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Pacifican Ian Butler earned county's Health Hero award for cleaning up 60-pound block of Styrofoam and more

By Jane Northrop | *Pacifica Tribune Staff Writer*

POSTED: 05/22/2012 05:03:58 PM PDT |

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Pacifican Ian Butler has cleaned many of the beaches of Pacifica for many years, but one day he discovered something that really astonished him.

A 60-pound block of Styrofoam was resting on the sand on one of his favorite beaches in the Manor district.

He called a couple of strong friends, Joe Arata and William Count, with a truck to help him haul it away, but the clean up had only just begun. The giant coffin-shaped mass had spawned off numerous little Styrofoam pea-sized eggs that were really hard to pick up. Butler and his friends persevered and made sure the beach was clean and no longer posed a threat to any wildlife which could mistake the Styrofoam for food.

"It turns out that giant Styrofoam blocks are made for construction that are eight feet long and weigh 125 pounds. This one likely floated out the Golden Gate and washed ashore here. It's a shame, because one of those can trash a beach for months. Hopefully this can show people the importance of keeping plastic out of the ocean," Butler said.

For his work against "styrozilla," and for all his efforts to clean up the Coastsde, the San Mateo County Health System named Butler a Health Hero last month.

He's a member of Pacifica Beach Coalition and a board member for Pacifica's Environmental Family. Those organizations work hard to educate and motivate others to get involved in cleanups, habitat protection and environmental stewardship.

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