TNACI’S NEW WORKING LAB

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BOLD FUTURE FOR FRESHWATER CONSERVATION

A NEW FACILITY FOR THE TENNESSEE AQUARIUM CONSERVATION INSTITUTE (TNACI)

Many people don’t realize that we live within one of the world’s great biodiversity hotspots — home to a freshwater rainforest. There are as many fish species in the Cumberland, Mobile and Tennessee River basins per unit area as the Amazon River.

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“TNCI can help everyone committed to the environmental well-being of our region to make better informed decisions,” said Dr. George. “There also needs to be ongoing environmental education for all stakeholders, especially those who will inherit the legacy we leave behind.”

Since creating a conservation institute in 1996, TNACI staff has been spread between a propagation facility in Cohutta, GA (located 45 minutes away from Chattanooga), the Aquarium, the Aquarium’s Animal Care Facility and various staff offices.

A new LEED-certified building, to be built on land on the Tennessee River leased to the Aquarium by The Baylor School, will consolidate operations and enable TNACI to expand its vital roles in conservation, research and education while serving as a repository for information and research sharing. “TNACI isn’t restricted by geographic, academic and political borders,” said Charlie Arant, the Aquarium’s president and CEO. “By creating a central hub for our programs, and a living database that will help other scientists with their work, we can help raise the bar for countless field conservation programs.”
(Above) Rendering of the new TNACI facility by Franklin Architects.

(At left) Announcement celebration at the site of the new TNACI facility. Listed from left to right: Shailey Shaw, CLAW camper; Rachel Powell, Reintroduction Assistant; Sarah Hazzard, GIS Analyst; Dr. Josh Ennen, Aquatic Conservation Biologist; Mary Klinghard, GIS Technician; Louise Stephens, Communications Liaison; Dr. Bernie Kuhajda, Aquatic Conservation Biologist; Shawna Mitchell, Science Coordinator; Dr. Anna George, TNACI Director; Charlie Arant, Aquarium President and CEO; Dr. Dave Neely, Adjunct Scientist.

Read the TNACI report online to learn more about the Aquarium’s expanded commitment to conservation: http://bit.ly/tnacireport
The new building also will have plenty of space for propagating rare aquatic animals as well as labs for genetics research and water quality testing. There will also be a conference space for working sessions with TNACI’s many conservation partners from around the Southeast.

The new location connects TNACI to the Tennessee River and opens the door for more educational program opportunities for schools throughout the region. “The design includes a spacious teaching lab so that we can work with high school and college students who are really dedicated to careers in environmental science,” said Dr. George.

Summer programs will get a boost once the new facility opens. The Conservation Leadership in Action Week, or CLAW, camp has been highly successful in its first four years. Plans are in the works for expanded summer programs that go beyond a one-week crash course of conservation lessons. “I have witnessed the life-changing effects of the CLAW program on high school students,” said Tennessee Aquarium board member Franklin McCallie.

“There is no substitute for learning about the critical importance of fresh water and the life it sustains than tramping in our creeks with the TNACI scientists conducting research and conservation projects. With the building of the new facility, diverse students from all schools in our region will have new opportunities like these during the summer or within the school year—and some of these students will even walk away with new career paths in mind.”

The enhanced scope of TNACI’s work helps solidify Chattanooga’s “green” reputation on a national level. Consolidating these efforts within a state-of-the-art facility will enable the Aquarium to focus on the importance of freshwater systems throughout our region in ways never before envisioned by any organization. “This is a tremendous opportunity and responsibility for us,” said Arant. “People are really concerned about the health of our waterways and we will lead, convene and collaborate with others for the benefit of our region. Twenty years from now we’ll look back on what TNACI has achieved, both on a regional and national level, and we’ll be very proud we took this next step to protect our water.”

Environmental factors that lead to disease and illness are real health challenges that many regional residents face. Healthy rivers and watersheds are vital to local economies, to the enjoyment of the natural world and to the quality of the environment on which we all depend. Like all challenges related to public health, there are no quick and easy fixes. Expanding TNACI’s programs now will create a foothold toward a healthier future for our communities.

As a lead supporter, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee recognizes the crucial role of TNACI’s work to collaborate, educate and work toward environmental prosperity. Their contribution helped begin the $4.5 million dollar expansion of TNACI’s work to examine and protect our physical environment’s resilience, health and well-being.

“The health of our waterways plays a vital role in the overall health of the environment, and is a key component to creating areas where residents can engage in healthy, outdoor activities,” said John Giblin, executive vice president and CFO of BlueCross and a member of the Aquarium’s board of directors. “BlueCross is proud to support this venture to ensure the continued health of our fresh water systems and the people who rely on them.”
Chattanooga will be on the leading edge of a revolution in the film industry when the Aquarium’s IMAX® 3D Theater converts to a new laser projection system.

For film buffs, seeing a movie in a stand-alone giant screen theater like ours has always been the pinnacle experience. Many film directors, producers and critics stood by the 15/70 film format even after digital projection systems rolled out across the nation. They still preferred the standard of quality that the large film format delivered to audiences.

But the next generation of digital projectors is here and they’re powered by lasers. “Laser showed us something far beyond other digital systems,” said Gordon Stalans, the Aquarium’s director of finance and chair of the Giant Screen Cinema Association’s board of directors. “And, the picture quality is brighter and much sharper than film.”

