



AmeriCorps pitches in on Martha's Vineyard

In honor of AmeriCorps Week (May 14-21) a group of young people cleaned up the beach at the Cape Pogue Wildlife Reservation on Chappaquidick on Martha's Vineyard. AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps members Kevin, Latasha, Maddy, Ellen, Ryan, Tristan, Marcus, Kelsey, Eric were joined by Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative members: Amoy Anderson, Shawna Brown, Courtney Minnehan, Emma HalBilsback, Sivana Brown and Shavanae Anderson and Vineyard community members Max Martin, Jerome Ticor.

Sarah Trudel Southeast Region Engagement Manager, Trustees of the Reservation educated the group on the harm of balloon trash on the beach, which can upset the digestive track of sea creatures. The debris is generally human based, either land or by sea (fishing vessels) that is blown ashore or washed ashore. Birds, seals, sea turtles and land and sea mammals can ingest dangerous plastics by accident or become entangled in fishing line, netting, or roping. Getting this debris off the beach is very important to keeping a clean and healthy environment for marine life.

Together the group raked up seaweed and sticks and picked up trash to ensure the well being of the nature and beauty along the coastline. They cleaned up the northern part of Cape Pogue because sea birds were nesting toward the south. Trash they found was nets, a shoe, a tennis ball, lots of bottles and balloons. They found a washed up sea lion, and a live one was spotted swimming. They were very blessed that the rain held off, and they had a beautiful day. It had poured the entire drive from the ferry to the bay, and then it suddenly stopped and barely even sprinkled the rest of the day!

“Sarah was incredibly interesting to talk to,” says Kelsey. “After finding a horseshoe crab shell, she told us about how they are one of the oldest (evolution-wise) sea creatures. And when we saw skunk tracks she explained how skunks are a predator of sea bird eggs.”

Within a couple of hours the group cleared a mile of coast, from the Dike Bridge out to the beginning of ‘The Cedars’ on East Beach. a task that would have taken The Trustees much longer to complete with limited staff.

“The MVYLI youth and AmeriCorps team were simply outstanding,” said Sarah Trudell. “They were mature, responsive, and up for anything I asked of them. The wildlife, beachgoers, and Trustees staff are truly thankful for their efforts out at Cape Pogue Wildlife Refuge and we certainly look forward to our next workday with this incredible group of young people!”

On June 19, MVYLI youth will participate in a kayak trip as part of the Youth Leadership Summit. They will travel directly across from the beach they cleaned – and get an opportunity to walk out to the ocean beach they cleaned when they land up to stretch mid tour and travel along Poucha Pond and into Cape Pogue Bay. The property is spectacular and we definitely look forward to having this group of young islanders back for a second visit – this time for a fun kayak trip.

"The MVYLI youth brought fresh energy and spirit to our team" Tristan Fowler. "It was motivating to work with youth who are so excited to help cleanup their own community." Ellen Leoni. "Working with the MVYLI youth was AWESOME" Latasha Johnson

Martha’s Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative • www.mvyli.org
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