

S. News

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# Unveiling of Wyland mural set for tomorrow morning

(BASED ON PRESS RELEASES) - No group in American Samoa is more delighted to see the mural celebrating the International Year of the Reef (IYOR) come to life at the Executive Office Building than the Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG).

Wyland's important mural which will be unveiled tomorrow is the centerpiece of a week long series of marine education activities CRAG is spearheading for the students of the territory.

Wyland's participation in the project came about after Gov. Togiola Tulafono extended an invitation during the most recent US Coral Reef Task Force meeting in Washington, DC. and CRAG is confident that American Samoa's mural will provide a lasting message of the importance of conserving and protecting our oceans and marine life - and how we as a community can work together to protect our ocean resources.

The pioneer in the marine art movement arrived this past Sunday and immediately began his preparation by going SCUBA diving in the Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (FBNMS) and at Aunu'u on Monday.

Taking inspiration from the smallest and most remote of the Nation's National Marine Sanctuaries, Wyland was able to observe some of diverse assortment of marine life that includes 271 species of fish and more than 200 species of coral.

Sharing his success and talent seems to be part of Wyland's modus operandi and here in the territory he has had two students and an art teacher from each school working with him as the mural is being produced. Different students participated each day providing opportunities to all of our local students to have interaction with the renowned artist and gain a wealth of information from the experience.

As the driving force behind bringing Wyland to the territory, Gov. Togiola said, "I am very excited about this large-scale project. I extend my most heartfelt gratitude to Wyland and his foundation for making this project possible. Through efforts such as this, we hope to foster in our children and community a strong sense of appreciation for our environment and a strong commitment to its conservation."

The art students have not only been able to observe the world famous painter up close, they and their art teachers have also been able to work side-by-side with him on their very own mural project, as well as participate in a variety of other environmentally themed educational activities.

CRAG collaborated closely with the Department of Education, the American Samoa Community College and private schools to make sure that the kids activities are both fun and educational. Employees from the Department of Commerce and the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources have been conducting a circuit

of different activities including a station on fishing and fish identification, a fun discussion session about our local sea turtles, and a few physical activities related to environmental messages including a Coral Reef and Plankton game which teaches the children important facts about our local coral reefs as well as how they can help to protect them.

The week long event culminates tomorrow morning at 10 am at the Executive Office Building with an official unveiling of the mural.

Through education and outreach activities such as Wyland's mural project, CRAG hopes to generate urgent action at all levels to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of American Samoa's reef system.

CRAG is the local working body of the International Coral Reef Initiative, a partnership among governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations striving to

preserve coral reefs and related ecosystems all around the world.

CRAG is a collaboration of five different agencies in the Territory, all of which have

some link to the coral reef environment; The Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR), the Department of Commerce (DOC), American

Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), and the National Park of American Samoa.



Whale mural on the side of the EOB early yesterday

[Courtesy Photo]