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## Our eco-heroes of tomorrow

By Elizabeth Roberts

More than 70 students attending an environmental youth conference were told they can make a difference to the global environment.

Student delegates selected by more than 30 public and private schools throughout the Island attended last week's two-day conference entitled The Power of One. Students aged ten and upwards met many of Bermuda's local scientists and environmentalists and took part in workshops designed to give hands-on experience in conservation projects.

The keynote speaker was conservationist Sophie Benbow, of the award-winning marine research group Blue Ventures in Madagascar.

Delegates also went on field trips to several of Bermuda's most important natural sites, including Walsingham and Trunk Island.

Environment Minister El James presented certificates to each student at the event's closing ceremony at the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute last Friday.

The conference, the fifth of its kind, was organised by Bermuda Zoological Society (BZS) and sponsored by the Ernest E. Stempel Foundation.

It was held at the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum and Zoo, and supported by the Ministry of the Environment, the Department of Conservation Services and the Bermuda National Trust.

BZS Education Officer and event organiser Joseph Furbert said: "One thing that was evident across the board was the high level of environmental awareness. The delegates were ready to learn ways in which they could actively get involved and make a difference.

"There is much more environmental education that needs to take place, but it is encouraging to take note that the eco-heroes of tomorrow are listening and learning.

"I believe that with our continued encouragement and support, the youth today will be well-equipped to face the environmental challenges of tomorrow."

Two primary year six delegates will now be sent overseas to represent Bermuda at the Tunza International Children's Conference on the Environment in Stavanger, Norway from June 17 to 21. The theme for the conference is "A Climate for Change."

Interested students who attended the BZS event will be invited to fill out an application form and write an essay that includes research information on Stavanger, as well as a convincing appeal as to why they should be selected.

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