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*Kate Messner , Matthew Forsythe (Illustrator)*

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All it takes is one:

One coral gamete to start a colony

One person to make a difference

One idea to change the world

The ongoing efforts to save and rebuild the world's coral reefs--with hammer and glue, and grafts of newly grown coral--are the living legacy of Ken Nedimyer.

Kate Messner and Matthew Forsythe tell the true story of the coral restoration pioneer in this brilliant tribute to the wonders of nature and the power of human ingenuity.

## **The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation Details**

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Author : Kate Messner , Matthew Forsythe (Illustrator)

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## **From Reader Review The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation for online ebook**

### **Margie says**

Home to one of the most diverse collections of life, coral reefs are known as the rainforests of the sea. Although they cover less than two percent of the ocean bottom, it is believed one quarter of all ocean species depend on them for food and shelter. (Ocean Portal Team, Smithsonian. "Corals and Coral Reefs." Ocean Find Your Blue, Smithsonian, April 2018, [ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/invertebrates....](http://ocean.si.edu/ocean-life/invertebrates....)) They are vital to life on our planet but they are dying.

There are champions recognizing the danger of the diminishing coral reefs. They are working tirelessly to renew these valuable places in our oceans. *The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding The World's Coral Reefs: The Story Of Ken Nedimyer And The Coral Restoration Foundation* (Chronicle Books, May 8, 2018) written by Kate Messner with illustrations by Matthew Forsythe portrays the life of one of these champions.

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My full recommendation: <http://librariansquest.blogspot.com/2018/05/the-brilliant-deep-rebuilding-worlds.html>

### **Penny Peck says**

Dramatic color illustrations, that use a soft-focus style perfect in depicting the underwater environment, are matched with an engaging text about a scientist and his work. Beginning with Nedimyer's youth in Florida, where his father worked for NASA, readers will relate to his interest in the ocean and science. That interest resulted in his life-long mission to save the coral reefs, by figuring out a way to regrow coral by "planting" coral grown and nurtured on rocks. The process is explained clearly and simply, and back matter adds more information for primary graders just learning about coral. A book that will empower young readers to try to help the environment.

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### **Lori says**

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Follow your passion. A lovely example of how one person CAN make a difference.

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### **Laura Harrison says**

Today's picture book biographies are simple incredible. This may be one of this years best. Awesome (as usual) writing by Kate Messner and magnificent illustrations by Matt Forsythe. An amazing, inspiring story. A must have book.

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## **Marianne says**

If I could edit this book, I would change not one word nor one brushstroke. Lovely.

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## **Stephanie Bange says**

"It starts with one..."

This amazing picture book biography begins and ends with this empowering, yet simple sentence. Ken Nedimyer was a boy growing up in Southern Florida and watched as the coral reefs off the coast began to die. He decided to take action and established a foundation to restore corals to the reefs.

Messner's engaging text is uncomplicated and direct as she follows the life of Ken as he grows into manhood and fatherhood, making the ocean his life's work. She gets straight to the point, then moves onto the next. Matthew Forsythe's artwork is equally simple, almost primitive in nature. It has all the colors of the ocean in them and adds visual details that help clarify concepts for young children.

Backmatter in the book includes a paragraph of why the coral reefs are dying, how kids can engage in helping to save them, a short bibliography, a few websites to view and a short glossary of terms.

Great for STEM and encouraging others to be proactive in helping to save our world.

Recommended for PreSchool - grade 4.

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## **Mrs. Krajewski says**

Yes I loved the beautiful language and illustrations, but I just couldn't stop thinking of my own eight-year-old son, a future marine biologist. I saw him within these pages. ❤?

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## **Gary Anderson says**

Kate Messner's nonfiction picture book *The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs* wraps the science of coral reefs around a biography of conservationist Ken Nedimyer. Young readers will easily understand Messner's clear explanation of a natural coral reef's growth process, although the human-assisted grafting process for establishing a new coral reef is more complex. The biographical treatment of Ken Nedimyer emphasizes how his professional commitment to coral reef conservation began with boyhood curiosity. Matthew Forsythe's pastel illustrations convey both the vibrant colors of a healthy coral reef and the fading glory of a coral reef as it begins to die. The back matter provides more details about coral reefs and a "How Can Kids Help?" section with suggestions for becoming involved in coral reef restoration.

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## Michelle (FabBookReviews) says

4.5 stars

Award-winning children's author Kate Messner (*The Seventh Wish*) and acclaimed Canadian artist Matthew Forsythe (*The Gold Leaf*) have teamed up for the children's non-fiction title, *The Brilliant Deep: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs: The Story of Ken Nedimyer and the Coral Restoration Foundation*. A pictorial biography as well an introductory examination into conservation efforts of coral reefs, *The Brilliant Deep* is a fascinating true story brought to life by beautiful artwork.

