

## NATIONAL NEWS

# EARTHCARE's Underwater Cleanup in honor of World Oceans Day

BY GAIL WOON  
For The Guardian

**E**ARTHCARE, along with concerned citizens and volunteers, cleaned a quarter mile or 400 meters of ocean bottom at Coral Beach, the site of the Bahamas Air Sea Rescue Association (BASRA) marathon this summer, according to Gail Woon, founder of EARTHCARE and a director of Save The Bays.

The objective of the event was to rid the seafloor of trash and marine debris. Trash bags and refreshments were provided. Volunteers snorkeled to remove trash and it was bagged ashore. All members of the public were invited to the event.

"Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans," said Jacques-Yves Cousteau, famous ocean science and media pioneer. His words have unfortunately proved true today as evidenced by the state of our Bahamian beaches and the world's coastlines.

"I am happy with the results of today's cleanup. The sea was calm, 15 volunteers collected trash just off the beach in five to eight feet of water. We filled six large trash bags. A special thanks goes out to all who showed up to help," said Gail Woon.

"The idea came from Ryan Carroll, a concerned yacht captain and former commercial fisherman. He was in the water one day and saw all the marine debris and thought it would be a good idea. He organized several underwater cleanups throughout the past four years and we



From left are EARTHCARE volunteers Justin Snisky II, Justin Snisky, James Snisky, Maya Simmons, Gabriella Rguez, Ryan Carroll, Angelina Rahming, Aiden Rahming, Savanna Gibson, Havana Gibson, Ana-Alicia Carroll and Candice Woon. Not pictured are Edwin A. Moss, Linda Gembalies-Rahming and Gail Woon.



Candice Woon hands marine debris to Linda Gembalies-Rahming as her son, Aiden Rahming, looks on.

thought this would be a great way to keep his tradi-

tion alive and also honor World Oceans Day, June 8.

This is an area that most people don't see, so it goes

ment bag to the dry cleaner. Put pressure on manufacturers to minimize plastic packaging", Ms. Woon continued.

Mr. Carroll remarked, "A calm day at Coral Beach was met by very little garbage near shore. A pleasant surprise, unlike the copious amounts we usually find elsewhere. Onto filthier pastures soon."

Justin Snisky said, "Another wonderful clean up event put on by EARTHCARE and volunteers and it was a pleasure for BASRA to join up with them and do our part in keeping the beaches and waters clean. We encourage everyone to join this worthy cause and hope to see you all at the next clean up."

Items found underwater included many bottles, fishing gear, rope, nets, hooks, lines, sinkers, plastics of all sorts, towels and metal sheets to name a few.

Volunteers who helped with this underwater cleanup effort included Ryan Carroll, Angelina Rahming, Havana Gibson, Savanna Gibson, Justin Snisky, Justin Snisky II, James Snisky, Edwin A. Moss, Ana-Alicia Carroll, Gabriella Rguez, Maya Simmons, Candice Woon, Gail Woon, Aiden Rahming and Linda Gembalies-Rahming.

Ana-Alicia Carroll reiterated, "We all did a fantastic job on bringing up debris that was sitting off the ground floor. Though, it shouldn't be that hard to take your own trash with you at the end of the day!"

Another underwater cleanup is planned for mid-July. Contact earthcare.bahamas@yahoo.com for details and information on how you can join the effort.

ignored. It's very critical now that we stop the abuse of our oceans.

"Plastics are overflowing into our oceans. Whales are dying from eating plastic. It has been predicted in a World Economic Forum Report that by 2050, on the current track, oceans will contain more plastic than fish by 2050 (by weight). Things you can do: Eliminate or minimize your use of disposable plastics. Bring silverware to events and wash them for re-use. Buy products with a minimum of plastic packaging. Never discard fishing gear overboard. Stop buying water. Boycott microbeads, which are being found in many marine creatures now. Cook more to eliminate the need for take-out containers. Purchase items secondhand. Recycle. Support a bag tax or ban. Buy in bulk. Bring your own gar-