In 2011, Josiah’s grandmother sent him a newspaper article about how too many nautiluses were being caught for their pearly shells.

“I started looking around for a charity that was helping the nautilus,” says Josiah. He e-mailed a nautilus expert, Peter Ward. Dr. Ward told him there was no such charity. “So I decided to start one,” says Josiah.

Josiah and his friend Ridgely built a Web site: savethenautilus.com. Ridgely designed a T-shirt to sell on the site. Through donations and shirt sales, the boys have raised nearly $20,000!

Dr. Ward and his team are using that money to count nautiluses. If they can prove that there aren’t many left, the nautilus could become protected by international laws.

Above left, Josiah (left) and Ridgely hold a nautilus they helped trap to study during a visit to American Samoa with Dr. Ward.

If you read last month’s Ranger Rick, you know what a nautilus (NAH-tuh-luss) is: a squid-like animal with a beautiful shell. You might remember that nautiluses are in trouble. But you probably didn’t know that two of the people working hard to protect them are kids: Josiah Utsch and Ridgely Kelly, both 13.