



HOLA MUNDO BEACH CAMP JR CIT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

FIGHTING DAMAGE CAUSED BY PLASTIC STRAWS

A group of Junior Counselors in Training at Hola Mundo Beach Camp, in their efforts to clean the beach and protect our environment in the City of Pompano Beach, decided to investigate the origin and history of plastic straws. Their initiative was also to create a piece of art that would show the dangers of plastic straws to our marine life, specially our Florida turtles.

Their research shows that in 1888, a man named **Marvin Stone** was the first to invent a drinking straw. The Smithsonian Institute tells a story saying that it all started when Stone was drinking a mint julep on a hot summer day in 1880, and the piece of rye grass that he was using as a straw, began to decompose. He wrapped strips of paper around a pencil, glued them together, and began making paper drinking straws. He patented his design in 1888, and by 1890, his factory was producing them in large quantities. The problem was that this new straw could not bend. So, in the 1930s, a man named Joseph Friedman, watching his daughter struggle to easily reach her milkshake through a straight paper straw, inserted a screw into the straw, wrapped floss around the screw's grooves, and took out the screw. With indentations, the straw could easily bend without breaking. Friedman then created the Flex-Straw Company.

During the Second World War, cheap plastic was booming in factories. Straws were among the many throw-away products being rapidly manufactured by large corporations. Plastic straws quickly became cheaper to produce and more durable than paper. They could easily wedge between the crosshairs of a fast food restaurant's to-go lid without ripping or tearing. Throughout the 1960s, the manufacturing infrastructure to mass produce plastic straws was put into place. "It was better, it was cheaper, and they didn't fall apart," says David Rhodes, the global business director for paper straw manufacturer Aardvark Straws. "It truly was a better product at a cheaper price, and in that era, no one looked at the future impact it would have on our environment."



Exactly...nobody knew, and now we are suffering the consequences. Our group of CIT leaders at HOLA MUNDO Beach Camp gather this important data from their research:

“Why use paper straws? Paper straw are biodegradable and compostable, it would take 2 to 6 weeks to decompose, while plastic straw take around 200 years. Also, 100 million marine animals die from plastic and ocean debris. Let’s make a difference.” **(William Knight)**

“Did you know that about 500 million straws are used each day, and 8.3 billion straws pollute beaches? Say yes to paper straw!” **(Daniel Mahon)**

“It is very sad to learn that it is expected that by 2050 there will be more plastic in our ocean than fish! Come on everybody let’s drink from paper straws” **(Kaden Hussey)**

“Did you know that plastic straw is the top ten marine debris, and that more than half of the sea turtles population has ingested plastic? I’m going to say YES to Skip the Straw Pledge from the Ocean Conservancy” **(Makayla Midgett)**

“What can we do to help? Get groups together and clean the beaches and the ocean. Remove all pieces of plastic” (Lilly O’Connor)

“On March 1, 2018 a law was amended to ban the use of plastic straw in public places. There has been many controversies regarding this law. Many people refuse to obey, and we would like to educate the public with our actions” **(Kaley Bevilacqua)**



A note from the artist:

“This piece represents the plastic surrounding our sea turtles in our beautiful oceans. The idea is to re-purpose plastic straws and turn them into beautiful artwork so that they don’t end up in our oceans”

Makena Vargo