

# 2015 COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

## INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION ENTRY FORM

Please copy and complete this form for each entry.  
Create a separate document for answering the five questions below.

Check only ONE entry classification below:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. AAPA Awareness Initiative Messaging _____ | 8. Overall Campaign _____               |
| 2. Advertisements – Single _____             | 9. Periodicals _____                    |
| 3. Advertisements – Series _____             | 10. Promotional/Advocacy Material _____ |
| 4. Annual Reports _____                      | 11. Social/Web-Based Media _____        |
| 5. Audio-Only Presentations _____            | 12. Special Events _____                |
| 6. Directories/Handbooks _____               | 13. Videos _____                        |
| 7. Miscellaneous <u>  X  </u>                | 14. Visual-Only Presentations _____     |
|  | 15. Websites _____                      |

Please check the appropriate box:

CATEGORY 1

CATEGORY 2

CATEGORY 3

Entry Title Think Watershed Field Trips

Name of Port Port of Los Angeles

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On separate paper, **FIRST** write a short, descriptive summary of your entry, **THEN**, in as much detail as needed, specifically address each of the following five questions and number your answers. Your answers equal 50% of your score.

- 1. What are/were the entry's specific communications challenges or opportunities?**

  - Describe in specific & measurable terms the situation leading up to creation of this entry.
  - Analyze the major internal and external factors needing to be addressed.
- 2. How does the communication used in this entry complement the organization's overall mission?**

  - Explain the organization's overall mission and how it influenced creation of this entry.
- 3. What were the communications planning and programming components for this entry?**

  - Describe your overall goals or desired results.
  - Describe your objectives and list specific, measurable milestones needed to reach your goals.
  - Identify your primary and secondary audiences in order of importance.
- 4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were used in this entry?**

  - Explain what strategies were developed to achieve success and why these strategies were chosen.
  - Specify the tactics used (i.e., actions used to carry out your strategies).
  - Detail the implementation plan by including timeline, staffing and outsourcing used.
- 5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?**

  - Describe any formal/ informal surveys used, or anecdotal audience feedback received, that helped in evaluating the success of this entry.
  - If possible, explain how this entry influenced target audience opinions, behaviors, attitudes or actions.

Cost

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*Project Name:* Think Watershed Field Trips  
*Port:* Port of Los Angeles

### Summary

The Port of Los Angeles provides Think Watershed hands-on, science based, boat field trips to fourth through seventh grade classes that teach about the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability in the maritime environment directly supporting Port of Los Angeles educational endeavors.

### Communications Challenge/Opportunity

At America's Port<sup>®</sup>, the leading container port in North America, the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) continues to proactively address sustainability, security and community issues and is innovative and visionary in solutions to social, environmental and economic needs. The Port of Los Angeles is aware that an integral aspect of sustainability includes educating our youth about the maritime environment and the Port of Los Angeles is committed to supporting educational endeavors that do just that.

To expand on that commitment, the Port of Los Angeles has partnered with Think Earth Environmental Education Foundation (Think Earth), a non-profit organization whose mission is to help Southern California communities create a sustainable environment through education. Think Earth creates educational programs that increase awareness of the environment and affect behaviors to improve the environment. One of those projects, Think Watershed, educates students about our vast regional watershed's impact on the marine and coastal environments. Although students learn about these topics in the classroom, it can be challenging to fully grasp in that setting. The Port of Los Angeles and Think Watershed aim to inspire young people to become stewards of the environment through science laboratory on-the-water field trips.

Think Watershed field trips directly support Port of Los Angeles educational endeavors. As we have found with our other educational programs, an ongoing challenge in working with schools is very low school field trip budgets. We were aware that the field trip needed to be provided at no cost to the school and that a bus subsidy covering all or most of the school transportation costs needed to be available. Another challenge is selecting schools for the field trips. We have a limited number of trips available so we needed to determine the best way to select schools for the program.

To measure the success of this ongoing program and continue to improve upon it in future years, evaluation forms are provided to teachers on the tour to gauge the overall effectiveness of the program. Also, records have also been kept and continue to be kept year after year to compare school participants and evaluations.

### Nexus to the Port's Overall Mission

This program supports the overall mission of the Port of Los Angeles. The *Port of Los Angeles Strategic Plan Update 2014* (Strategic Plan) identifies "an efficient, secure and environmentally sustained supply chain" and "strong relationships with stakeholders" as two of its four strategic plan objectives.

Teaching our youth to be environmental stewards is imperative to an environmentally sustained supply chain. The Think Watershed Project teaches students that their actions impact the environment. It creates awareness, instills responsibility and promotes environmental stewardship. It's very possible that these messages do not end with only the students and educators that participate in these tours. Students that take these tours may promote environmental stewardship at home teaching their families and friends to do the same and educators that take these tours may teach more students and other educators.

6002

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In the Strategic Plan, under "Strong Relationships with Stakeholders," an initiative is to "attract visitors to the LA Waterfront of Wilmington and San Pedro." Providing Think Watershed field trips to educational groups is a stimulating way to build strong relationships with youth, educators and parents – essential stakeholders of our community. This program brings up to 900 people per year to the LA Waterfront.

