



The Stone Soup leadership Institute
Cronkite Awards for Ocean Champions
New York City • 2024

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Oceans Initiative

In honor of the Cronkite Awards for Ocean Champions, the Institute is announcing our Oceans Initiative. The award ceremony is timed to Climate Week NYC and ahead of the U.N.'s General Assembly to spotlight The U.N. Goal #14 • [Life Below Water](#) and the [U.N. Ocean Decade - The Science We Need for the Ocean We Want](#). (2021-2030) and all the ocean champions who fought for the historic [High Seas Treaty](#) that aims to protect marine life in the ocean's high seas, ratified by 60 nations, which goes into effect in 2025.

“Mr. Cronkite was an anchor on TV - as a sailor, and in our world.”

David McCullough, at the Institute's first Cronkite Awards.

Walter Cronkite was an avid sailor - and he lived on islands when he wasn't the anchor for the CBS Evening News. He enjoyed the simpler way of life he found there as well as the close-knit community. He treasured his three months of sailing on Martha's Vineyard every summer, and in the winter months, he enjoyed the gentle tradewinds of the British Virgin Islands, where he moored his beloved sailboat, *Wymtje*, in Sopher's Hole, in Tortola.

For sailors around the world, islands are paradise - they provide a respite from our busy world. A quiet way of being, with the calming waves lapping alongside the boat. A fun adventure where you can rediscover the joy of living - and where children of all ages encounter a magical world, snorkeling in the vibrant marine ecosystem of fish and coral reefs.

Building Bridges

For the last 28 years, the Institute has worked with coastal communities and islands around the world: from Martha's Vineyard to Newport, Rhode Island, and other New England coastal communities, to the islands of Hawaii, Vieques (Puerto Rico), the British Virgin Islands, and the Philippines. We've built bridges with local companies, government, education, and community leaders to develop strategic initiatives, and public-private partnerships that empower young people to become leaders of sustainable communities.

Living and working alongside these island peoples, we've seen firsthand the impact that climate change is having on these fragile islands. Coastal erosion from hurricanes and typhoons is ravaging their coastlines and wiping out villages and even whole islands. Rising temperatures are killing their coral reefs, depleting fish, and their food supply. Their beautiful beaches are being covered with plastics and trash. Their fragile ecosystems are being attacked on every level. They are on the front lines of this global crisis.

At the Institute's Annual Sustainability Summits, youth leaders have been coming together for 19 years to share stories about the challenges facing their islands; and they've exchanged their ideas for sustainable solutions. During this week-long intensive summit, island youth have developed a deep bond which has given them the courage to be ocean champions when they return to their communities. It was a great honor when some of these youth leaders later joined future Summits as faculty, to train the next generation. They have become leaders on their islands and have laid the foundation for the Institute's educational resources to inspire others around the world to flourish.

The Oceans Initiative's Call to Action

We hope to engage *all* ocean lovers in joining with us to become ocean champions in their communities and in our world. What can each of us do to fight this global crisis, and protect our oceans? Here are a few ideas:

- **Sailors:** Ditch single-use plastics; practice carry in-carry out; collect the trash littering our oceans.
- **Parents:** Share the inspiring stories of ocean champions in *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World*.
- **Educators:** Bring these stories to life with the *Stone Soup Climate Education Curriculum*.
- **Chambers of Commerce:** Form a sustainability chapter to help business integrate green best practices.
- **Yacht Clubs**
 - Beach Clean-Ups: Start an annual tradition; make it fun by offering contests and prizes.
 - Host a blue Speaker Series where local leaders can learn about best practices from national experts.
 - Collaborate with local schools and organizations to develop sustainability projects.
 - Join the UN's Clean Seas Campaign: Sailors for the Sea Green Boater, and Clean Regatta Programs.

What We Have Learned from All These Island Communities is that they lack the educational resources to prepare their youth for the ever-changing realities of our world. As a result, the Institute has offered all of our educational resources and training programs to these communities at no charge. We are painfully aware that those who are most adversely by the climate crisis – and are the most in need of these educational tools – are the least able to afford them.

With the **Institute's Oceans Initiative**, we are gearing up to scale our educational tools and trainings with the *Stone Soup Climate Education Platform* so that educators on these islands and then around the world will have **FREE** access, so they can in turn prepare *all* young people to build a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

Just Imagine if all young people could learn about **Cronkite Award for Ocean Champions** recipient Henk Rogers, and his Blue Planet Alliance, and the other champions featured in the book *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life Changing Stories of Young Heroes*. Ocean Champions like Hawaii's Nainoa Thompson and the *Hokule'a*; Jasper Ralph, Plastic Free MV of Martha's Vineyard; Daniela Fernandez, of the Sustainable Ocean Alliance; Perry Raso, of Matunouk Oyster Farm in Rhode Island; Angelique Pouponneau, of SYAH-Seychelles; Gary Benchehib, of Bali; Cruz Erdman, New Zealand; James Ellsmoor, of Island Innovation; and François van den Abeele, of Sea2See.

We invite strategic partners and funders to join with us for first our national, then our global launch in 2025. We're in this together, and everyone's help is needed. In this way, we will honor Mr. Cronkite and his insurmountable spirit, creating a future that the next generation will be proud to inherit. Learn more here: [link](#).

Stone Soup Leadership Institute
www.stonesoupleadership.org