



Contact: Erinn McKell (916) 653-6598
Contact: Sarah Marquis (949) 222-2212

For Immediate Release
June 1, 2010

Thank You Ocean Campaign Announces Ocean Stewardship Video Contest Winner

Sacramento, CA. – The Thank You Ocean campaign is pleased to announce the winner of the Ocean Stewardship Video Contest: Mesa College Professor Paul Detwiler and his marine biology students, Dominique Gilbert, Cheyne Palmer, Kelly Hughes and Carlos Valdovinos. The winning video can be viewed on <http://www.thankyouocean.org/take-action/contests>. These filmmakers will be honored at the upcoming Blue Ocean Film Festival to be held in Monterey California, August 24-29.

Marine debris, or trash on our beaches and in the ocean, is identified by the campaign as one of four major threats to the ocean. Cheyne Palmer, the film's main actor, is deeply concerned. "People aren't getting it", says Palmer. "You can never leave litter behind. It travels on ocean currents, eventually catching up with marine animals." Palmer believes that waiting too long to address problems often creates a whole new set of issues. "We need to correct the problem at the source. If people would just pick up their trash, the problem would go away."

Student filmmaker Dominique Gilbert credits Detwiler's marine biology course with changing his mind about the importance of ocean stewardship. "I never really thought about it", explains Gilbert. "Once I started taking the class, I came to understand how important the ocean is and how much damage we are doing to it." Gilbert is inspired to continue documenting ocean-related issues and telling the stories that inspire people to action. "I don't want this process to stop. I realize now that these films can change the way people think. Once people understand why, they will want to take the initiative."

"The video showcases, often in funny ways, the need for all of us to take personal responsibility to ensure that trash doesn't end up on our beaches", say Thank You Ocean Campaign co-chair and Chief of Staff/Communications Director with the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Matt Stout. "Professor Detwiler and his students are a great example of citizens doing their part to communicate the importance of the ocean".

Professor Paul Detwiler has been cultivating ocean stewardship in his students for the last nine years and his passion for ocean conservation is infectious. Inspired by his high school biology teacher, he knew as a teenager that he wanted to teach at the community college level. "Students are simply more invested in their personal educational journey," said Detwiler. "They are motivated, self-reliant and willing to take real steps toward achieving success. Making this video was an empowering step that translated words in actions."



“The Thank You Ocean contest helped my students see that we don’t have to be experts to do something. We can all be citizen-scientists, just by doing a little something to make the oceans healthier.” When asked what message he most wants to convey to his students, Detwiler replied, “Reduce plastic. Marine debris is a major culprit in causing entanglement, choking and starvation of marine creatures large and small.”

Professor Detwiler and his students will be honored at the Blue Ocean Film Festival, to be held in Monterey Aug 24-29. Their video will be featured as part of a student film exhibit and they will receive full access to all the festival events, including emerging filmmaker mentoring sessions so they can continue their great work.

About The Thank You Ocean Campaign

The Thank You Ocean Campaign is a nonprofit partnership supported by the State of California, the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the Ocean Communicators Alliance. The campaign mission is to raise awareness of the benefits the ocean provides to us and to identify ways each of us can help protect the ocean in our everyday lives.

The campaign features a PSA produced by world-renowned cinematographer, Bob Talbot; a PSA on marine debris featuring actor and activist Edward James Olmos, an out-of-door advertising campaign; a bi-weekly podcast series featuring leaders on ocean issues; a [newly redesigned Web site](#) in English and Spanish; and numerous social networking outlets. The campaign is focused on educating the public about the importance of sustaining ocean life and inspiring Californians to practice ocean stewardship to address four major threats to the ocean: climate change, marine debris, water pollution and marine life decline.

In 2008, the Thank You Ocean Campaign received the Coastal America Award, the highest award from the White House, for its ocean and coastal initiatives.

A Call to Action

In his 2004 Ocean Action Plan, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called for the development of a public awareness campaign that empowers individuals to better understand and take action to address the threats facing the ocean. The 2004 federal U.S. Ocean Action Plan also called for greater public education about the importance of the nation’s coasts and oceans. As a result, the California Thank You Ocean Campaign was launched in 2006 to fulfill both of these plans’ call to action.

Get Involved

For more information about the Thank You Ocean Campaign and how to become involved, visit www.thankyouocean.org. Or, follow the Thank You Ocean Campaign on [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#) or [Twitter](#) (@thankyouocean). To listen to the Thank You Ocean podcast, the “Thank You Ocean Report,” visit www.thankyouocean.org/news/podcasts.

#