



Khaled bin Sultan

Living Oceans Foundation

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**UNIQUE CORAL REEF EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM TO BE
CONDUCTED IN THE BAHAMAS**

*Program will help structure education components of Khaled Bin Sultan
Living Oceans Foundation Global Reef Expedition*

LANDOVER, MD—Starting Saturday, May 1, in Nassau, Bahamas, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation (Living Oceans Foundation), in partnership with the Harvard Medical School Center for Health and the Global Environment and the Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation (BREEF), will conduct an intensive four-day education program focused on the Bahamas' coral reef ecosystems. All funding for this program will be provided by the Living Oceans Foundation as a pilot project for the education component of the Foundation's *Global Reef Expedition: Science Without Borders®* program, which will take place from 2011 through 2014.

"We selected Nassau for our pilot education project because the government of the Bahamas, in association with the Bahamas National Trust and The Nature Conservancy, has embarked on a plan to form a national network of marine reserves to ensure the sustainable protection of marine biodiversity for future generations," said Captain Philip G. Renaud, Executive Director of the Living Oceans Foundation. "The Foundation hopes to contribute to this effort by the Bahamian government to preserve and protect the country's coral reefs by interactively engaging both teachers and students in coral reef ecosystem research and improving their knowledge of coral reefs so they can directly contribute to coral reef conservation initiatives."

The project will include components for educators, as well as high school, junior high, and college students, focused on coral reef conservation. Teachers will participate in a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) Skin Diver certification course followed by in-water field work at nearby coral reefs. They will also certify in the Project AWARE Coral Reef Conservation specialty. The Project AWARE Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to conserving underwater environments through education, advocacy, and action.

On Sunday, May 2, the newly certified educators will be taken by boat to a local coral reef to put their skin diving skills to the test and participate in an immersive learning experience. Teachers will also be creating film documentaries about this experience to share with their students. Additionally, coral reef classroom activities will be introduced to the educators so they may be used to stimulate students' interest in coral reef conservation.

After the two-day program for educators, the project team will give presentations on coral ecosystems and conservation to Nassau's C.V. Bethel Senior High School students who are in the marine science magnet program, and to S.C. McPherson Junior High School's general science class, which is taught by Nicola Williams, one of the pilot program's teacher participants.

On the final day of program, experienced SCUBA divers from the College of the Bahamas will participate in multiple SCUBA dives using sophisticated underwater communications. They will receive training in scientific coral reef survey methods and will experience a Living Oceans Foundation Live Underwater Classroom.

"While the Living Oceans Foundation conducts scientific research of coral reef ecosystems during its four-year Global Reef Expedition, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to conduct marine science education," stated Renaud. "This pilot education project in the Bahamas will help us shape the Expedition's educational program, which will include the involvement of educators and students in our research, the use of multi-media technologies to bring the scientific marvels of the ocean into students' classrooms, and development of coral reef conservation curricula, which can be used internationally."

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The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is dedicated to the conservation and restoration of living oceans and pledges to champion their preservation through research, education, and a commitment to Science Without Borders®.

Science Without Borders® is the overarching theme of the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation. Its purposes are to provide financial sponsorship of marine conservation programs and scientific research, and to promote public awareness of the need to preserve, protect and restore the world's oceans and aquatic resources.

The Foundation is headquartered just outside of Washington DC in Landover, Maryland. For more information, visit <http://www.livingoceansfoundation.org> and <http://www.globalreefexpedition.org/>.