This week, members of the Outrigger 'ohana from Honolulu to Guam to Fiji to Mauritius joined together in launching OZONE – Outrigger’s ZONE – a global conservation initiative designed to strengthen coral health and resiliency in the waters of Outrigger Resorts’ iconic beach destinations.

OZONE is not an overnight inspiration but a carefully thought-out program that joins Outrigger in partnership with some of the world’s leading governmental and environmental organizations to make a significant impact on coral reefs and near-shore waters. But it also has its roots in some of the experiences that members of the Kelley family had while growing up in Hawai’i and visiting islands throughout the Pacific.

The 1950s, 60s and 70s were a delightful time to grow up almost anywhere across the Pacific Ocean. The devastation left by the battles of World War II was gradually healing and leisure travel was growing. Bob Six, the dynamic CEO of Continental Airlines, and Juan Trippe, the founder of Pan American World Airways, were both developing the airline routes and infrastructure that would enable Travel & Tourism to bring prosperity to places like Chuuk, Pohnpei, Palau and Papua New Guinea.

I was fortunate to be able to visit those islands and many more in those early years of Pacific tourism. I usually brought along members of my family, including several who, now part of the Outrigger ‘ohana, are the leaders and dedicated supporters of our OZONE initiative.

The photo right of my daughters Bitsy and Colleen Kelley floating in a small inflatable boat in the pristine waters of the Palau archipelago 40 years ago tells the story better than any words I can write. Since this photo was taken, the population of planet Earth has nearly doubled – from about 4 billion to some 7.4 billion, according to UN estimates. Excessive and careless use of our environment has brought harmful impacts to many formerly pristine areas across the Pacific and Indian oceans where Outrigger has its resorts.

With over 60 percent of the world’s reefs under immediate threat, Outrigger has taken on the mission of working with a range of local and global conservation partners to protect coral reef systems in tropical destinations around the world.

Among the most valuable of Earth’s ecosystems, coral reefs provide people with billions of dollars in economic and environmental benefits, not the least of which are food, tourism and the protection of coastlines from wave erosion. In fact, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), reefs provide up to 15 tons of seafood per square kilometer each year. However, coral faces serious dangers, including the impact of climate change, overfishing and pollution by a range of modern contaminants washed into the sea with rainwater runoff into rivers and streams.

“OZONE is an action plan that charts a clear course for Outrigger to make a positive impact in helping to save and protect coral reefs and ultimately the wellness of waters around the world,” said Bitsy Kelley, who is today Outrigger’s vice president of corporate
communications. “As a lifelong surfer, swimmer and snorkeler, ocean health is near and dear to my heart, and I’m extremely proud that Outrigger Resorts has pledged significant resources and is aligning with key conservation partners for this important cause.”

Inspiration for OZONE originated with Geoffrey Shaw, former owner of and later partner with Outrigger Resorts in Castaway Island, Fiji, and chairman of the Mamanuca Environment Society – a group passionately committed to protecting the stunning marine and terrestrial environment of Fiji’s Mamanuca Islands. Thanks to his vision, OZONE will give Outrigger guests the opportunity to take part in healing the world’s troubled reefs by helping to plant coral offshore at Castaway Island Resort and other participating Outrigger properties.

In addition to giving guests the once-in-a-lifetime chance to plant coral, OZONE will also generate awareness of coral reef systems’ health through in-room videos and on-property presentations.

“With more than 500 million people around the world depending on coral reefs, it is our responsibility to ensure their future – especially since it is people who are the ones most threatening their survival,” said Bitsy Kelley. “And since coral grows at such a slow rate, the time to make a change is now.”

To inaugurate OZONE, Outrigger kicked off its commitment to ocean health at the celebration of World Oceans Month at the Waikiki Aquarium in Hawai‘i – one of our like-minded partners in this important initiative. Representing Outrigger there were Bitsy Kelley, Colleen Kelley Heyer and Dr. Chuck Kelley. Also present at the Aquarium reception were Jean, Ingrid and Makeeley Rolles, Pua Black and Nani Naish and daughter Lilikoi. They and all members of Outrigger’s Kelley family hope that the OZONE initiative, in cooperation with our government, environmental and commercial partners, will help save our planet’s priceless coral reefs. I am proud that Outrigger is the hospitality company that continues to champion the health of our oceans.

Congratulations to everyone involved in undertaking and carrying on this vital project!

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Reef planting launches OZONE at Castaway Island, Fiji

By Donna Parkin

Castaway Island, Fiji, launched OZONE on June 7 with a number of initiatives aimed at protecting the stunning marine and terrestrial environment of the Mamanuca Islands region of Fiji.

General Manager Steven Andrews gave a presentation to guests highlighting OZONE’s aims while kitchen staff baked a huge OZONE cake for a morning tea to officially celebrate the launch.

A program of activity saw hosts and guests join forces to conduct a butterfly fish count to ascertain the health of the existing reefs and to plant trees along the coastline.

A trash-line game to highlight how long it takes everyday household items to decompose in the ocean was followed by a beach cleanup, beach volleyball and a sunset kayak.

Castaway aims to generate awareness of the environment while enhancing the guest and host experience through education and interaction. Regular lectures will provide guests with an opportunity to learn about OZONE while becoming part of the solution by participating in various environmentally focused activities, including coral planting.

OZONE was inspired by Geoffrey Shaw, former owner of Castaway Island and chairman of the Mamanuca Environment Group, committed to protecting the natural beauty of the Mamanuca Islands.
In partnership with UnderWater World Guam, the Outrigger Guam Beach Resort launched World Oceans Day/OZONE Day with a community-wide beach cleanup.

With the mission of protecting our coral reef systems, we set out to raise awareness of the dangers of a degrading coral reef system and "campaigned" with lobby signage and in-room videos. A large group of volunteers came out to help make a difference in preserving our precious resources.

We also initiated coral reef education outreach sessions and hosted a kids coloring activity to help spark interest in the preservation of our oceans and reefs.

Mahalo to all those who contributed to a successful event for an important cause.
After signing an agreement with Reef Conservation Mauritius, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of the marine environment of Mauritius, on 3rd June 2015, the Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort celebrated World Oceans Day on 8th June by cleaning the beach of Riviere des Galets in South Mauritius. The initiative is part of our new global conservation initiative OZONE (Outrigger’s ZONE) to preserve coral reefs and oceans.

The cleanup, with Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort hosts and students from Keats College in Chemin Grenier, yielded over 140kg (308 lbs) of waste! In addition, educational sessions for our ‘ohana and the students were followed by lunch at Mercado restaurant.