

AUGUST 26, 2020



UPDATE: PROJECT HOPE

Project HOPE: College students leading an exchange between ocean elders and 6th grade students focused on the cross points of traditional cultural methods and STEM principles to promote ocean conservation stewardship.

IN THIS TIME OF CRISIS, STEM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

We won't let COVID-19 stop us.

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we enter into the second half of 2020, the Friends of the Mariana Trench would like to thank all of our partners for supporting Project HOPE and for bearing with us in the process of adjusting to this unpredictable year. We hope you are all in good health and staying safe! Please read on to learn more about our progress so far and what to expect from Project HOPE moving forward.

Sincerely,

Laurie Peterka, Project Director

Joe Villacrusis, Project Coordinator



Ocean Elders

We've conducted a number of Ocean Elder interviews and have selected six individuals. Onboarding and orientation for these individuals are scheduled for the first week of September. If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming an Ocean Elder, please don't hesitate to send them our way! While we have our current group selected, we will consider expanding for the Spring semester.

NMC/ENRO

At the beginning of the year, we signed an MOU with NMC/ENRO establishing protocols for recruiting volunteers. In early March, the first cohort of ENRO volunteer/intern college students applied and seven completed their initial four hours of onboard training by March 13. Our summer cohort worked on project planning and investigating revised engagement protocols to deliver Project HOPE activities. As we move into the new school year, our third ENRO cohort will add new ENRO/NMC students who will conduct the 6th engagement session during the Fall.

PSS

In January, FOMT was granted permission from the Director of STEM at the PSS office of curriculum to work directly with selected PSS school principals. Our Project Coordinators have met with several educators and administrators to review our program goals and overall PSS/FOMT partnership. At the request of PSS, we conducted a parent survey to help us understand how families envision safe education for their children during the pandemic. The results provided us with guidance on how to proceed. Another survey will be administered this week to gauge differences with the start of the new school year. These results will provide us with further guidance on executing our engagement planning.

Classroom Engagement

After much dialogue with PSS, parents, NMC, and several community centers regarding how to ensure all Project HOPE activities occur in a safe environment, we have finally arrived at an implementation date; while we made preparations to begin our program this summer, we are now moving forward with student engagement in line with the PSS Fall semester start date. The Fall semester will focus on 7th grade students, as they were unable to participate as 6th graders during the Spring of SY2019-2020 due to the pandemic. The incoming 6th graders for SY2020-21 are slated to participate in the Spring.

OUR PARTNERS

Collaborating for everyone's benefit.

Outreach Specialists

In early March, we met with six outreach specialists including Brook Nevitt, Carry Demapan, and several scientists at CRM/BECQ and the NOAA field office. As of this update, outreach specialists have been asked to join our outreach WhatsApp group so that they can review our learning plan and delivery method, and provide their feedback for how we can better collaborate to deliver a fun yet STEM-based learning experience.

Camp Providers

Agreements with both MINA and 500 Sails have been finalized. The target dates for the Fall ocean camp will be December 26-31. FOMT will monitor the COVID community directives as they are issued to gauge whether these dates will be feasible. Should anything change, dates will be adjusted accordingly. One alternative option will be to have Fall students attend the ocean camp with the Spring semester students in mid June 2021.

CCVI

On March 1st, we began communicating with Heirs to Our Oceans board members, leading to discussions about holding a virtual presentation. Unfortunately, taking next steps has proven difficult in the wake of COVID-19. That said, as our community learns how to navigate this new set of challenges, we hope to have the opportunity to revisit these discussions as soon as possible. One of our Ocean Elders sits on the board of Heirs to Our Oceans' local chapter, so we have high confidence that this relationship can be advanced to provide our 6th graders with the opportunity to be eligible for their programs.

Data Managers

Data managers have created ocean literacy surveys for 6th grade and ENRO students. A separate survey was created for Ocean Elders. These surveys will be administered at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of Ocean Camp to measure for key improvements in the four ACT Aspire test areas. Parent and student consent forms are ready. Data results control sheets for assigning numbers to students are ready. Answer keys for surveys are ready.



Correspondence between original methodology developers and our data team have confirmed a partnership in which data results are shared in exchange for using their survey instruments. Data management protocols are in place and monthly updates are provided to the Project Director.

Media & Content Developer

Our media and content developer was hired in late June and is now developing FOMT messaging, website content, and social media strategy. We expect to publish several newsletters, newspaper editorials, and social media posts throughout 2020 as a way of spreading awareness about conservation, offering updates regarding our services in light of the pandemic, and expanding our reach across the CNMI community and beyond. In addition, local artist Maria Manalo has assisted us in finalizing our Project HOPE logo.

Website

We officially started building our new website in mid June and we are targeting August 28 for a soft launch. Developing our online presence doesn't just help us get connected as an organization; it's also an important step towards making our services (including Project HOPE) virtually accessible. Our partners will be asked for feedback before we go live and public. Live and public target date is September 7, 2020.

It is our intention to continue producing this information bulletin monthly to keep you updated. If you have updates that you'd like to contribute or if you have any questions or concerns, please send your reply to marianamonument@gmail.com or call (670) 483-FOMT.

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