



LAMI YOUTH TAKE ACTION ON MICROPLASTICS



LAMI YOUTH CREW MEMBERS, FROM AFFILIATED ANIMO HS MARINE BIOLOGY/ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB, IN RESEARCH AND ACTION ON MICROPLASTICS

Young bilingual Latino students have been on board, Explore the Coast/Explora la Costa sails carrying out research on microplastics in San Pedro harbor. With a six-foot manta trawl donated by 5Gyres, for the past 2 months, they have been sampling San Pedro harbor and then analyzing the biotic and abiotic material collected by the trawl.

This is part of the project for the Los Angeles science fair in mid-March and their efforts to involve other student organizations locally, nationally and internationally in microplastics research and action.

Other team members participated in a recent conference, on February 9-11, when 127 students from 11 countries met in Dana Point, California for Algalita's International Youth Summit to debut and refine their action-oriented solutions to reduce plastic pollution in their communities. Throughout the weekend, these teams, made up of students ranging from 10 to 18 years old, had the opportunity to work directly with Algalita and Captain Charles Moore as well as international leaders from Bahamas Plastic Movement, Space 2 Create, Heirs to Our Oceans, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, The Lost Art of Love Letters, Plastic Pollution Coalition, The Last Plastic Straw, Green Art Labs, and Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Programs. Participating countries included US, the Bahamas, New Zealand, Cambodia, Botswana, Kenya, Tunisia, Lebanon.

Another high school team is experimenting with plastic eating worms for their LA science fair entry. They have been observing these worms as they go through their natural life cycle and consume Styrofoam, and other soft plastics. These wax worms will now become a permanent feature on board Exy and Irving Johnson when schools request a mini science station on microplastics and ecology. The team is also highlighting as part of their project new innovations developed internationally to reduce plastic entering the ocean. A third team entering the science fair is researching and analyzing microplastics in the sand at local beaches in San Pedro, Long Beach and elsewhere.

The club, affiliated to LAMI, is a teacher's workshop sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and the USC Sea Grant, and two of the students will be going to Chile with LAMI education staff member, Mark Friedman in May for a University of Chile sponsored teacher and student conference on ocean plastic reduction.

They also produced a colorful brochure and developed a website to invite other high school environmental organizations, clubs and classes to participate in this international effort. They have had several Skype sessions with Japan, Wisconsin and England to further this goal and to assist in the organization of others. Each group or team participating will have its own drop-down menu.

Club members spent a day at LAMI working on their projects, research and developing their action campaigns. They had an opportunity to tour LAMI offices, building G, the tall ships and the AltaSea facilities. by Robin Aube.