

# DISCOVER WONDER

## AURORA AVALLONE

Sanctuary youth advisor and volunteer



*"I really don't know why it is that all of us are so committed to the sea, except I think it's because in addition to the fact that the sea changes, and the light changes, and ships change, it's because we all came from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea - whether it is to sail or to watch it - we are going back from whence we came."* - President John F. Kennedy

Growing up in the small coastal fishing town of Scituate, MA, I have been able to foster my love of the ocean in a very unique way. In my first days of life, my parents brought me home to our house on the sea wall where my dad held me up so the salty sea spray could christen me on my second day of life. I was baptized by the Atlantic and I feel that the saltwater runs in my veins. Ever since the first day I was embraced by the ocean, I have been driven to protect and advocate for its preservation. There is so much wonder and beauty in the ocean and all of the life it holds which makes me so forever grateful that I have a front-row seat to view and conserve its ever-changing scenery.

Living in Scituate, I had the unique opportunity to volunteer for Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, which is headquartered in my town. When I came to the Sanctuary I was hooked, not only by the beautiful wildlife and mission but also by the amazing people who share a common passion for the ocean and for the protection of wildlife everywhere. Volunteering for Stellwagen since seventh grade, I have invested hundreds of wonderful hours conducting conservation research on the topics of whale migrations, pollution impacts, ocean warming, and overfishing. My goal is to educate people of all ages about how we can each make a difference by protecting our precious natural resources.

At the start of high school, I knew that I wanted to bring my passion for ocean education and conservation into other facets of my life, so I partnered with the Sanctuary for my Girl Scout Silver Award Service Project. The goal of my Silver Award Project, "Sea Scouts," was to make a hands-on beachside program where early elementary school-aged children could learn about our ocean and get a deeper understanding of their connection to the sea. Living in a coastal town, I noticed that many kids took the ocean for granted so I believed that if we taught young kids about the ocean, we would create lifelong protectors, advocates, and lovers of the ocean. Since then, I've also had the privilege to serve on my Sanctuary's Advisory Council which allowed me to use my voice to educate my community on current issues concerning our oceans and to speak out for positive change at town hall meetings and environmental events across Massachusetts. This allowed me to help persuade local communities to allocate funds towards protecting the ocean and establish educational venues to teach tens of thousands about the power of environmental conservation.

My environmental conservation journey is just beginning and as I grow older, my passion and dedication to the ocean grow stronger. Just as President John F Kennedy once said, "We are tied to the ocean," and therefore I truly believe that we all have a commitment to protect and conserve our oceans. All life on this planet depends on the health of our oceans. My work with the Sanctuary inspires my current research on the possibility of desalinated hydroponic farming to create a renewable water source to revolutionize the positive use of the ocean in sustainable agriculture. My years of environmental service have helped to give the course of my life true direction and have led me to follow my passion of being a life-long advocate and protector of the environment, to ensure that future generations inherit a healthy and prosperous planet.

[WATCH AURORA'S VIDEO](#) ▶

### There's an Ocean of Sanctuaries to Discover

Beautiful and awe-inspiring, they are home to miraculous wildlife that soar above and swim below the water's surface. Explore and do your part to help protect these wet and wonderful places.

*Discover your story, Discover Wonder.*



**National  
Marine Sanctuary  
Foundation**