*The Brilliant Deep* begins in the water, with one coral illuminated and the words "It begins with one". Messner takes readers on a brief look at the spawning of corals: how "corals begin to spawn- releasing first one, then millions of tiny lives", and that if one "is lucky" and not eaten or washed away, it "lands in a place where it can grow...[beginning] a coral reef". Messner then switches to a summarized look at Coral Restoration Foundation founder Ken Nedimyer's childhood, and how his love of swimming and exploring the Florida Keys reefs spurned what would become his lifelong captivation and passion for protecting and restoring reefs. Messner balances some tricky work here: as the story turns to follow Nedimyer as an adult, there is a significant amount of terminology and (necessary) explication of Nedimyer's experiments of growing and planting coral colonies. However, Messner makes it work smoothly, particularly with the repeated emphasis on how it takes just "one", and the neatly woven narrative circle that the entire story makes from coral back to coral. It would be absolutely remiss not to mention how stunning Forsythe's artwork is here, as his golden and blue/green-toned artwork masterfully captures Messner's narrative and allows the reader to actually 'witness' steps involved in coral restoration. You can get a sense just from the selected images (in full blog post) how rich and ambient Forsythe's illustrations are, whether invoking Nedimyer's childhood seeing Jacques Cousteau on the television, with his array of aquariums or (not pictured) seeing hands gently apply glue on coral. The last few pages of *The Brilliant Deep* include links to organizations, books, and articles that readers can further explore; a succinct note about coral reef decline and protection; how to help/get involved; as well as a select set of vocabulary definitions.

Overall, a timely, mesmerizing and truly interesting non-fiction children's title that has multiple ways of being enjoyed (and used!). Thinking of books like Hello Hello or Bloom, one can see that children's titles (whether categorized as picture books or more strictly non-fiction) are exploring and offering up tremendous scope of topics for children (and adults). Children's book efforts on conservation are blossoming and the possibilities for education and literacy (in schools, in libraries, at home, etc.) is exciting. Messner and Forsythe have, with *The Brilliant Deep*, added a very strong (and beautiful!) title to the booming roster of children's biographical and science books- a title that might spark readers to learn even more about the Coral Restoration Foundation and Ken Nedimyer's legacy of conservation.

*News note:* Here is a link to a May 16, 2018 news article about Ken Nedimyer stepping down from a leadership position with the Coral Restoration Foundation.

*I received a copy of this title courtesy of Raincoast Books in exchange for an honest review. All opinions and comments are my own.*

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## **David Schaafsma says**

I dunno. I am extraordinarily depressed about the world's inaction about the environment as evidenced by the direst possible October 2018 United Nations IPCC landmark report:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/climate/ipcc-report-global-warming.html>...

I also just last night saw First Reformed, the powerful and devastating film Paul Schrader wrote and directed (featuring Ethan Hawke) in one sense about a pastor's interaction with a despairing young man whose wife is pregnant, who asks the pastor, How can I bring a child into this world, knowing that the environment will almost definitely profoundly come to a certain level of devastation in the coming decades (and no, not in centuries):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCF5Y...>

But I kind of needed to read this hopeful--if not fundamentally optimistic--book that perfectly embodies this quote from The Unnameable (1953) by Samuel Beckett, itself written after the Holocaust and Hiroshima:

"I can't go on. I'll go on."

Kate Messner lives on Lake Champlain. I read and loved her picture book Over and Under the Pond which takes a close look at a lake above and below the surface. This book focuses on a climate change hero of today, Ken Nedimyer who in the face of coral reef devastation, is figuring out how to regrow it, and maybe get it to adapt to higher temperatures. I'll just say I want to believe it can happen.

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## **Kristi Starr says**

I would rate this book closer to 3.5. The artwork is beautiful; Matthew Forsythe has done, as expected, an amazing job illustrating this book. The key to appreciating the book is to focus on the subtitle: Rebuilding the World's Coral Reefs.

This is the story of Ken Nedimyer, a conservationist focusing on rebuilding coral reefs around the world. You will find little about the causes that necessitate rebuilding, though inferred in the text and somewhat addressed at the end of the book. You will find allusions to problems such as the disappearance of sea urchins. Again, other than a line in the end notes about what "some scientists think" in regard to the role of sea urchins, the issue is raised but then dropped.

Also somewhat perplexing is the coral reef vocabulary. Several of the words defined are never used in the text (exoskeleton, polyp, gametes), while other potentially unfamiliar words (invertebrates, epoxy) are not explained. That said, the additional information - "What happened to the coral reefs?" / "How can kids help?" - "Read more" - "Explore online" - "Articles" - can be helpful in filling in the gaps not addressed in the text.