## Planning and Programming

The Port of Los Angeles partnered with Think Earth, a nonprofit with similar initiatives to the overall mission of the Port of Los Angeles. The Senior Director of Communications at POLA joined the Think Earth Foundation Board of Directors to meld this partnership. We determined that the best way to implement this Think Watershed Project at the Port of Los Angeles would be through an Authority for Expenditure with Think Earth so that trips would be offered at no cost to the schools.

The program includes on-the-water science laboratory boat trips that are three hours in length and can accommodate up to 60 (approximately two classes of) fourth, fifth, sixth or seventh grade students. Trips include a plankton lab, water visibility testing, bottom sediment study, water chemistry and wildlife activities. Pre- and post-trip curriculum is provided to maximize students' experience. The program also includes a website where students can post and compare results of their data with other classes that have participated in the program. This year, iPads have been added to the boat tour experience so groups of students can see plankton and other findings up close.

These field trips are offered during the school year, Monday through Friday, except holidays, depending upon availability.

Because of tight school budgets, in addition to the free boat trips and curriculum and lab materials, the Port of Los Angeles also offers a bus subsidy as an incentive to schools to take advantage of this program. The bus subsidy aids with paying for the school bus to and from the port and covers nearly, if not all, of the bus cost.

*Goal:* The goal of this program is to educate students about the impact of human behavior on the environment and to promote the importance of environmental stewardship at the Port of Los Angeles and beyond.

*Objective:* The objective is to receive very favorable teacher comments on every program evaluation form received by our office.

*Target Audience:* Fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh grade LAUSD students. The current program and curriculum is geared to these age groups, but Think Earth is working to establish curriculum for other student age groups as well.

*Secondary Audiences:* Teachers and faculty also participate in this program. It is important that they value the curriculum and program so they return for future years, recommend this program to other teachers and teach these important messages to their students in their classrooms.

## Actions Taken & Outputs

*Strategies:* Since there were a limited number of opportunities available, it was determined that it was best not to advertise this program for participation on the Port of Los Angeles Web site and social media sites. We have learned from other programs that those media channels quickly create an onslaught of requests which our budget for this program did not allow.

Public relations management and staff decided that participating schools would be selected in two ways. First, working with our government affairs division at the Port of Los Angeles, we provided City of Los Angeles

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council offices the opportunity to select a school in their district for this program. This encouraged participation from schools throughout the City of Los Angeles and provided an opportunity to the council offices to offer a unique, educational experience to a school in their district. Community relations staff also included harbor area schools and schools that have been long-time participants and supporters of our established educational programs.

Although we weren't able to advertise this program for additional school participants, we did want to notify the public of our partnership with Think Earth and the opportunity we provide to students.

*Tactics:* Community relations staff made contact and offered trips to selected schools.

A short video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtAIM0jHRR4>) showing a Think Watershed field trip in action was created towards the end of the first program year to showcase this program and send to new participating schools. The short program video was later placed on the Port of Los Angeles Website and YouTube page.

Although we cannot offer every school a Think Watershed field trip, Think Earth has put some of their curriculums into an online format for teachers to access. We are working with Think Earth to promote our Port of LA filed trips and the Think Earth new online curriculums on the most popular Los Angeles morning news show. This will take place during an upcoming Port of Los Angeles Think Watershed boat field trip.

*Implementation Plan:* It was determined that through this partnership with Think Earth, the Port of Los Angeles would provide Think Earth with a list of schools authorized to participate in the program. One public relations staff member coordinated the program for the Port of Los Angeles including reaching out to selected schools and securing program participants. Think Earth staff and other foundation partnership members reserved the tours, provided the bus subsidies, administered the program and facilitated the field trips.

The short program video was placed on the Port of Los Angeles Website for a short time and is available on the Port of Los Angeles YouTube page.

The total budget for this program is \$30,000 per year. Through this budgeted amount we are able to provide this opportunity to up to 15 schools (30 classes) and 900 students per year. This cost includes everything - the boat field trip, curriculum materials and the bus subsidy so that trips are provided at no cost to the participating school.

### Outcome and Evaluation

The Port of Los Angeles is able to extend this opportunity to up to 15 schools (30 classes) and 900 students per year. Evaluation forms are provided to teachers on the field trips. Teachers are asked to fill them out after their tour. This program has received very high complementary remarks on teacher evaluation forms.

As stated above, the goal of this program is to educate students about the impact of human behavior on the environment and to promote the importance of environmental stewardship at the Port of Los Angeles and beyond. One teacher evaluation form stated "An amazing educational experience... There's a lot of learning going on here!" Another evaluation form stated, "Our students benefitted from this trip in so many ways. Although they've 'book learned' about the ocean, this hands-on, real life experience was priceless for them. The staff was patient, knowledgeable, and great with our students. Thank you and please have us back again."

The Think Watershed Project promotes sustainability and social responsibility, as does the Port of Los Angeles, and it is with great hope that some of the youth and teacher participants take these messages away with them when they leave their field trip at America's Port®.