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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**I Love A Clean San Diego to Coordinate First Event Bi-National ‘Aerial Art’ Display**  
*Cross-border cleanup to unite students in US & Mexico*

**SAN DIEGO, CA** – Two countries, a one mile stretch of beach, a helicopter and a human art formation with a message. This is not your average day in the classroom!

Nearly 1,500 San Diego and Tijuana youth will gather on both sides of the US-Mexico border at Borderfield State Park and Playas de Tijuana on Thursday, February 26 at 9:30 a.m. for I Love A Clean San Diego’s (ILACSD) Kids’ Ocean Day. For the first time ever, the event will occur bi-nationally, uniting kids from both countries at the beach and reinforcing the importance of cross-border collaboration to save the planet.

The students will first conduct a large-scale beach cleanup. Then they will form a giant aerial art image of the words “UNITE | POR EL MAR” on either side of the border fence. This powerful image is meant to remind all San Diego County residents about the importance of our ocean as a diverse and sensitive ecosystem and the collaborative role we play to protect it.

“This is a great way to have local children learn about the importance of protecting our coastal waters,” said County Supervisor Greg Cox, who represents San Diego on the California Coastal Commission. “With this unique art project, they are sending out the message that we have only one ocean and we must each do our part to protect and take care of it.”

The Coastal Commission is the statewide event coordinator. This year’s effort has been made possible by a number of partners, including presenting sponsor Jack-in-the-Box. Additional funding support comes from the Qualcomm Foundation and the statewide event coordinator, the California Coastal Commission. Other partners include the US-Mexico Border Philanthropy Project, US Border Patrol, California State Parks and Supervisor Cox.

Students from seven local elementary schools -- Emory, Bayside, Parkview, Silver Strand, Leonardo de Vinci Charter, Howard Pence and Halecrest -- will arrive at Border Field State Park to pick up litter and debris. Simultaneously, students from Tijuana will gather at Playas de Tijuana to clean up.

For some students, they will experience the beach for the first time at this event. Additionally, most of these youth have never experienced the powerful image standing at the US-Mexico border. Items like cigarette butts, food wrappers and plastic lids are often found as part of these cleanup events, and while they seem small and insignificant, the items pose a great threat to the marine environment.

Prior to the beach cleanup, the students will meet with ILACSD staff for comprehensive education presentations at their school sites. In the hour-long assembly, students learn about San Diego's watersheds, common pollutants and their impacts on ecosystems and most importantly, how they can be good stewards and prevent pollution from entering the environment in the first place.

ILACSD's Education Department enlightens close to 30,000 San Diego youth about crucial environmental topics every year. Presentations include topics such as recycling, waste reduction, resource conservation and pollution control, and feature hands-on learning for children and teens, as well as a full slate of adult education activities designed for local businesses and community organizations. On average, ILACSD's educators provide 18 classroom education presentations each week during the school year.

Undertaking an aerial art display with 1,000 people is quite a process. An image is "translated" from an 8.5" by 11" piece of paper to a 150 foot by 450 foot section of beach divided by a border fence. The aerial art process is one of precision and patience, in which volunteers spend hours plotting points and creating the outline of image and text in the sand. This year, volunteers will be coordinating this effort both in the US and in Mexico. Once that process is completed, volunteers lead groups of students into the aerial art image, placing them one by one along the outline of the image to create a larger than life piece of living art. In celebration of this year's bi-national event, aerial art will represent the theme **"UNITE | POR EL MAR"** and will depict a message across the US-Mexico border: the US side image will read "unite" and while the Mexico text will read "por el mar" which translates to "for the sea".

ILACSD is recruiting adult volunteers to help with the cleanup and aerial art at Border Field State Park. To sign up as an adult volunteer, please contact Lexi Ambrogi at [lambrogi@cleansd.org](mailto:lambrogi@cleansd.org) or (619) 704-2778.

### **About I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD)**

*Celebrating more than six decades of environmental programs, I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD) is the go-to organization for programs that enhance and conserve San Diego County's environment. Through recycling, education and cleanups of the region's most beloved areas, ILACSD provides pollution prevention programs that pave the way for a cleaner and healthier San Diego right now, and for future generations. In 2014, ILACSD with the support of 28,634 volunteers, removed 230 tons of debris from San Diego communities, conducted 232 cleanups and gave 701 education presentations reaching 31,447 people. ILACSD is an award-winning, environmental program innovator, and was recognized as "Affiliate of the Year" in 2014 by Keep America Beautiful. The organization's innovative programs and initiatives prove ILACSD is a leader in the environmental movement. For more information, to volunteer or donate, visit [www.cleansd.org](http://www.cleansd.org) or call (619) 291-0103. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

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