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PRESS RELEASE

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Miami Beach Engages Students in Fight Against Plastic Pollution

— *Youth-Driven Environmental Activism Project Puts Our Shores Forward* —

Miami Beach, FL – In recognition of World Oceans Day this week, the city’s #PlasticFreeMB program is partnering with local and international nonprofits to deploy students on a plastic-reduction mission. Ocean Conservancy, Big Blue & You and Debris Free Oceans, in partnership with the City of Miami Beach, will train students from the Design and Architecture High School (D.A.S.H) to serve as sustainability advisors for Miami Beach businesses. Their goal is to assist local businesses in moving away from single-use plastics and registering them for the #PlasticFreeMB program.

#PlasticFreeMB is a free business certification program with an aim of showcasing businesses that have taken action to reduce plastics within their establishments. The program is designed with a three-level system in which each participating business can choose the most suitable level based on their current plastic reduction practices. Participating businesses are recognized for their leadership role in supporting sustainable practices and are given resources to expand their programs.

“Our #PlasticFreeMB program already has over 100 participating businesses, and this new collaboration shows how government, nonprofit organizations and students can work together to make our community more sustainable,” said Miami Beach Mayor Dan Gelber. “We’re proud and excited to empower the next generation to help improve the future of the environment they’re inheriting.”

Through this youth-driven environmental initiative, students will also assess how plastic-reduction efforts can mitigate the impacts of plastic pollution in the environment. Students will come away with an understanding of sustainable business operations and best management practices. At the conclusion of the project, students will provide presentations on their experiences.

“Ocean Conservancy is proud to have partnered with the City of Miami Beach under our Shores Forward initiative, and the Big Blue & You youth driven plastics assessment is a flagship component of that partnership,” observed J.P. Brooker, director of Florida Conservation – Ocean Conservancy. “This project is incredibly meaningful not just to the students who have volunteered to participate, but also to the greater Miami Beach community.”

“It is essential for young people who want to protect the ocean to think globally and act locally. All of us at the Big Blue & You are proud to take part in the Shores Forward program and help facilitate more youth leaders in ocean conservation inspire our South Florida community to

move toward a single-use, plastic-free future,” added Danni Washington, executive director, Big Blue & You.

This plastic reduction initiative is one of many sustainability initiatives undertaken by the city. A citywide plastic straw and stirrer ban took effect last year as did a resolution requiring beachfront concessions to employ 100% reusable food and beverage wares.

Learn more about this program by visiting: www.plasticfreemb.com

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