



THE ANDREW "RED" HARRIS FOUNDATION



Jupiter's most attractive feature is its dynamically beautiful marine environment. Local residents and visitors from all over the world enjoy boating on the Loxahatchee and Intracoastal, fishing in the Gulfstream, diving our offshore reefs and relaxing, swimming and surfing at our beaches. Everyone loves our beautiful marine resources, but they are increasingly overburdened by the pressures of population growth. If the present spread of global warming-fueled coral disease outbreaks does not abate, artificial reefs may be one of the only means of creating and preserving habitats to assure our resident offshore fish populations continue to exist in the decades to come. Now is the time to act.



The Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation is a 501C3 founded in July 2014 that strives to build and enhance the marine environment in northern Palm Beach County by creating artificial reefs with huge 8,000 pound "Bahamian coral head" inspired modules to expand our marine habitat. The Foundation's first reef was built in 2015 with 40 four-ton coral head replicas. A year later, our second project created the Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation No Shoes Reef and began the rehabilitation of a natural reef a mile and half Northeast of the Jupiter inlet that was buried and destroyed by sand decades ago. The reef restoration's first phase was built with 100 four ton modules and 250 tons of limestone boulders creating a 800' by 80' wide footprint. In August, 2017 the Foundation will deploy 100 more "Coral Heads", 34 "Fish House" modules and 1,000 tons of boulders, expanding the new reef to 1800 feet long.



Gulfstream currents bring the life that is settling on our modules and interact with them to scour away the smothering sand that has been preventing growth on the underlying bedrock. More than 75 kinds of fish swarm on the reef, turtles visit to rest and use the reef as a cleaning station, dozens of sea plant species are growing and corals are already returning.



In November 2016 we donated 15 lagoon size coral head replica modules to the renowned Blue Heron Bridge snorkeling trail. Our intricate reef structures serve as beautiful guideposts that allow everyone to experience the foundation's beautiful "Lagoon Coral Head" modules first hand in a lifeguarded county park.



We thank Palm Beach County, the Town of Jupiter, Florida FWC, Jupiter Inlet District, CCA, No Shoes Reefs Project, and many private foundations, but most of our support is from people who just love Jupiter and the ocean and discover Andrew's foundation is a "no red tape" way to help our local marine environment.



Guy Harvey Magazine feature article excerpt, Summer 2017 Edition, "REEFS WITH A CAUSE"

When you work on a noble cause, you will usually find success. That is certainly the case with the Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation, an organization that was born out of tragedy but today has gained the attention of thousands of water lovers for building innovative, artificial reefs. They've even caught the eye of country music superstar Kenny Chesney.

Andrew Harris was an inspirational young man who was killed at age 26 when he was struck by a boat while snorkeling on June 8, 2014. Loved by many and admired for his determination, Andrew had recently begun a career in the insurance business and had found success building an agency. As a youngster, Andrew was always a gifted athlete. In high school he had the distinction of being named to the Palm Beach Post's All Area team in both golf and basketball on the same day. And he was voted MVP of the Jupiter High School basketball team his senior year. Raised on the water in the Jupiter area, he loved to fish, snorkel, scuba dive and just be out on the ocean. When he thought about college, he decided to apply to only one: Florida State University, a school he loved dearly. But, his early attempts to get in were denied. Andrew continued to pursue his dream and was eventually accepted to FSU where he graduated with honors.

On that fateful day in 2014, he was snorkeling with a girlfriend in the Jupiter Inlet when strong currents swept her away. As she struggled against the fast moving tide, Andrew took action and began pulling her to safety. As he was towing her back, a boat came too close. Andrew shoved her away from the boat and got pushed backwards and under water. The girl was grazed by the hull but Harris took a direct hit. An onlooker from another boat recovered Andrew from the bottom of the inlet.

In a sad twist of irony, Andrew's father reveals that the day before Andrew was killed was one of the most joyous for their family. "June 7, 2014 was the happiest day that Andrew and Ryan, our younger son, spent together," Scott said. "It was highlighted by Ryan being drafted and getting a nice bonus from the Boston Red Sox. The next day was our saddest."

