

The Tribune

BODY AND MIND

health

Young environmental advocates get first hand look at sustainability in action

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FOR a group of young Bahamians passionate about conservation and sustainability, this year's Earth Day observance extended far beyond classroom discussions and speech presentations.

Finalists in the Ethan S Bain Environmental Health Foundation's speech competition recently traded theory for experience during an educational tour of the New Providence Ecology Park, where they explored the inner workings of modern waste management and environmental sustainability practices in The Bahamas.

The initiative formed part of the Foundation's continued efforts to encourage environmental awareness among young people while exposing students to possible career pathways connected to conservation, sustainability, and public health.

Jacqueline Bain, founder of the Ethan S Bain Environmental Health Foundation, said the tour was designed as a continuation of the students' participation in the organisation's November 2025 speech competition, which centred on the theme: "It's Our Environment: Conservation and Sustainability Are Our Responsibilities."

"To continue this focus, we wanted to expose them to real-world environmental management and sustainability practices. The Ecology Park (NPEP) provided the ideal setting," said Jacqueline.

Set across a 300-acre site, organisers noted that the New Providence Ecology Park has undergone significant operational changes



Young environmental advocates at Ecology Park

in recent years, becoming a key example of modernised waste management practices in the country.

During the visit, students observed how household, industrial, and hazardous waste are processed and managed while also learning about upcycling initiatives aimed at reducing environmental impact.

Jacqueline said the experience introduced students to practical systems that many had never encountered before.

"Students observed the standards established for waste management in The Bahamas and learned how the site's operational transformation supports sustainability. Demonstrations of composting, tire shredding, construction material repurposing, and electronic component disassembly highlighted how waste upcycling contributes to sustainable practices and material-use efficiency," she said.

The tour also gave students an opportunity to engage with the science and engineering behind



New Providence Ecology Park

landfill operations. According to Jacqueline, many participants were especially intrigued by the technical side of waste recovery and land management.

Among the facts shared during the visit was that sorting waste before compaction, including separating wood, tyres, appliances, construction debris, and compostable materials, can reduce landfill volume by approximately 60 to 90 percent. Students also learned that trash compaction can reduce mixed municipal solid waste land use by 50

to 75 percent while helping to lower fire risks.

Other aspects of the tour highlighted how compacted waste is covered with tyres and soil to minimise odours before eventually becoming grass-covered hills. Students were also introduced to the process of repurposing construction debris into low-cost road paving and building materials.

One of the more memorable stops for many participants was the electronic waste facility, where discarded electronics are dismantled and sorted for reuse or resale.

"At the e-waste facility, electronics were disassembled: circuit boards, processor chips, batteries, and screens separated for reuse or resale. This process supports upcycling and reduces fire risks in landfill zone," Jacqueline explained.

She added that students particularly enjoyed examining the internal structure of everyday appliances and attempting to reassemble salvaged components, an activity that offered exposure to electrical engineering concepts in a hands-on setting.

Apart from the Earth Day observances, Jacqueline said

the Foundation remains focused on nurturing future environmental leaders through education, communication skills development, and community engagement opportunities.

"The foundation seeks to provide educational resources for students who are interested in pursuing environmental health careers. It offers opportunities to build oratory skills, and build networking connections with environmental outreach opportunities and local conservation and sustainability efforts.

We hope to inspire the next generation to actively pursue environmental protection and conservation of our natural environment," said Jacqueline.

As environmental concerns continue to shape conversations globally and locally, the Foundation hopes experiences like the Ecology Park tour will encourage young Bahamians to see sustainability not as an abstract concept, but as a shared responsibility rooted in everyday decisions.

Hannah Foster-Middleton

The body's hidden cleanup crew: Top 5 benefits of manual lymphatic drainage



Every week, we see sanitation trucks making their rounds through our neighbourhoods. They collect waste, clear debris, and help keep the streets clean and functioning. Without them, things would pile up quickly and create all sorts of problems.

Believe it or not, your body has its own version of a cleanup crew — and it works around the clock.

It's called the lymphatic system, and while many people have heard of it, few truly understand how important it is. This quiet but powerful network helps remove waste, excess fluid, toxins, and unwanted materials from your tissues. It also plays a major role in your immune system, helping your body defend itself against illness and infection.

When the lymphatic system becomes sluggish or overwhelmed, the body can start to feel it. Swelling, fatigue, brain fog, poor healing, congestion, and general discomfort can all be signs that your internal cleanup crew needs support.

