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Jun 20, 2000

**FL: Charles H. Kirbo Memorial Reef**

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June 1, 2000 - The Reef Ball Foundation and many local community organizations and schools will be deploying over 700 Reef Balls off Ponte Vedra beach to create what is to be known as the Charles H. Kirbo Memorial Reef. These Reef Balls will be deployed in 55' of water about 5 miles offshore to create a first-of-its-kind educational research reef. World Free Diving Champion Tanya Streeter will participate in the deployment and speak with the students from the participating schools. The reef is being deployed the first week of June in celebration of the United Nations Ocean Day as the reef will be completed by June 8th-Ocean Day. (Members of the press will have access to this event on board the La Cruise Casino boat or private boats to record the event. Deployment dates are Saturday, June 3rd in St. Augustine, Monday, June 5th and Tuesday, June 6th in Jacksonville.)

The reef is being built to honor Charles H. Kirbo, Sr. who was an attorney from Atlanta, Georgia who served as an advisor and lawyer to President Jimmy Carter, was a trustee of the Carter Center and a trustee of the T.M. and Irene B. Kirbo Charitable Trust. A underwater plaque will be placed on this reef honoring his life's accomplishments as a lawyer, statesman, W.W.II Vet., farmer, fisherman and conservationist. Congressman John Linder said regarding Kirbo's many contributions, "The world may never know the many great contributions he has made because of his great modesty." The reef is being built thanks to a grant from the Kirbo Charitable Trust, The Reef Ball Foundation and support from local community organizations and businesses.

The goals of this project are to help restore the marine habitat off the Jacksonville coast and to provide educational and research opportunities for the greater Jacksonville area. Local high schools, colleges and community organizations, such as Jacksonville University, Jacksonville Reef Research Team, St. Augustine and Mandarin High Schools will utilize the Kirbo Memorial Reef as a site to do scientific studies. The students also participated in the construction of the reef. Reef Balls are mound shaped concrete artificial reef modules that mimic natural coral heads. The modules have different sized holes in them to provide habitat for many types of marine life. Reef Balls are made by pouring environmentally safe concrete into

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patented mold systems, and are stable on the ocean floor, having been proven not to move even after hurricane-force winds have passed overhead.

The Reef Ball Foundation has been assisting the educational efforts of students around the state and the world. As a result of their support, as well as the contributions of numerous locals businesses, the Reef Ball Project at Mandarin High School in Jacksonville was the recent recipient of the National Sea World/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Award as the most innovative project in the Planet Ocean category. Selection for the award was done by a committee from the American Oceans Campaign in Washington, D.C. and was chosen among nine finalists from around the country.

With over 400 projects worldwide, The Reef Ball Foundation is making a big splash to help save the world's ailing ocean reefs, and contribute to the educational efforts of students interested in marine science and preserving their oceans. The foundation's projects range from the Boy Scouts of America's High Adventure program in Islamorada, Florida to the government of Sarawak's marine sanctuary for sea turtles in Malaysia to Instituto Ecoplan's habitat restoration project in Brazil.

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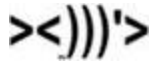
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