Again, if you focus on Nedimyer's concepts for rebuilding reefs, you will encounter exactly what you

expected. If you want a deeper explanation about the challenges facing the reefs, their ecosystems, and other solutions, you won't really find it here.

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### **Lisa Vegan says**

I've always been interested in marine biology and in coral reefs so this book was my cup of tea.

This is a beautiful and interesting book.

The illustrations had me diving right in. They're gorgeous and immersive. The only thing I was not a fan of was people's faces straight on. Everything else drew me in.

This is a great book for kids because it shows how one person can make a difference and also shows how kids can make a difference. The story is interesting, both the biographical and nature aspects of it. Ken Nedimyer's accomplishments are a worthy subject for a book about coral reefs. And I really appreciated learning how people, including young people, can help save coral reefs. It's inspiring.

I was very grateful for the additional information, with more illustrations, at the end of the book. I was especially glad that it reveals a bit more (not quite enough for my tastes) why the coral reefs are dying. Hint: though it is a complex process it's mostly humans misusing the ocean and the ocean's inhabitants. I was happy to see that Jason Chin's book *Coral Reefs* is one of the reference books listed in the back. It's another good book about this subject.

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### **KC says**

Along with its stunning cover and brilliant illustrations, this book tells the story of how one scientist tries to rebuild the world's coral reefs.

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### **Joan says**

This was very interesting and positive! Unlike many books, it can report on a person who has started a foundation to physically help seed more Coral Reefs, which seems to be doable and successful. The book showed specifics on how to plant polyps when mature enough to re plant and start new reefs. It is essential and fascinating work, and the book is fascinating as well. I loved that the 3 books listed in the bibliography were by 3 of my very favorite nonfiction writers (Chin, Gibbons and Seymour Simon)! The illustrations in this book are very interesting and informative and complement the text well. Highly recommended since it is a very recent book. I'm going to check out those 3 bib titles but they are somewhat out of date.

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### **Alex (not a dude) Baugh says**

When Ken Nedimeyer was a boy, his father's job at NASA meant living in Florida, and, for Ken, that meant

exploring the ocean.

Influenced by underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau, Ken learned how to scuba dive and as he swam around the ocean, observing the world of fish and sea stars, he also began noticing the beautiful coral reefs in the Florida Keys.

Made up of countless tiny sea creatures, Ken found them to be just beautiful, and wanted to know everything about them - how the reefs grew so large, why they were different colors and shapes.

But, one hot summer, Ken noticed that the reefs were beginning to lose their color, and the sea urchins, who made sure algae did overtake the coral reefs, were beginning to die, and consequently, so were the massive coral reefs. But Ken just didn't know what to do for the dying reefs.

As an adult, Ken operated a rock farm in the Florida Keys, growing rocks full of sea life to help keep the ocean water safe and healthy for the other forms of sea life. One day, a coral colony spawned and attached itself to one of Ken's rock on his farm. And it grew! So Ken and his daughter began attaching corals onto other rocks and they also grew.

If you could grow corals on rocks, Ken wondered, could you transplant them onto a dying reef? Ken decided to test out this theory. Ken founded a group called the Coral Restoration Foundation, staffed by volunteers. As the corals grew, the volunteers transplanted these coral colonies, attaching them (with glue) in places on the reefs where they hoped the corals would take hold and flourish.

Did the transplanted corals survive? Yes, they did and now Ken's group travels around the world, teaching others how to grow and transplant healthy corals in order to save their dying corals.

Messner begins and ends the The Brilliant Deep with one tiny coral spawn and how it can grow into a new colony. And what feels to be a simple story in between is in actuality a wonderful lesson about ocean life. Readers learns how coral reefs are formed, why they are important to the not just the ocean's environment, but also to ours, and that sometimes, it takes just one person with an idea to make a difference.

The Brilliant Deep has been a favorite of my young readers right from the beginning. Not only is it interesting and informative, it is also quite beautifully illustrated. Forsythe's colorful, batik-style, gouache and watercolor washed illustrations are done in a watery pastel palette of mainly blues, greens, and sunny yellows give the perfect effect needed for a book about the ocean and its colorful reefs.

Messner cleverly brings the story of coral reefs and the story of Ken Nedimeyer full circle with to a satisfying ending that connects them back to the beginning of the book - spawns to coral reefs, a young boy to the man he became. She also includes more information about coral reefs in the back matter, including ways kids can help, online ways to explore attempts to save the coral reefs, and vocabulary words used through the book.

This book is recommended for readers age 6+

This book was sent to me by the publisher, Chronicle Books

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