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#EMFBeachCleanup kicks off on June 9th with the Great NC Beach Sweep

In its third 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.

"I was thinking about the past few years and how we had taken up volunteer efforts while on vacation as a way to keep Emma with us by honoring her beautiful spirit," Michael Munson, Emma's father remembered, "and we were nearing the end of our time away and didn't find the time to organize an event. Then it came to me. I got up and walked along the beach and looked for trash to pick up."

Inspired by Emma, the Munson family has made it one of their foundation's missions to help organize Beach Cleanups through their network of friends and family.

"It's really very easy 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.

To help kickoff the 2019 season, Michael and Denise are turning it up a notch. Actually, a few notches.

The "Great NC Beach Sweep" is the name of their 2019 North Carolina initiative where they will travel from Bird Island, NC (the furthest southern beach in NC) along the North Carolina coast and finish in Carova, NC (the furthest northern beach in NC) doing 40+ cleanups along the way. The Munsons will set out on their journey on Sunday June 9, finishing on the Summer Solstice June 21. To track where the Great NC Beach Sweep is on any given day,

visit http://emfbc.emmamunsonfoundation.com/GNCBS_Roadmap.cfm.

“We wanted to start the summer off in a big way,” said Michael, “and what bigger way is there than to do cleanups at nearly every beach in a state that has spectacular coastlines?” 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.

A beach cleanup can take as little as 45 minutes and allows the beachgoer to spend time walking the coastline looking down to find what others have left behind. 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.

“I was amazed at how easy it was to find litter along the coast if you just look for it,” Michael notes, “we’ve done dozens of cleanups over the past three years and haven’t left empty handed yet!”

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 #EMFBeachCleanup. 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. 2019 has been designated the foundation’s year to #LoveYourMother and so far they have planted over 800 trees in Pennsylvania, over 600 of which at the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, 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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