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The Marine Mammal Center's 10th Annual Gala Celebrates an Evening of *Transformation*

(Sausalito, Calif. – October 10, 2006) The Marine Mammal Center's 10th Annual Gala celebration kicks off on Thursday, October 19th in San Francisco's historic City Hall. This year's theme is *Transformation* as The Center modernizes its Sausalito facilities and quickly approaches its one-year anniversary of construction groundbreaking. The new Marine Mammal Center hospital will give professional staff and volunteers the tools they need to save more lives. In addition, expanded research facilities will lead to a greater understanding of marine mammal diseases and ocean health.

"Our gala is going to be a night to remember as we mark the beginning of the public phase of our \$25 million Capital Campaign to rebuild The Center," said Mecca Nelson, development director at The Marine Mammal Center. "This is truly a moment in our history and a cause for celebration and appreciation. To date, we have raised \$18 million from generous leadership donors, and we are looking to our members and the public to help us raise the remaining \$7 million needed to make The Center's rebuild a reality."

The Gala evening will begin with an elegant cocktail reception in the Rotunda at 6:30 p.m. accompanied by musical entertainment from one of San Francisco's favorite musicians - Abe Battat. After cocktails, guests will proceed to the North Light Court for an extravagant three-course dinner and a delectable desert - all catered by Dan McCall (McCall Associates). Later, The Center will host a live auction for some exhilarating prizes, some of which may make hearts race, put minds at ease, or expand horizons. One of the unique prizes is a chance to be a co-pilot in an Italian-built fighter plane while participating in real life, mid-air, dogfights! For something more grounded, a weeklong North Captiva Island getaway in the Gulf of Mexico, or a 10-day,

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nine-night expedition to the Galapagos Islands will provide lasting memories and an unbelievable educational experience in biological diversity. The night will close with festive sweets and music back under the Rotunda.

Tickets for the 10th Annual Gala celebration can be purchased online prior to the event by going to www.marinemammalcenter.org and clicking on the events button or by calling (415) 289-7335. All net proceeds will benefit The Marine Mammal Center.

About The Marine Mammal Center

Headquartered in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in Sausalito, California, The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit hospital dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals, and to the research of their health and diseases. Since 1975, volunteers and staff have rescued thousands of California sea lions, elephant seals, porpoises, and other marine mammals, along 600-miles of northern and central California coastline. Staff and volunteers uniquely combine rehabilitation with scientific discovery and education programs to advance the understanding of marine mammal health, ocean health and conservation.

On the web: www.marinemammalcenter.org

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