

## THE OCEAN INSTITUTE COMES TO THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF LAGUNA BEACH

Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laguna Beach were treated to a very special and exciting experience tailored specifically to teach young people about the precious ocean. The Ocean Institute's Adopt-a-Class visited the Boys & Girls Club TLC Branch on January 5 and the Main Branch, grades K – 4, on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Once the "visiting classroom" arrived, the oceanic learning adventure began with a brief talk about the moon and how it affects the tides and how the trash affects the ocean and the tide pools. The instructors brought a dead baby shark and a shark jaw, as well as a dead sea turtle. They also brought examples of the sea life that is found in the local tide pools, such as sea urchins and sea stars. The children were encouraged to touch the animals and examine their differences and similarities. The children were extremely inquisitive, and the Ocean Institute's knowledgeable staff was able to answer all their questions as well as dispel some common misconceptions about the ocean and its inhabitants. As one can imagine, the young Club Members at both the TLC and Main Branches were immensely intrigued, initially approaching the animals with caution which quickly transformed into gleeful giggles of excitement. The children had a wonderful time while learning about the Intertidal Zone of our local beaches.

The Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach Even Start Preschool Program was also treated to a special field trip to the Ocean Institute in Dana Point. The children participated in the "House for Hermit Crab" lab workshop which allowed them to interact with sea animals while letting hermit crabs crawl on their hands. The children were guided through hands-on activities discovering the tidal animals and their natural habitats. "It is so important for children to have hands on experiences like this," explains Preschool Director, Terry Anne Barman. "When studying

biology and science later in their education, they will remember this exciting adventure and learn faster.”

The Ocean Institute’s visit to TLC and The Club, as well as the preschool field trip, was made possible by the generosity of the Hearts of Montage, a philanthropic program of the Montage Resort and Spa. The mission statement of the Ocean Institute is to inspire all generations, through education, to become responsible stewards of our oceans. Mission accomplished as the experience was both educational and inspiring for the Boys & Girls Club Members!

Thanks to the Montage Resort and Spa, the Hearts of Montage and the Ocean Institute, the youth in our community are learning more about the important role that they play in being good stewards of our ocean.

The Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach provides over 30 engaging and enriching after school and summer programs that help build character, creativity, academic success, healthy behaviors and teamwork in young people. The Club serves 3-18 year olds from Laguna Beach, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Dana Point, and the surrounding communities. For more information, please call 949-494-2535.

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