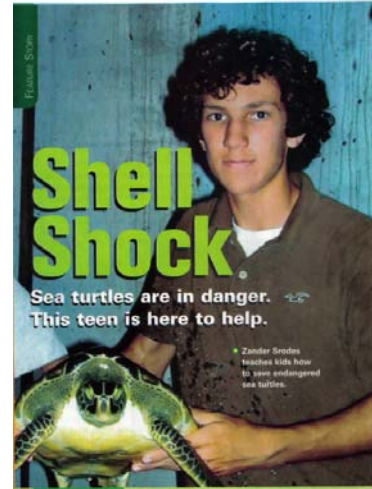


# Shell Shock:

**Sea turtles are in danger. This teen is here to help.**

*Know Your World Extra*  
April 6, 2007

**A day at the beach is always fun. But** without sea turtles, it might not be. Sea turtles help keep beaches from wearing away. Their eggs supply nutrients for animals in sand dunes. But there is a problem: Sea turtles may soon be extinct. Luckily, Zander Srodes, 17, has got their back ... er ... shells.



Zander, a junior from Cape Haze, Florida, has started Turtle Talks. That is a program that teaches students about sea turtles. For his work, he has won the Brower Youth Award and the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes.

## It's Not Easy Being Green

When Zander was in middle school, he noticed something unusual while on vacation. The turtle nests along the beach were being watched by a group that keeps track of turtles. That got his attention. "I kept hearing that the number of nests was lower than normal," he says. Zander wanted to learn more.

Zander discovered some disturbing facts about sea turtles while he was researching them. "All the sea turtles are endangered or threatened," he explains. "Their main predator is man." Pollution is a major reason that sea turtles – and other ocean animals – are dying. "The trash on beaches also affects dolphins," Zander says. In addition, sea turtles can become caught in fishing lines and nets.

## Hero in a Half Shell

After doing some research, Zander began Turtle Talks with some grant money from the government. He visits schools and libraries to teach children about the turtle problem. "My teachers allow me to leave school to speak to students," Zander says. He made a turtle costume that young kids can wear during his demonstrations. The costume is made of canvas over a rubber tube, which is then attached to a backpack. "Kids love to put it on, and then I tell them about the anatomy of the turtle," Zander mentions.

The Turtle Talks program has become successful, and Zander teaches all over the world so people can learn about turtles. He has even written an activity book that has been translated into Spanish. Though he is headed to college soon, Zander does not want to stop helping sea creatures. "I want to go into environmental law," he says. With people like Zander looking out for the environment, Earth is already looking a little bit greener.