Since that dreadful day, Andrew's mother and father and many of their friends have worked together to honor his memory by building reefs for snorkeling, diving and fishing. The Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation has made it their mission to enhance the waters he loved to help ensure the long-term health of the oceans and to assure that he will not be forgotten. They've held golf and tennis tournaments many other events to raise money to build reefs. The foundation also sells its own shirts through their website with a beautiful split view image of a reef and the Jupiter Lighthouse.

Understandably, Andrew's mom and dad, Scott and Martha Harris, are the driving force behind the foundation. They were determined to do something in Andrew's memory but they weren't sure where to begin. "We started out with college scholarships," Scott said, "but didn't get much interest from local schools. It's a very crowded space. Then we started to think about Andrew's hobbies like golf, fishing and diving and we decided that artificial reefs would be perfect! "Andrew loved fishing and diving and we thought, 'how hard could building artificial reefs be.'" Scott says with a laugh.

If getting the foundation cranked up was difficult, the Harris's never let it show. They began the organization in August, just two months after the accident, and by November they had formed a viable plan to build and deploy hand-made, custom concrete modules. Nine months later, they sunk 40 artificial reefs and the next summer, in August 2016, they deployed 100 more - 50 pyramids and 35 custom designed "Coral

Heads." They also put down 15 prototype concrete block reefs. A few months later, in November 2016, they placed 15 "Lagoon Coral Head" modules at the Blue Heron Bridge Snorkel Trail at Phil Foster Park in Palm Beach County. To date, the Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation has 155 reefs deployed and another 134 under construction.

"The Palm Beach County ERM staff has been instrumental in the whole process," Harris said. "They have guided me since day one and have been great partners. Their knowledge and expertise has really helped us to achieve our goals."

If building reefs began an emotionally healing process for the Harris family, it also had the side benefit of advancing the science of artificial reefs. Placing many of their reef modules on a site where an ancient natural reef once existed has been clearing the smothering sand from the underlying bedrock and re-exposing the natural sea floor. "It's more important where you build an artificial reef than what you build it with," Harris said. "And we think we have the best possible site: thin sand over flat bedrock in shallow water with good visibility. It's our hope that researchers use our work as a substrate for advancing the science of reef building."

Already, a PhD at Palm Beach State College is forming a new curriculum to be introduced for the Spring 2018 semester to experiment with and study growth on the new Foundation reefs, possibly aided in the future by electrical stimulation on some of the reef modules to stimulate coral settlement rates and enhance coral growth.

It's no surprise that 100 percent of the money raised by the foundation goes to reef building. And, so far, they've brought in more than \$900,000, some of which has come in the form of grants, fundraisers and donations of labor. For example, Palm Beach County pays for deploying the reefs, CCA and Building Conservation Trust have been major donors, Morgan and Eklund donated the sub-bottom survey, the Wantman Group donated the engineering and Kimley-Horn made festival display boards. Jupiter Dive Center contributed funds and boats for deployment viewing. Of course, the Harris family itself has also been a major donor. "We are not just asking others to contribute, we are putting our own money and time in," Harris said. "It's important to us, and our community sees the benefits as our projects move from theoretical to actual and our dreams become real as the thriving new reefs we build help Jupiter's marine environment".

As the foundation continues to do good and do well, more positive things are happening.

Now, country music superstar Kenny Chesney and his No Shoes Nation have pledged their support. Chesney has partnered with ENGEL Coolers to create No Shoes Reefs. The goals are to raise awareness and funding to protect precious coral reefs, which are vital for aquatic ecosystems to thrive. Limited edition "No Shoes Reefs" shirts and hats are available and a portion of the proceeds go directly to the Andrew "Red" Harris Foundation to assist in artificial reef building and deployment.

"Our long term goal is to honor Andrew's memory by seeing the foundation become a self-sustaining organization for building and advancing the science of artificial reefs," Harris said.

Anyone interested can sponsor a reef module for \$5,000 or an entire boulder pile reef for \$20,000. Three of the boulder piles are going in this year. Contributions of any amount are welcome.