That's where Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD) comes in.

What Is Manual Lymphatic Drainage?

Manual Lymphatic Drainage is a gentle hands-on

treatment designed to stimulate the movement of lymph fluid throughout the body. Developed in Europe by Dr Emil Vodder and Estrid Vodder, it uses light, rhythmic movements to encourage the natural drainage of the lymphatic system.

This is not a deep tissue massage. In fact, it's the opposite.

MLD is soft, calming, and precise. Because lymph vessels sit just under the skin, heavy pressure is not needed. The treatment is relaxing, soothing, and often leaves people feeling lighter, clearer, and more energised.

So why should anyone consider it? Here are five major benefits.

1. Faster Recovery After Surgery

One of the most common and effective uses of Manual Lymphatic Drainage is after surgery.

Procedures such as liposuction, tummy tucks, cosmetic surgery, joint replacements, or cancer-related surgeries often create swelling and fluid buildup. This is a normal part of healing, but excessive swelling can slow recovery and increase discomfort.

MLD helps move that trapped fluid, reduce puffiness, and support tissue healing. Many patients report

less tightness, improved mobility, and quicker comfort after treatment.

It can also be beneficial before surgery, as a healthier lymphatic system may help the body prepare for the healing process ahead.

2. Relief for Painful Muscles and Joints

When people think of physiotherapy, they often think of sore backs, bad knees, or sports injuries — and yes, lymphatic drainage can help there too.

Sprains, strains, tendonitis, rheumatoid arthritis, and inflamed tissues often come with swelling. That swelling can increase pressure, reduce movement, and prolong pain.

By improving fluid movement and reducing congestion in the tissues, MLD can help ease discomfort and improve mobility.

Many people are surprised to learn that not all pain needs aggressive treatment. Sometimes, calming the system and reducing inflammation can be just as powerful.

3. Support for Everyday Health Conditions

Manual Lymphatic Drainage isn't just for surgery or injury recovery. It can also support people dealing with common ongoing health concerns.

Some conditions where people may benefit include:

- Sinus congestion or sinusitis
- Fibromyalgia
- IBS and digestive sluggishness
- Acne or skin congestion
- Headaches linked to tension or fluid pressure
- General bloating

Because the lymphatic system is tied to circulation, immunity, and tissue health, improving its function can have a ripple effect throughout the body.

Many people simply say, "I feel better overall."

4. Better Energy, Sleep, and Stress Relief

Modern life can leave people feeling drained.

Poor sleep, chronic stress, low energy, and mental fatigue are common complaints. While there is rarely one magic answer, helping the body regulate itself can make a real difference.

MLD activates the parasympathetic nervous system — often called the "rest and restore" state. This can help the body shift out of fight-or-flight mode and into healing mode.

People often leave sessions feeling deeply relaxed, lighter, and mentally clearer. Some even report sleeping better that night.

When the body is less burdened by inflammation,

fluid retention, and nervous system overload, energy levels often improve naturally.

5. Improved Healing and Scar Recovery After Trauma

Whether from surgery, accidents, falls, or injuries, trauma can leave lasting effects in the tissues.

Scar tissue, swelling, bruising, and delayed healing are common concerns after trauma. Manual Lymphatic Drainage can help improve circulation to the area, reduce fluid buildup, and encourage better tissue repair.

This may help soften scars over time, reduce stiffness, and shorten recovery periods.

It's one of the reasons many physiotherapy clinics now include lymphatic techniques as part of comprehensive rehabilitation.

More Than a Trend

Lymphatic drainage has become popular on social media for reducing puffiness and helping people look refreshed. While those cosmetic benefits can happen, this treatment is far more than a beauty trend.

It is a science-based therapy that supports one of the body's most important systems.

Your lymphatic system doesn't have a pump like the heart. It relies on movement, breathing, muscle contractions, hydration, and manual stimulation to keep things flowing. That means sedentary lifestyles, stress, illness, surgery, and injury can all slow it down.

Is It Right for You?

If you struggle with swelling, fatigue, slow healing, congestion, or simply feel like your body needs a reset, Manual Lymphatic Drainage may be worth exploring.

It should always be performed by a properly trained healthcare professional or therapist who understands the lymphatic system and any medical conditions you may have.

Sometimes the body doesn't need something harsh or dramatic. Sometimes it simply needs help clearing the pathways so it can do what it was designed to do.

And when your internal cleanup crew is running smoothly, everything tends to feel a little better.

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