

# STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT MOODY GARDENS RAISES FUNDS FOR CORAL RESTORATION FOUNDATION

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**Galveston, Texas (February 8, 2022)** – The Society for the Advancement of Volunteer Youth, or SAVY program, at Moody Gardens offers youth ages 14-17 the opportunity to volunteer within the community while gaining experience in a variety of career fields. Each year the SAVY program chooses an organization for which to raise funds and awareness. The organization chosen for 2021 was the Coral Restoration Foundation. The Coral Restoration Foundation grows and outplants endangered species of coral to restore reef sites along the Florida Reef Tract to a healthy state. The donations were collected in front of the Coral Rescue Lab inside of the Aquarium Pyramid at Moody Gardens.

The SAVY volunteers set up an informational Coral Reef Cart in front of the Coral Rescue Lab that contained different demonstrative artifacts. The students used this to educate and engage the public about corals, why they are disappearing and what the general public can do in their daily lives to help reduce the negative environmental impacts for these crucial ocean organisms. The Coral Restoration Foundation supports the work that occurs inside of the Coral Rescue Lab and contributes to the Moody Gardens mission of education and conservation.

The Coral Rescue Lab in the Aquarium Pyramid was created in response to an international effort to increase awareness and combat a disease that is rapidly killing the Florida Reef Tract, the third largest coral reef system in the world. This lab is used to propagate coral and focuses on species being detrimentally impacted by this disease.

As a SAVY volunteer, students have the opportunity to work side by side with Naturalists, work with animals both on exhibit and behind the scenes, provide guests with information about Moody Gardens, assist staff with various duties and responsibilities and attend continuing education courses. It is also designed to provide valuable insight into the job opportunities available in this field, as participants are able to work on interpersonal and public speaking skills. While some students are looking forward to the sandy beaches or the movies during their summer break, others will offer their services for an experience of a lifetime only Moody Gardens can offer. This program is not for everyone, as students must demonstrate a desire, a passion and a willingness to learn more about Marine and Animal Health Sciences. Strict rules and guidelines exist as students compete for acceptance into the program.

“The SAVY Program is great for the kids because it gives them an opportunity to experience something that they otherwise wouldn’t be able to experience,” said Tim Raeke, Guest Service Manager at Moody Gardens. “It also gives them a chance to educate the public while also collecting donations for different organizations that support our conservation efforts.”

Moody Gardens is currently accepting applications for those who are interested in joining the SAVY program for the summer of 2022. Applications will be accepted until April 8 and can be found on the Moody Gardens website. Applicants must submit a completed SAVY Volunteer application with at least two letters of recommendation from non-relatives and a copy of their most recent report card. Once the application is received in full, the applicant will be contacted to attend a required SAVY Open House and schedule a personal interview with Moody Gardens Staff. Teens selected for the program will learn about ocean inhabitants and rainforest mammals from around the world and how to care for them.

For more information please call 409-744-4673 or visit  
[www.moodygardens.org/get\\_involved/teen\\_volunteers](http://www.moodygardens.org/get_involved/teen_volunteers)

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