



## New Conservation Initiative Launched for Florida's Wild Dolphins

**Davie, FL—March 7, 2008** The journalism class of Plantation High School is joining the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), as well as state, federal and international partners, in a campaign to raise awareness among youth of threats to dolphins, manatees and the marine environment throughout the State.

The initiative of teacher Jamie Aquino and her journalism students is being launched in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in support of the Year of the Dolphin 2008, and is aimed at outreach and fundraising to support marine mammal conservation initiatives in Florida and elsewhere.

The Year of the Dolphin is a joint initiative between CMS, and its dedicated regional agreements on dolphin conservation, as well as UNEP, WDCS and the international tourist group TUI.

“With increasing human populations and growing demands on the world’s marine resources, it has never been more important that Governments, conservation groups, industries and individuals all play their part to ensure the continued survival of all our whale, dolphin and porpoise species”, said CMS Executive Secretary Robert Hepworth.

Across the globe, dolphins, whales and manatees face a myriad of threats; including death in fishing nets, prey depletion due to over fishing, pollution, harmful noise disturbance, collision with vessels, habitat loss and deliberate hunting. One of the major issues facing dolphins in the wild, and especially in Florida, is harassment by commercial and recreational vessels and interactions with fisheries.

The new initiative is being called Pier2Pier and hopes to spur local action to educate students and promote protection by addressing major threats to these marine mammals and their environment. Ms. Aquino and her students will be working with state, federal and international agencies, including the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bryan Adams Foundation. Dolphins and manatees are protected by both state and federal law.

Pier2Pier (see [www.pier2pier.net](http://www.pier2pier.net) for information) will initially raise funds to assist stranding networks in Florida, purchase recycling bins where old fishing lines can be collected to reduce marine debris and entanglement of dolphins in discarded gear, and assist in the construction of a school in Haiti and the development of a marine sciences program there.

Courtney Vail, US Campaigns Officer for WDCS, stated: “The message that the protection of dolphins and manatees is important to today’s youth underscores the enthusiasm shown by this committed group. We are hopeful that the initiatives undertaken by Pier2Pier will have a real impact on spreading a conservation ethic to an important demographic in Florida, and serve as an inspiration elsewhere.”

“My students and I want to reach as many young people as possible with the message of conservation and protection for marine mammals”, Plantation High journalism teacher Jamie Aquino said. “We plan on getting our message across through a variety of ways, including a newsletter, website, public service announcements and fundraisers.”

### Media Contacts:

Jamie Aquino, Plantation High, 954-439-6458, [jamieaquino@yahoo.com](mailto:jamieaquino@yahoo.com)  
Courtney Vail, WDCS, 480-678-7977, [courtney@wdcs.org](mailto:courtney@wdcs.org)

[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)  
[www.yod2008.org](http://www.yod2008.org)  
[www.wdcs.org](http://www.wdcs.org)