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## Having a sand ball connecting to Earth

By Paul Liberatore  
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There was a whole lot of "sphere-a-sizing" going on Saturday at Stinson Beach.

Zach Pine, a Berkeley environmental artist, was showing beach-goers how to make sand globes, aka sand balls, using a counter-intuitive tossing technique he developed himself and calls "sphere-a-sizing."

This was a highlight of the 51-year-old artist's annual Create-with-Nature Earth Day Celebration, a hands-on collaborative art event he's hosted on the south end of the beach for the past seven years. It was in anticipation of the actual Earth Day on April 22.

"What I'm trying is to have a celebration at this place that will connect people to the earth and to each other in a way that conveys their collective power, because the problems the earth faces are too big to handle alone," he said over the sound of the surf. "So if you're in a place like this and you're together, you're enjoying yourself and you're seeing the power of good work, my hope is that this will carry forward into action on behalf of the earth."

But the first order of business on this sunny, breezy Saturday was learning how to make those amazing sand globes. Chris Krueger, a burly, 51-year-old computer programmer from Sausalito, wasn't having much luck trying to squeeze wet sand together between his big hands.

"Don't squish," Pine said, demonstrating a gentle tossing action that resulted in perfectly round sand balls of varying sizes.

"Zach's a pioneer," chimed Amy Pertschuk,

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Krueger's wife, scooping up sand with their 9-year-old twins, Nick and Mia. "He's one of my heroes."

Pertschuk, who lives on a houseboat in Sausalito with her family, is a co-founder of the Bay Area branch of the Children in Nature Collaborative, a nationwide campaign to reconnect children with the outdoors. Saturday's free beach day was part of its Let's G.O.! (Get Outside) series of events this month. The next is an Earth Stroll from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 23 at Chrissy Field in San Francisco.

"The idea is to get kids and families outside again," she said as her son announced that he had already made five sand balls and her daughter worked with a group of adult

participants on a sculpture constructed of a driftwood "spire" decorated with seaweed, a crab shell and topped, as you might guess, with a large, perfectly smooth sand globe.

Julie Gieseke, a San Franciscan who grew up in Mill Valley and graduated from Tamalpais High in 1984, compared the evolving creation with the work of Andy Goldsworthy, the famed British environmentalist who produces site-specific sculpture and "land art" in natural as well as urban



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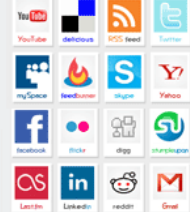
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"I've come to this beach since I was a kid, and this is a different experience of it," she said. "My experience is lying on the sand getting a tan or swimming in the water. I've never created objects here. I like that you create something here and it doesn't have this preciousness that it needs to be in a museum or on a wall. It's something you can create in the moment."

As the leader of Saturday's event, Pine was very much in the moment. He had on a baseball cap with "Eat fruits and vegetables and stay active" written across the front in Spanish.

At one point, he danced in the surf, spinning like a dervish with one hand cradling a sand globe.

"This is where I began connecting with nature," he said, explaining that he used to come to Stinson with his mom when he was a kid. "So when it was time to do an Earth Day event, this was the place that came to mind."


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