



Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation

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B.A.M. - A New Project to Restore Mangroves in The Bahamas

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ANNAPOLIS, MD – This week, the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation (KSLOF), in partnership with Friends of the Environment (FRIENDS), is taking students and teachers to restore a local mangrove forest. It's the final phase in a new mangrove education and restoration program called Bahamas Awareness of Mangroves (B.A.M.). Forty-five students from Abaco Central High School and Forest Heights Academy will visit degraded sections of mangrove forests in Abaco to plant mangrove trees they have been growing all school year.

Last fall, the B.A.M. team brought students to a mangrove forest to collect mangrove seedlings (called propagules) to grow in their classrooms. "The project teaches students and teachers about the ecological importance of their mangrove forests and helps them get involved in local restoration efforts," says Amy Heemsoth, Director of Education at the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation, and the founder of the B.A.M. program. "We are able to provide students with solid science education while also imparting a conservation ethic."

As well as planting 135 mangrove trees, Amy Heemsoth is working with teachers to help them plan for next year's B.A.M. program, and visiting classrooms to help students analyze the data they have been collecting on the growth of their mangrove propagules.

"We are bringing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) education and hands-on learning experiences to students in The Bahamas," says Kristin Williams, Executive Director of FRIENDS. "The B.A.M. project is a great hands-on experience for students." It's another great way FRIENDS is inspiring pride and awareness in students by introducing them to science and exploration in their local environment.

The B.A.M. program was launched at the start of this school year to preserve mangrove forests and help teachers educate students in The Bahamas about this important ecosystem. "Our mangrove education and restoration programs in the Caribbean strike the perfect balance between education, science, conservation, and outreach" says Captain Philip G. Renaud, Executive Director of the Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation "We're empowering young people with an appreciation for these critical natural resources."

"Working with the B.A.M. program has given our students a new realization of the importance of the Mangrove wetlands," says Jim Richard, a teacher at Forest Heights Academy participating in the B.A.M. program. "I believe



that the work the students have done with the Living Oceans Foundation and FRIENDS of the Environment in Abaco will go a long way towards ensuring our students graduate with a respect for the environment and an understanding of the important role each ecosystem plays in our lives."

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Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation:

The Khaled bin Sultan Living Oceans Foundation is a US-based nonprofit environmental organization that protects and restores the world's oceans through scientific research, outreach, and education.

www.livingoceansfoundation.org

FRIENDS of the Environment

Friends of the Environment works to preserve and protect Abaco's terrestrial and marine environments in order to achieve sustainable living for the wildlife and the people of Abaco.

www.friendsoftheenvironment.org

Photos:

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