

[<=Back](#)

## **REEF BALL UPDATE:** *Sarasota Kids Get Involved In Saving Our Environment*



**By Todd Barber, President & CEO, Reef Ball Development Group, Ltd.**

The Reef Ball Foundation, The Reef Ball Development Group, Reef Innovations, Sarasota County Marine Resources Division, The National Estuary Program and The School In The Park are teaming up to offer Reef Balls for residents that own docks in Sarasota and perhaps Manatee County. The school kids will do the public awareness campaigns, help the dock owners determine if their dock is suitable for Reef Balls and take orders for the Reef Balls. Moneys will be collected by the Reef Ball Foundation so that fees charged for the reefs will be a charitable contribution so that they can be deducted on taxes. The Reef Ball Foundation will then subcontract with Reef Innovations to do the actual construction and deployment of the Reef Balls. The National Estuary Program (NEP) is offering the school an additional grant of up to \$5,000 to help develop the community awareness brochures and to help get the word out to residents. Both Sarasota County Marine Resources Division and the NEP are helping the kids to obtain the necessary permissions so that the resident dock owners don't have to do any of the paperwork themselves. The remainder of the money after construction and deployment will be donated to the School In The Park where the kids will manage the money themselves to go on educational trips, etc.

Reef Ball sends a special thanks to Nicole Park (marine biology teacher at School In The Park), Mark Alderson of the NEP, Mike Solum of Sarasota County Marine Resources and Larry Beggs of Reef Innovations for their contributions of time to help get this project started. The Reef Ball Foundation hopes that this program will serve as a model for other schools around the state.

From International Reality Consultant's Website: Estero Bay's Ecosystem and the Reef Ball Artificial reefs being deployed all over the world to foster vegetation and boost fish populations may be just what Estero Bay needs to rejuvenate its natural habitat. The concrete-textured buoy designed with various-sized holes allows life to cling to its surface and the holes increase circulation, mimicking a natural reef. Reef Balls would promote plant and sea life for the failing estuary and if used around imbedded channel markers would help keep the markers from being dislodged when they are hit by boats. Collier County's Division of Natural Resources Management is just beginning to look into the possibility of utilizing the Reef Ball programs for the waterways which have experienced environmental destruction through storm Water run-off.

Reef Ball gave a presentation on October 6th to Classroom On Wheels. Over 40 Sarasota area seniors gathered for the presentation and tour of the Reef Ball construction facilities. Two more presentations are scheduled for the Classroom on November 29th - 30th. Seniors interested in attending should contact the Classroom On Wheels program (Brenda) at (941) 921 - 9392 or 922 - 0817.

Manatee County received notice of a grant award for Reef Balls for the 3-mile south reef offshore. The project will start its planning phases this winter.

Reef Ball Rocks reports more "red tape" in obtaining an aquaculture permit to grow miniature Reef Balls for salt water aquarists . . . the Florida Aquaculture Department reports that it will be at least 6 months before the permit can be processed.

### JUST FOR KIDS

The new Reef Balls Kids Island, a section of our website especially for children, is up and running at [www.reefball.org](http://www.reefball.org). Go down the Reef Ball Kids Island link and check it out. There are neat things to learn about giant squid, jelly fish, and other creatures, coloring books to download and lots of fun games to play.

*Visit The Reef Ball website at [www.reefball.com](http://www.reefball.com)  
for more interesting facts about Reef Balls.  
The Reef Ball Coalition website is at:  
[www.reefballcoalition.org](http://www.reefballcoalition.org)*

[<=Back](#)