

Ocean academy coming to Hout Bay

JOHN HARVEY

The success of the W4C Surf School in Hout Bay has prompted the village's professional big wave surfer, Frank Solomon, to set the ball rolling for an ocean academy on the Chapman's Peak side of the beach.

Mr Solomon was pivotal in bringing W4C (Waves 4 Change) surf school to Hout Bay earlier this year and has since formed the Sentinel Ocean Alliance, a non-profit that manages the site on the beach from which W4C Hout Bay is based ("Surf's up at Waves 4 Change surf school", Sentinel, February 23).

Some 60 youth from Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu now take part in the W4C programme. Through the Sentinel Ocean Alliance, 30 girls from Imizamo Yethu are also being given surfing lessons every Friday afternoon.

With these initiatives growing and W4C scheduled to increase its lessons from two to four times a week next year, Mr Solomon has



■ Frank Solomon alongside the green container which W4C uses as its base. He is hoping to add more containers for an ocean school and Hout Bay Surf Lifesaving Club.

his sights set on procuring additional containers to include new attractions.

Currently, a green container is shared with City lifeguards. The Sentinel Ocean Alliance also managed to secure a JoJo water tank.

"I'm in the process of getting

the Hout Bay Surf Lifesaving Club up and running, and there is also potential for a school teaching kids about the ocean environment. I am currently engaging with the City of Cape Town and the Department of Public Works on these ideas," Mr Solomon said.

"There will be one container for W4C, one for lifesaving and one for the ocean school. My ultimate goal is to give underprivileged kids in the community ocean-based career opportunities, such as becoming a lifeguard or surfing instructor."

Mr Solomon is a well-known

advocate for cleaner oceans. Earlier this month, he travelled to communities around South Africa to educate people and drive awareness about eco-innovation to clean up the beaches and protect the oceans. "One of the big problems is public awareness. People are often overwhelmed by the problem, but if every one of us takes responsibility, by even picking up one piece of litter a day, every day, just think about the difference it would make. Our aim is to explore the issues and fight for change," Mr Solomon said.

Mr Solomon said the ocean academy would provide a safe space for young people in Hout Bay where they could learn about the importance of caring for the marine environment.

"I am really keen for the people of Hout Bay to give their input on these projects. If people have ideas, I would really like them to contact me."

Mr Solomon can be reached at Frankjsolomon@gmail.com