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#EMFBeachCleanup kicks off on June 4th with the Great NC Beach Sweep

In its seventh year, the #EMFBeachCleanup project of the Emma Munson Foundation is aimed at helping give Mother Earth a big hug. The project started on Father's Day 2017 on the coast of North Carolina as a way to continue to honor the spirit of Emma Munson, who died in October 2013.

"Emma was always present with us on vacation," Michael Munson, Emma's father remembered, "and we started cleaning up beach litter – something that she always did while at the beach."

The focus on Beach Cleanups was inspired by Emma, and something the Munson Family is trying to encourage their network of friends, family and followers to do every time they are along the coast.

"It's easy but a very important thing to do," noted Denise Munson, Emma's Mother "and a great way to show respect to Mother Earth – one of Emma's favorite people."

Centered on individual effort, the program and its #EMFBeachCleanup hashtag is a growing movement with each summer season as more beachgoers head to the shore to enjoy the beauty of the beach and ocean. AAA estimates that 100 million Americans will take a family vacation this summer, many of them will choose the seaside as a place to unwind, reconnect with family and recharge their batteries. The Munson's would love to see "giving back to Mother Earth" as another part of their trip.

#EMFBeachCleanup and other movements to take back the beach are aimed at keeping the litter from a beach day from entering the ocean. If litter is left on the beach, chances are it will enter the ocean.

According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, plastic debris kills an estimated 100,000 marine mammals annually, as well as millions of birds and fishes. This man-made waste is a byproduct of our lifestyles and a real threat to nature in so many ways.

2022 will be the third time that Michael and Denise travel the coast of North Carolina as part of their "Great NC Beach Sweep", planning to visit over 40 beaches in just under 2 weeks - collecting litter along the coastline that may otherwise have ended up in the ocean.

The "Great NC Beach Sweep" kicks off on Sunday June 4, 2023 from the North Carolina/South Carolina border near Bird Island – a sanctuary of sorts that is a fitting place to start their northbound journey. The couple plans to traverse the North Carolina coast in their foundation truck (Big Blue) and finish on June 16, 2023.

"We're back at it!" said Michael, "this summer we hope to inspire more people to do a small part to help keep beach litter contained and ensure marine life isn't impacted by vacationers." North Carolina boasts over 300 miles of coastline along the Atlantic and holds a special place in the hearts of the Munson and Martier families. "Our daughter Emma loved the beach and ocean and visited our family's

beach house on NC's Outer Banks every year of her life," noted Denise, "her first time as a 9-month-old." It's here that the Munson's met and they've returned each year as they started their family.

Since 2022, the Munson's are promoting what they are calling a "515" – challenging people to try to find 5 pieces of beach (or near beach) litter in 15 minutes. While their cleanups take nearly an hour per beach, they are confident that on any beach it's possible to meet the challenge. Even on very clean beaches, there's little doubt that you will find something left behind. High tide and changing winds may take left behind litter into the ocean. From there it threatens the marine life that call the ocean home.

"If you're lucky enough to be at the beach, you're pretty lucky," Michael notes, "and we hope you can meet the challenge to find 5 pieces of litter in 15 minutes and then challenge a friend to do the same!"

To help spread the word, the Munson's have encouraged followers to take photos of their cleanup and "trash haul" and post to social media using the hashtag #EMF515. Individual Beach Cleanups are encouraged! A website has been setup at www.EMFBeachCleanup.com to provide more information on how to get started.

The Emma Munson Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable foundation based in Pittsburgh and formed to honor Emma Munson who died tragically while in her freshman year at VCU Arts in Richmond. The foundation seeks to further Emma's passion for helping others, celebrating the arts and protecting the environment. 2023 marks a continuation of the foundation's plan to #LoveYourMother and this year they have planted over 1,000 trees in Pennsylvania at the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, PA and at an abandoned quarry in Shippensburg, PA.

For more information, go to www.EmmaMunsonFoundation.com. Contact the Emma Munson Foundation by calling 412.945.7363, emailing [info@ EmmaMunsonFoundation.com](mailto:info@EmmaMunsonFoundation.com).

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