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Snorkel Bob's owner donates photos of marine life to Sacred Hearts School

September 15, 2016 Lahaina News

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LAHAINA - Robert Wintner, the founder of Snorkel Bob's shops throughout Hawaii, recently visited Sacred Hearts School to donate four large photographs on canvas of marine life from around the world.

New Principal Becky Spitznagel said, "I'm so pleased, and we're excited to share the photos with the kids and let them see these pictures of real life and real animals from the coral reef.

"Hopefully, that will help impart on them the importance of taking care of the world and the coral reefs and the oceans. I know it will enliven our cafeteria and make it a more joyful place to be and colorful place to be."

Article Photos



Sacred Hearts School Principal Becky Spitznagel (left), Te...

After donating the photos, Wintner discussed them with students in teacher Mary Anna Grimes' classroom.

Wintner said he tries to get out snorkeling at least once a week.

"It surprises me how many people live on Maui and don't really make regular contact with our gill-breathing neighbors and friends," said Wintner, who gets recharged being in the clear blue ocean with reef critters.

The avid traveler and author takes many of his photos while snorkeling. He said the goal is to get close to your subject.

"And if you are holding your breath, you have to be real still and allow the fish to set its fear aside, its anxiety, and come up and

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check you out, and then you get your shot," Wintner said.

He explained that there are two galleries at Snorkel Bob's on Maui, and the business decision was made to convert the artwork in them to the new medium of acrylic.

A related factor is the printer he used to put the images on canvas broke down.

Wintner noted that life is full of ups and downs, joys and setbacks.

"These (photos) were in inventory, and we tried to think of what to do with them," he explained. "And over the years, among those things that lingered with me as one of those small joys was the support that I felt for my gill-breathing friends, and I felt it at this school from Mary Anna" and her students during a visit a few years ago.


Three photos were taken in Maui waters. A picture of an anemone clownfish is from the Phillipines.

A closeup photo of a Hawaiian green sea turtle, called "Honu Lisa," was taken in strong currents in South Maui waters.

Wintner hopes the busy students will see the photos and remember that they live in a special place.

"We live in Hawaii; we are the reef state. We are the reef place, and these are our neighbors. This is a reef community, and it has two parts: below the surface and above the surface," he concluded.

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