



The Marine
Mammal Center

News Release

Contact:

Jim Oswald – (415) 289-7341 oswaldj@tmmc.org

Maria Vierra – (415) 289-7334 vierram@tmmc.org

BAY AREA TEEN SWIMS FOR THE SEALS!

Swim from Spain to Morocco benefits The Marine Mammal Center

(SAUSALITO, Calif. – August 26, 2009) – On August 20, Stewart Goossens, a 17-year-old high school student at St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco, completed a 13 mile solo swim in the Strait of Gibraltar from Tarifa, Spain to Morocco as part of a fundraising challenge to benefit The Marine Mammal Center, a Sausalito, California-based rehabilitation hospital for ill and stranded seals and sea lions. Despite strong winds and tough currents, Stewart completed what was expected to be a five-hour swim in just four hours. The Moroccan Navy, in between encounters with super tankers, escorted him into Morocco all the way across the Strait. His fundraising efforts for the Center's Dollar-a-Pound campaign were equally amazing. Stewart set out to raise \$5,000 which would help the Center towards its goal of purchasing 90,000 pounds of fish (at a dollar a pound) needed to feed the influx of more than 1,200 patients rescued so far this year. His fundraising goal was met two-fold and within a short time he raised \$10,000, which included a generous contribution of \$3,000 from Union Bank.

“We are ecstatic that Stewart accomplished his goal of swimming the strait and we are truly inspired by his discipline in practicing for this challenge, and his tenacity in making this event a fundraiser for the Center's Dollar-a-Pound Campaign,” said Jeff Boehm, executive director at The Marine Mammal Center.

Stewart has been swimming in the San Francisco Bay since he was 13. That year, he completed the famous Alcatraz swim. In addition, Stewart completed the Maui Channel swim in 2008, the Waikiki Roughwater Swim in 2007, and earlier this year, he placed first in the men's under 25 group of the Roper Invitational Golden Gate Swim. In order to prepare for the swim between Spain and Morocco, Stewart completed double pool sessions daily, and he swam in the Bay every 10 days for up to seven hours at a time! This practice helped him acclimate to the cold waters of the Strait of Gibraltar.

Interviews and electronic photos from the Spain to Morocco swim are available upon request.

Media are invited to schedule interviews with Stewart for Thursday, August 27 at The Marine Mammal Center. Photos from his amazing swim will also be available. For more details, and to arrange an interview time, please contact Jim Oswald at (415) 289-7341.

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About The Marine Mammal Center:

The Marine Mammal Center is a 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 14,000 marine mammals. The Center's newly rebuilt headquarters in Sausalito gives visitors the unique opportunity to learn about marine mammals through animal rehabilitation, meal preparation, and post mortem viewing platforms, as well as educational exhibits. The Marine Mammal Center is open to the public every day 10 A.M.-5 P.M. except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information, visit www.MarineMammalCenter.org.

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