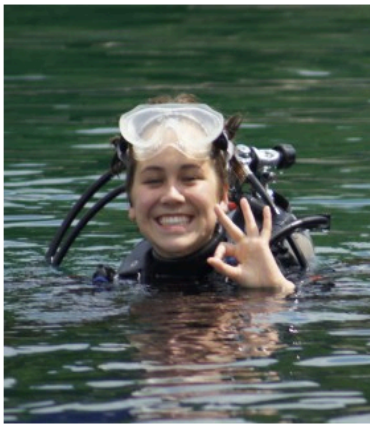


# Love A Sea Turtle, Make A Difference

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By Casey Sokolovic



I started my organization — Help Them LAST – Love A Sea Turtle –nine years ago when I was 8 years old. My organization is dedicated to preserving the world’s sea turtle population, inspiring others to become involved, and providing hands-on STEM focused outdoor summer camp experiences for at-risk youth.

Expanding my mission and continuing my passion has not been an easy journey especially in the middle school years. My peers did not understand what I was trying to do and thought it was weird that I was trying to save sea turtles. From my 9 years of

conservation work and countless presentations to youth, I have learned that you must be willing to stand by yourself sometimes and make some sacrifices to do what you know is right and will help the world. There were times when I wanted to give up and stop my efforts, but I knew that I was making a difference in the lives of others and spreading awareness about the plight of sea turtles. I had to develop a thicker skin and keep my trust in God that He had a plan for me and that going through teasing was part of the trials I must overcome.

Soon, my classmates started to understand that what I was doing was making a true impact in the community and that we must help those who have fewer opportunities than us get involved. There are still trials and tribulations that I have to overcome daily, but that goes on in everyone’s life. High school presents new temptations and distractions, but knowing the difference from right and wrong, having a solid group of friends with similar beliefs, and maintaining strong moral values are extremely important in not giving in to these temptations. There will be many people who want to bring you down, but you must remind yourself of the kind of person you are and keep Jesus in your heart at all times.

Casey Sokolovic, 17, has been named a national winner of the 2014 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. Each year, the Barron Prize celebrates twenty-five inspiring, public-spirited young people from all across America who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. The top fifteen winners each receive a \$5,000 cash award to support their service work or higher education. For more information please visit [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org)




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