

Waves of Hope

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Waves of Hope is a youth-led national program founded by 14-year-old diver and Leo Club member Jeniru Oshadha to raise awareness on ocean and coral reef conservation. A joint project between the Lions Club of Udahamulla and the Leo Club of Raththanapitiya, and supported by Kangara Holdings, the project unfolds in two phases: an ocean photography exhibition, which was held in August, and coral reef restoration. Jeniru Oshadha and Lions Club District Governor, Gaya Upasena speak on the project.



PIP Mahendra Amarasuriya PMJF; Lion Samantha Fernando, Project Chairman and MD, Kangara Holdings (Lions Club of Udahamulla); Leo Jeniru Oshada, Project Chairman, Leo Club of Raththanapitiya; PID Sanjay Khetan PMJF; DG Gaya Upasena PMJF; Lion Tharaka Jayathilake, Chairman, Kangara Holdings and Member of Lions Club of Udahamulla, Lion Asanka; Abeygunawardana, President, Lions Club of Udahamulla; Lion Palitha Gamage, Secretary, Lions Club of Udahamulla, and members of the Lions Club Udahamulla.

Jeniru Oshada, Leo Club member:

What message do you want people to take away from the exhibition?

The ocean is part of our daily lives, giving us oxygen, food, and protection. If reefs die, we all suffer. Through my photos, I hope people realize that even small actions—reducing plastic, protecting beaches, supporting reef restoration—can create big waves of change. I want everyone to see that we are not separate from the ocean; if we care for it, it will care for us.

What impact does the project intend to create?

The project aims to make a difference socially and environmentally. For coastal communities, it means cleaner beaches, healthier reefs, safer coasts, and stronger

livelihoods.

For the environment, it promotes coral planting, reef protection, and reducing plastic waste. The ultimate impact is clear: a healthier ocean, thriving marine life, and communities proud to protect what protects them.

How do you plan to ensure sustainability and longevity?

To make Waves of Hope last beyond just one exhibition, I have shared the project online so more people, including Leo and Lions members, students, government officers, NGOs, and other partners, can learn about it and participate.

By raising awareness and building partnerships now, we create a community that can support future actions like coral planting, clean-ups, and youth-led campaigns.

How do you envision the future of Waves of Hope?

With the proper support and funding, I see the project growing into a traveling exhibition that will reach schools, villages, and cities to showcase the beauty of reefs, highlight the threats, and inspire more people to act.

District Governor Gaya Upasena:

How does the involvement of the Lions Club in Waves of Hope align with its mission and values?

The Lions Club's partnership reflects its mission to serve communities and empower youth. Lions extend their humanitarian service to environmental well-being by supporting marine conservation and coral reef protection. Waves of Hope blends creativity (photography, art, exhibitions) with civic responsibility (awareness and education), aligning with the Lions' commitment to community welfare. As a Leo-led initiative, the project embodies leadership, experience, and opportunity, with Lions mentoring the next generation of leaders.

As District Governor, "Building a Better Future Together," my theme is realized as youth take charge of urgent environmental issues. The project unites Lions, Leos, schools, and partners, fostering intergenerational collaboration and global understanding. With coral planting, youth engagement, and ongoing awareness, the project ensures long-term community impact—true to the Lions' belief in lasting service.

What inspired the Lions Club to support Waves of Hope?

The Lions Club was inspired to support because it embodies its mission of serving civic, cultural, social, and environmental welfare. As a youth-driven initiative, it offers Leos opportunities for leadership and creativity while addressing urgent marine conservation needs.

What does supporting Waves of Hope mean personally as District Governor?

It's deeply personal, reflecting my theme, "Building a Better Future Together." It's about empowering youth to lead with vision, protecting the environment, and strengthening fellowship within our Lions family. By guiding and learning from youth while ensuring sustainability, our service today will continue to create lasting impact for the future.