

# WE'RE NEVER FIN-ISHED

Band junior **Johanna Daugherty** volunteers at the Loggerhead Marinelife Center

## 10 Years Old

The first time Daughtery learnt about Loggerhead was when she was walking along the beach in the fifth grade. She saw the center releasing turtles back into the ocean, and, Daughterty being an “animal nerd”, dragged her mom over to the release. She spoke with the volunteers and learned that the center was just across the street.

“We spent the afternoons there, and I remember falling in love pretty much immediately,” Daughtery said. “They had the baby sea turtles there when I went for the first time, and that was such an incredible experience because I’ve never even seen them in person before.”

## 13 Years Old

Ever since watching the movie “Dolphin Tail”, in which a group of kids volunteer at a marine hospital, Daugherty wanted to be a marine life volunteer as well. She was “crushed” to learn you had to be 16 to volunteer, though. So, she came up with her own way to make an impact until then.

“I started selling these little bracelets that I made out of plastic beads. I remember I was so proud when I made the first \$100 that I made my parents drive me to Loggerhead so I could directly hand it to one of the people working there,” Daughtery said. “My parents still have that photo somewhere.”

## **16 Years Old**

After turning 16, she applied to be a volunteer. She was assigned as a hospital interpreter, meaning she would walk around the tanks where animals were recovering and inform guests about the medical conditions and procedures.

“I specifically love to work in front of the Shark Tank. Sharks are one of my favorite animals, so it's amazing to get to talk to people all afternoon about these animals,” Daugherty said. “Also, you are helping these conservation causes by educating the general public.”

## **17 Years Old**

She said one of her favorite parts about the job was working with kids, since their “brains (were) like sponges” and would be receptive to important information. She emphasized the careful use of sunscreen, pesticides, and fertilizers, whose chemicals contribute to coral bleaching and encouraged listeners to opt for reef-safe alternatives.

“If we want to see real change, we need more regulation,” Daugherty said. “Florida Fish and Wildlife, the people who control the Florida environment, they are all real estate moguls, basically. ...It makes me feel sad, really angry too, when I see people doing something that they know is wrong.”

## **The Future**

With regulations on light near beaches, she admitted that Palm Beach County was taking steps in the right direction. Conservation areas like Gumbo Limbo and Grassy Waters serve as educational and environmental centers in the county.

“Palm Beach County really is pushing to be more environmentally friendly, and it really makes it so special,” Daughtery said. “Where else would you be able to go and just walk into a Sea Turtle Hospital?”

Still, Daughtery worries about the preservation of swamps and coastlines, since they are not only important habitats but also the county’s natural defenders against floods and storms. She hopes for a future where the interests of the environment come before those of developers.

“We only have one Earth. Our Earth. There's no do-over,” Daughtery said. “It's so important to protect this, not only for the animals, but for ourselves too.”