



The Marine
Mammal Center

News Release

Contact: Jim Oswald 289-7341, cell (415) 637-0827, oswaldj@tmmc.org
Cheryl Reiss 289-7367, cell (415) 640-5431, reissc@tmmc.org

THE MARINE MAMMAL CENTER HOSTS FIRST “HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS” OPEN HOUSE ON DECEMBER 11, 2010

Watch the whale film “In the Wake of Giants”, learn how the experts rescue seals and sea lions, and take a family photo with Frannie the Fur Seal

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – December 1, 2010) – The public is invited to The Marine Mammal Center’s first “Home for the Holidays” open house at its new facility in Sausalito to learn more about the Center and its work as volunteers and staff help to get patients healthy so they can return “Home for the Holidays.” The event will be held on Saturday, December 11, 2010, from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visitors will be treated to a wide range of free activities of interest for all ages as well as a gift with purchase in the gift shop, while supplies last, and a rare photo opportunity with Frannie the Fur Seal. An expanded schedule of Docent-Led tours will also be available.

“Our mission is to expand knowledge about marine mammals – their health and that of their ocean environment – and to inspire their global conservation. What better way to work toward this goal than an open house that offers a chance to connect with the community,” explained Jeff Boehm, executive director of The Marine Mammal Center. “By engaging with the community, we strengthen this symbiotic partnership by making new relationships and reinforcing already established ones.”

Schedule of Day’s Events:

12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. - Reading and book signing for *Astro: The Steller Sea Lion* with author Jeanne Harvey

1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. – Film screening of *In the Wake of Giants* and Q&A with executive producers

11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. – Docent-Led Tours (book early at www.marinemammalcenter.org)

One of the much anticipated events that day is the screening of the documentary “In the Wake of Giants.” The film is about humpback whale rescues in Hawaii and features experts freeing whales from ocean trash that the animals have become entangled in and dragged for thousands of miles. Much of the exciting footage was filmed from helmet-mounted cameras as the rescue efforts took place. In 2009, approximately 11% of the 1,706 seal and sea lion patients were admitted to The Marine Mammal Center as a result of an entanglement or ocean trash-related injury. On December 11, visitors will also have a chance to meet the film’s Executive Producers Mara Kerr and Mark DiOrio. The documentary won the award for Best National Marine Sanctuary Short at the 2010 Blue Ocean Film Festival in Monterey.

The open house will include an opportunity for children to enjoy a story time reading of the book *Astro: The Steller Sea Lion* by author Jeanne Harvey who will also sign books. This delightful story tells about the rescue of Astro, a former patient, who wandered ashore at a local school. In addition, demonstrations

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of simulated animal rescues and tube feedings will take place throughout the day.

The highly popular Docent-Led tours times have been expanded for the holidays. November 29-December 17 tours will take place on Saturday and Sunday at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m., and Mondays and Fridays at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. December 18 -January 2, tours will be available daily at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3p.m. Docents will share fascinating tales about former seal and sea lion patients while guiding visitors around the exhibits and animal viewing areas. Tours are \$7 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students, free for children who are 4 years old and younger, and \$5 for members and their guest.

Visitors can also get their holiday shopping started early at the gift shop. All purchases fund the work of the Center. Open house visitors who spend \$30 or more in the gift shop will receive a free canvas tote bag while supplies last.

In addition, Frannie the Fur Seal will make a rare appearance and is available for photographs – perfect for family holiday greeting cards!

About The Marine Mammal Center:The Marine Mammal Center is the world's largest nonprofit veterinary hospital, research and educational center dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals - primarily elephant seals, harbor seals and California sea lions - and to the study of their health. Since 1975, the Center has been headquartered in the Marin Headlands, within the Golden Gate National Parks and has rescued and treated more than 16,000 marine mammals. The Center's newly rebuilt headquarters in Sausalito gives visitors the unique opportunity to learn about marine mammals through viewing areas and educational exhibits. For more information and to sign up for the Center's eNewsletter, go to: www.marinemammalcenter.org

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