



JEN SCHUMACHER'S 3MF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

When I began my journey to complete my childhood dream of crossing the Catalina Channel, I had no idea that not only would I become hooked on marathon swimming, but that I would find so much meaning in my training. The early stages of preparation were a steep ascent from pool swimmer to timid short-distance ocean swimmer to avid open-water enthusiast. I fell in love with being out in the middle of the ocean, this other world we know so little about but are so determined to explore. While the limitlessness of the sea opened my eyes to uncharted potential, it also revealed the troubled health of our oceans.

Training in the Pacific, I've experienced awe at the beauty of the ocean and sadness at what we are doing to it. I began to see more cigarette butts than seashells on the sand and more plastic than fish in the ocean. On longer swims when I had my mother alongside me in a kayak, we would collect all the trash we came across, and it usually filled up her kayak. The majority of this destruction was due to disposable single-use plastics. I began to read more about the damage to our oceans and beaches and what we could do to prevent it, and it changed the way I viewed and consumed plastic-based products.

I realized that changing my personal habits was not enough, and it was not going to stop this problem I was encountering on a daily basis. I decided to dedicate my marathon swims to non-profit organizations that focus on the oceans and marine conservation. As I now set my sights on racing to become the first person to complete the Ocean's Seven, I will be swimming to benefit Third Millennium

Foundation (3MF), an international organization dedicated to ocean conservation and marine life protection. The problem is much larger than plastics, and 3MF is striving to increase awareness and understanding about the complexity of our impact on the environment as a whole. With over half the world's population dependent on the ocean, and with pollution, overfishing, and the number of endangered marine species continuing to rise, I feel compelled to do my small part to draw the public's and media's attention on our great oceans and the urgent problems they are facing. While it will not be easy, our oceans and marine life CAN be restored and protected through 3MF's forward-thinking approach, which combines research, education, and international cooperation. Like the Ocean's Seven, the Third Millennium Foundation is working on a global scale, because protecting and improving the health of our oceans is a challenge charged to the world.

— Jen Schumacher

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