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## My Grades of Green Story by Johanna James

by Nik Swiatek | Apr 14, 2017 | News |



### Ocean Pollution



I am Johanna James, a 13-year-old student at Lincoln Middle School in Santa Monica, and I have been with Grades of Green since 2014. Grades of Green is an amazing program for students grades 2-12 who care about the environment and want to help and learn more about it. As a resident in Los Angeles County Third District, I think it is awesome that Supervisor Sheila Kuehl sponsors Grades of Green! Thank you, Third District for believing in kids like me!

I joined the Grades of Green Youth Corps Eco-Leadership program because I care about the environment, since it provides us with life and beauty, and without nature and the Earth, we wouldn't be here or survive. The environment

gives us food, water, air, and a gorgeous place we can wake up to every day. I have been able to embrace my love of nature with Grades of Green since it gives me a way to connect with other people who feel the same. The people around us teach us different things about the environment every time we get together for a Youth Corps meeting, and they fill everyone up with more and more passion for nature as the months go on.

Since I became a Grades of Green student, I have begun understanding more and more about the Earth, and how humans can help it thrive. I have organized a beach cleanup and have spread awareness about ocean pollution. Grades of Green pushes me and many other students to reach our goals through working with the environment, and I believe this method has made every student accomplish some sort of goal, and has learned something important on the way there. I couldn't have done these amazing accomplishments without the help and support of Grades of Green and its supervisors.

Each year in the **Youth Corps Eco-Leadership Program**, every student implements a Grades of Green Activity that has to do with spreading the word about saving the environment. Did you know that 12.7 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean every year? Last year I made a video about ocean pollution, how it is caused, and how humans can stop it. The video shows how when humans litter even not knowing it, the Earth pays a cost, which affects not only the planet and its wide variety of animals but people as well. I mainly focused on the effects that the ocean (and the animals in it) faces, such as animals dying because of eating or getting stuck in trash, and reminding people that the ocean gives us oxygen and food, so if we fill it with litter, we are paying a cost as well.

A few tips on how to stop ocean pollution include not using as much plastic as you need. For example, skipping the straw at a restaurant. Even just sweeping your sidewalk instead of hosing can help the problem of millions of marine animals dying. See, when you use up water on the streets, this can carry litter or oil from cars into storm drains and straight into the ocean.

To learn more about Grades of Green and the Youth Corps Eco-Leadership program, check out [www.gradesofgreen.org](http://www.gradesofgreen.org). Any school or student, anywhere in the world can join the Grades of Green program and start greening their school for free.

**About Grades of Green:**

*Grades of Green is an award-winning environmental education nonprofit, dedicated to inspiring and empowering students and the broader school community to care for the environment. Statistics show that greening schools protects our environment, but also saves schools money, decreases absences, and increases test scores, yet most schools lack the guidance and resources to produce tangible results. Grades of Green fills that gap.*

*It offers over 40 free, fun, and hands-on Grades of Green Activities, all meant to be conducted outside of the classroom, so there's no required extra work for your teachers or staff. We have worked with 500 schools across 41 states and 12 countries, and have a proven track record of assisting schools in instilling environmental values in students. Each school that registers here receives a one-on-one Grades of Green Advisor to provide support to your school as you implement Grades of Green Activities.*



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