

SCHOOLS IN COUNTY WEXFORD TO TAKE PART IN MARINE INSTITUTE 'HEALTHY OCEANS PROJECT' SUPPORTED BY LEAVE NO TRACE IRELAND TRAINERS



March 2022: Primary school students in two County Wexford schools, Poulfur National School, Fethard, and Scoil Mhuire, Our Ladys Island National School, have been selected to compete in the Explorers Healthy Oceans projects and will be in with a chance of winning a Marine Institute Explorers Ocean Champion Award this June.

The Health Oceans Project and Awards is part of the Marine Institute funded Explorers School Project, and the project modules will be delivered by Leave No Trace Ireland trainers around the country.

Padraic Creedon, Education Officer for Leave No Trace Ireland said he was delighted that Donegal schools that are taking part in the Explorers Healthy Ocean project module which focuses on supporting the primary school curriculum and creating positive actions to raise awareness and engagement about the ocean in the schools and their local communities.

“The schools working with our Leave No Trace trainers and the Explorers Outreach Centres will be learning about the ocean and how to take action to improve ocean health,” he said.

Domini Bn Mhic Óda, Príomhoide, Scoil Mhaodhóig Poulfur said that as Ocean Hero School of the Year 2014, they are particularly delighted with their selection as a participant in the Explorers Healthy Ocean Project with the Leave No Trace team.

“We are excited to have this new opportunity to participate in such a wonderful programme and ensure that the current cohort of pupils continues the good work which others before them have done. Headed by 5th Class teacher Eddie Breen with the help of Olivia Lynch, Bríd Doyle and Jacqui Hynes, the programme is a fantastic opportunity for the pupils and staff and the wider community to work together towards keeping our ocean clean. As a peninsular community, the raising of awareness, the planning and action which will result from the workshops and the sense of common achievement at its conclusion will further boost our common self-identity and esteem, our commitment to environmentally beneficial activities and will no doubt strengthen within us that all important “sense of place”.

The Explorers teams and schools will be working on the Healthy Ocean Projects over the next term where they will be able to select one of three categories to focus on. These include:

- The first includes incorporating a marine theme into a Science, Technology, Engineering Arts and Maths (STEAM) project.
- The second category includes developing an Ocean Literacy Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) creative project which addresses an SDG. This may be based on SDG topics such as climate change, wellness, as well as life under water.
- The final category is providing teachers and students an opportunity to complete a project outdoors, ranging from creating outdoor sculptures to beach cleans.

Patricia Orme, Director of the Marine Institute said the Healthy Oceans Projects furthers the Marine Institute's goals to increase marine education and engagement, and also encourages schools to engage with their local community.

“Through these projects we hope that the school children and their wider community will gain a greater appreciation of the importance of the ocean and an understanding of the significant impact of the ocean on our daily lives.”

This is the first year of the Ocean Champions Awards, and submissions based on the Healthy Oceans Projects will be judged by Leave No Trace trainers. The winners will receive a Marine Institute Explorers Ocean Champion Award for their school. Winners will be announced around World Ocean Day on the 8th of June.

There are some places still available for schools to take part in the Ocean Champion Awards. For more information see Explorers School Projects at the Explorers Education Programme www.explorers.ie

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The Explorers Education Programme is funded by the Marine Institute, Ireland's state agency for marine research and development.

Leave No Trace Ireland is Ireland's only outdoor ethics programme, which promotes the responsible use of the outdoors. Through education, research and partnerships, Leave No Trace Ireland enables and supports individuals, communities, organisations and companies in reducing the environmental impact of outdoor activities.