

UCSF Beach Clean-Up and Team Rejuvenation

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Overview

This project brought UCSF staff together for a beach clean-up at Ocean Beach in partnership with Refuse Refuse. It offered a chance to connect as a team, spend time outdoors, and care for the environment. After the clean-up, the group reflected on how to bring these values into their work and daily lives.

Data Snapshot

Over 75% of participants had previous experience with environmental stewardship, including clean-ups and restoration work. Most anticipated the event would boost team connection, increase environmental awareness, and provide a sense of purpose—highlighting a shared enthusiasm for meaningful, hands-on service.

Resources

<https://refuserefusesf.org/>



UCSF Human
Resources
Wellness



Project Details

The UCSF Beach Clean-Up and Team Rejuvenation project brought together 15 staff members for a two-hour clean-up at Ocean Beach, held in collaboration with Refuse Refuse in April 2025. Participants collected waste, engaged in outdoor activity, and concluded with a facilitated discussion on environmental awareness and team collaboration. The project responded to a departmental need for restorative, team-building experiences outside the traditional work setting, and an interest in putting effort toward environmental stewardship in community. Through this shared effort, staff deepened their connections, reduced stress, and reinforced a commitment to environmental responsibility and community wellness.

Project Challenges

While enthusiasm was high, our team faced a few challenges. First, coordinating schedules across busy departments proved difficult, requiring flexibility around event timing. Second, a few team members expressed feeling uncertain about how much of a difference their efforts would make, especially given the broader scale of environmental issues. Ensuring a smooth collaboration with our external partner, Refuse Refuse, required clear communication and early alignment on logistics and expectations, and was key for a successful event.

satisfy
helpful gratitude optimism
inspired awake fulfill focus relax
love connected feeling refresh
happy
joy
energize alegre hope
lightness friends grateful relief
surround presentation

Lessons Learned

Small actions—when done together—can have a big emotional and cultural impact. Despite initial doubts, participants reported that the event helped them feel more connected to their teammates and more mindful of their own environmental habits. We also learned that integrating time for reflection after hands-on service helped deepen the experience, and we plan to carry that approach forward. For future events, early coordination with partners and flexible planning will remain essential, and we'll continue to build in moments that connect action to insight.