

Action for Oceans

You probably know that our oceans have a lot of problems these days. Between climate change and human pollution, our waterways are suffering. But did you know that there can be solutions to these problems? And, even better, did you know that sometimes kids are the ones to solve them?

Alex Weber and Jack Johnston are both 17. They live in California and have been friends since middle school. One thing they have in common is their love of the ocean. So when they saw thousands of golf balls in the water near Pebble Beach, they wanted to do something to help.

First, Alex and Jack researched the problem. They discovered that golf balls in the ocean can destroy the environment. It can take between a hundred and a thousand years for a golf ball to break down completely. As they do, they release metals, chemicals, and plastics that can poison plants and animals.

Armed with this knowledge, Alex and Jack founded an organization called The Plastic Pickup. So far their group has removed 21,000 golf balls from the ocean. The Plastic Pickup is working with researchers to collect data about the harms of plastics to our waterways. They are also working on laws to make golf courses responsible for their environmental destruction.

Another young person who is taking action for the ocean is Stella Bowles. When she was only 11 years old she learned about the effect of straight pipes in her community in Canada. Straight pipes in her town dump waste from toilets directly into the LaHave River, which in turn runs to the ocean.

For her school science project, Stella took samples from the river flowing outside of her home. She discovered that it was so contaminated that it was dangerous to even get splashed by the water. Stella posted her findings on the internet and spoke at local community meetings to spread the word.

The Canadian government heard about Stella's project. They agreed to give \$15.7 million dollars to fund a two year project to clean up the river. Stella continues to monitor the contamination. Her updated science fair project showing the river's progress recently won a silver medal.

Stella, Alex, and Jack are three kids who are making a difference. They teach us that if you see a problem you can be a part of the solution. The next time you notice something that's not right, maybe their stories will inspire you to take action too.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

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 - a. They hit animals on the head
 - b. They release chemicals that can poison plants and animals
 - c. They are eaten by animals
 - d. They get buried in the sand and disrupt the growing plants

2. How did Stella get her research seen by the government?
 - a. She made a science fair poster
 - b. She made a telephone call
 - c. She spoke at community meetings
 - d. She won a silver medal

3. What is the same about the two stories?
 - a. Kids noticed a problem
 - b. Kids found a solution
 - c. Kids helped the ocean
 - d. All of the above

4. Why do you think it's important for kids to take action?
 - a. Because they have good ideas
 - b. Because they deserve to live in a better world
 - c. Because they notice problems others might not
 - d. All of the above

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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