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Teenage Eco-Ambassadors Clean Up Plastic Trash from Hawai'i's Shoreline

Island of Hawai'i – Hawai'i is known for having some of the most beautiful and picturesque beaches in the world -- and it's everyone's responsibility to help keep them that way. A remote area on Hawai'i Island's southeast coast is littered with trash and marine debris carried by currents and trade winds. Items that frequently wash ashore include plastic materials, commercial fishing equipment and commonly discarded household goods -- a troubling reminder of the current health of our oceans.

But it's getting cleaned up as part of a responsible tourism project, thanks to a group of high school students from New Zealand, Australia and Japan. In recognition of International Coastal Cleanup Day on Sept. 21, the Sea Cleaners, a New Zealand-based environmental nonprofit leader, and the Hawai'i Wildlife Fund have partnered with Hawai'i Tourism Oceania, Hawai'i Tourism Japan and Hawaiian Airlines to bring the young leaders to Hawai'i Island for beach cleanups in this remote area of Hawai'i Island. A crew from National Geographic is filming the beach cleanup for its Eco-Traveler show, which will air in Oceania at a later time.

"The work we are doing is for our children and our children's children," said Hayden Smith of Sea Cleaners. "We must make changes now to the way we operate our daily lives without wasted consumption."

The 12 students, who were selected because of their leadership in sustainability, will use their experience to steward youth in their respective countries. While on the island of Hawai'i, they're speaking with local students, and will participate in a voluntourism experience in Waipi'o Valley. Yesterday, the visiting group spoke with students at Konawaena High School about the importance of environmental stewardship, and were joined by big wave surfer and Konawaena graduate Shane Dorian. In addition, the group spoke with students at Hōnaunau Elementary School.

"As the hometown carrier for 90 years, we understand the tremendous responsibility we have in caring for these Islands," said Debbie Nakanelua-Richards, director of community and cultural relations at Hawaiian Airlines. "Our hope this International Coastal Cleanup Day is to bring people together to mālama honua (care for our Island Earth) and inspire others to join us in protecting all that makes Hawai'i special."

The partnership underscores the organizations' long-term commitment to sustainability and aims to raise plastic awareness by encouraging people to respect the environment both at home and when traveling abroad. Tourism dollars collected in Hawai'i through the Transient Accommodations Tax are helping to pay for this responsible tourism initiative.

For a link to b-roll and photos of today's beach cleanup: <https://bit.ly/2m707yx>

Interviews with:

- Hayden Smith of Sea Cleaners

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- Debbie Nakanelua-Richards of Hawaiian Airlines

Video courtesy: Hawaiian Airlines

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About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](http://www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org) is the State of Hawai'i agency responsible for strategically managing its support of the tourism industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure tourism's sustainability and the benefits it brings to residents and communities statewide. For more information about HTA, please visit www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org. Follow updates about HTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) (@HawaiiHTA) and its [YouTube Channel](#).

About Hawaiian Airlines

Hawaiian® has led all U.S. carriers in on-time performance for each of the past 15 years (2004-2018) as reported by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Consumer surveys by *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure* and *TripAdvisor* have placed Hawaiian among the top of all domestic airlines serving Hawai'i. Now in its 90th year of continuous service, Hawaiian is Hawai'i's biggest and longest-serving airline. Hawaiian offers nonstop service to Hawai'i from more U.S. gateway cities (13) than any other airline, along with service from Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, American Samoa and Tahiti. Hawaiian also provides, on average, more than 170 jet flights daily between the Hawaiian Islands, and over 260 daily flights system-wide. Hawaiian Airlines, Inc. is a subsidiary of Hawaiian Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: HA). Additional information is available at HawaiianAirlines.com. Follow Hawaiian's Twitter updates ([@HawaiianAir](#)), become a fan on Facebook ([Hawaiian Airlines](#)), and follow us on Instagram ([hawaiianairlines](#)). For career postings and updates, follow Hawaiian's [LinkedIn](#) page.

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