. They created short videos from their experiences, drawing inspiration from pop-culture and Scripps Oceanography science. Some of the videos take a serious tone while others lean heavily on humor or are more tongue-in-cheek; and one is inspired by popular YouTube makeup tutorials.

“Until we are able to make environmental impacts around the world relevant locally, we will suffer from isolationism and nobody will be able to act globally to protect our planet,” said Harry Helling, executive director of Birch Aquarium. “We are inspired by these young ocean advocates.”

The *Sea & Me* screening is open to the public and takes place at Birch Aquarium on Tuesday, May 29 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided by the Kearny High School Culinary Arts Program. [RSVP](#) is recommended. For more information, visit aquarium.ucsd.edu.

About Birch Aquarium at Scripps

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the aquarium features more than 60 habitats of fishes and invertebrates from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest to the tropical waters of Mexico and the western Pacific. An interactive museum showcases research discoveries by Scripps scientists on climate, earth and ocean science, and features interactive elements. Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Birch Aquarium has an annual attendance of more than 450,000, including 40,000 school children.