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## **The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Names Winner of Inaugural Ocean Challenge**

*Public contest generated promising ideas to help mitigate ocean acidification, improve ocean health*

**SEATTLE, Wash. – October 15, 2013** – The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation today announced the winning concept of its first Paul G. Allen Ocean Challenge, a public contest recognizing promising ideas that could help mitigate the effects of rising acidity of our world's oceans. The Seattle-based funder awarded the \$10,000 top prize to Dr. Ruth D. Gates from the Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Dr. Madeleine van Oppen from the Australian Institute of Marine Science for their idea to increase the resilience of critical and highly vulnerable coral reef ecosystems.

The winning concept recommends implanting selectively bred coral into existing reefs to help the coral withstand acidified waters. Dr. Gates, who has studied marine organisms for nearly three decades, and Dr. van Oppen, an Australian Research Council Future Fellow in the Marine Microbes and Symbioses research team, will be invited to submit a full grant proposal to the Foundation for consideration for research project funding.

"The Foundation is committed to supporting fresh approaches to our world's toughest problems," said Susan M. Coliton, Vice President of The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. "Oceans are one of our most treasured ecosystems, and we are excited to explore new opportunities and ideas to preserve them for future generations."

Over the last 150 years, the amount of carbon dioxide has drastically increased, putting ocean habitats at risk by lowering surface water pH. The Ocean Challenge was issued to scientists worldwide by The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation in collaboration with The Oceanography Society in early 2013 with the goal of awarding the most promising science-based concept for mitigating the impacts of ocean acidification. A panel of oceanographic experts from around the world examined 36 detailed submissions from researchers who put forward concepts to improve ocean health. Dr. Gates and Dr. van Oppen's proposal was picked from a list of six finalists, whose concepts were relevant to the ocean acidification problem and offered approaches that would not only increase basic knowledge of the subject, but would likely result in scalable procedures to reduce the impact on organisms, marine ecosystems, or industries.

The Ocean Challenge is one of The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation's first efforts in the ocean health space, which will become an increasingly important area of focus for the Foundation in the future. The Foundation has previously made significant multiyear grants to support research on fisheries, environmental conservation and ecology, and medicine and health. Last month, the Foundation hired a new ocean health program officer, Dr. Raechel Waters, to explore a variety of ocean-related projects and new funding opportunities for the Foundation as it expands its giving portfolio.

### **About The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation**

Launched by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen and Jody Allen in 1988, the Allen family's philanthropy is dedicated to transforming lives and strengthening communities by fostering innovation, creating knowledge and promoting social progress. Since inception, the Foundation has awarded over \$469 million to more than 1,400 nonprofit groups to support and advance their critical charitable endeavors in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The Foundation's funding programs nurture the arts, engage children in learning, address the needs of vulnerable populations, advance scientific and technological discoveries, and provide economic relief amid the downturn. For more information, go to [www.pgafamilyfoundation.org](http://www.pgafamilyfoundation.org).

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