The IMAX development team took a bold new approach to the laser projection “engine.” The new design utilizes twinned 4K-resolution projectors that fill massive displays, like the Aquarium’s giant 89-foot wide by 66-foot tall screen, with the most vivid digital images ever seen. “IMAX with laser delivers dramatic increases in sharpness, brightness, contrast and color,” said IMAX Chief Technology Officer Brian Bonnick.

Our theater will close on January 4, 2016 to begin the construction work. It will take about four weeks to install the new laser projection system, new screen and IMAX’s next-generation sound technology that includes 12 discreet channels throughout the theater and, for the first time, speakers on the ceiling. “Whether you’re hearing a pin drop or feeling the heart-palpating force of a volcano or a rock concert — you’re going to have a new kind of visceral sound experience at the Aquarium’s theater,” said Bonnick.

All of the upgrades will be in place by the first week in February, re-opening as the only IMAX with laser in the region.

“This comprehensive package of enhancements will begin an exciting new era for our theater,” said Don Walker, the Aquarium’s director of guest services. “We’re uniquely positioned to maximize the capabilities of this system while bringing new experiences to Chattanooga’s largest screen.”

In addition to showing awe-inspiring documentaries and Hollywood blockbusters, the Aquarium will be able to leverage the high-speed Internet connectivity of the “Gig-City.” “The range of possibilities includes live screenings of concerts, sporting events and theatrical presentations,” said Walker. “And, school groups may also gather at our theater for real-time interactions with researchers in other parts of the world or witness discoveries being made by deep sea or space explorers.”

Don’t miss National Parks Adventure coming to IMAX® with laser on February 12th! tnaqua.org/IMAX
The wonders of nature are some of the greatest gifts to share with family and friends. This year during Holidays Under the Peaks, the Aquarium is offering more fun ways to make special memories with the ones you love.

Meet fascinating creatures like the Peacock Mantis Shrimp (pictured at right). This feisty crustacean boasts the fastest punch in the animal kingdom (capable of busting through rock) plus bright colors that rival any holiday decor.

While we can’t recommend trying to touch a mantis shrimp, visitors will be encouraged to touch a jellyfish during a special pop-up Moon Jelly touch tank program. They may not really jingle, but these jellies’ bells are fringed with hair-like tentacles that feature nematocysts—or stinging cells—which are used to catch prey but are not harmful to humans.

On the fuzzier side, a special animal program will also let guests get closer to the Virginia Opossum. No need to hang up a stocking for this mammal, its special pouch makes it the only marsupial in the United States.

Stop by the Delta Country exhibit and catch a special reading of the Cajun Night Before Christmas read by entertaining holiday characters from the porch of the Cajun shack as alligators swim below. Then, see the jolly old elf himself when SCUBA Claus dives in the Lake Nickajack or River Giants exhibits on Saturdays and Sundays November 21 through December 20. (After that, he will be a busy guy.)

Our animals will be treated to holiday fun as well with special surprise weekend enrichment programs throughout the season. You may just spot a real snowman in River Otter Falls or festive holiday toys in the octopus tank.

For many families, catching The Polar Express 3D at IMAX® has become a holiday tradition. The classic film rolls into town November 27 through December 24. Audiences often grasp at snowflakes, duck as the train screeches into their laps and feel the howl of the steam whistle via state-of-the-art digital surround sound.

While downtown, families can enjoy ice skating on the riverfront. “Ice on the Landing” will open on November 20 just steps away from the Aquarium. This year a larger rink will be set up on the Chattanooga Green at Ross’ Landing. It’s the perfect way to finish your holiday Aquarium adventure. (And, you never know when one of our penguin mascots might skate by!)

Holidays Under the Peaks is proudly sponsored by:
### SCHEDULE
BEGINS NOV. 20
Schedule is subject to change

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<td>Cajun Night Before Christmas Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Gopher Tortoise Program</td>
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<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>Moon Jelly Pop-Up Touch Tank</td>
<td>Ocean Journey</td>
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### SCUBA CLAUS SCHEDULE
Saturdays at 11:00 am • Sundays at 2:00 pm

**LAKE NICKAJACK:** NOVEMBER 21 & 29 • DECEMBER 5, 13 & 19

**RIVER GIANTS:** NOVEMBER 22 & 28 • DECEMBER 6, 12 & 20
DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?
If you would like to stay on top of the latest Aquarium news, get notifications of new events and electronic renewal reminders, visit us at community.tnaqua.org to create your online profile. After signing up, you’ll be able to update your address, access your giving history, review your membership’s expiration date or sign up for e-newsletters.

PHOTO MEMBERSHIP CARDS
If you don’t already have your photo membership card, stop by the River Journey Members’ Entrance to have your new card made on your next visit. Bring in your old membership card without the photo and we will recycle it for you.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK & TWITTER
Keep up with our daily postings — you can even join in the conversations!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

WINTER EVENTS
Register online & discover newly-added events at:
TNAQUA.ORG/EVENTS
OR CALL 423-267-FISH (3474)

All events are held on Eastern Time. Full event details, including Non-Member pricing, are available at tnaqua.org/events-programs. There’s plenty of fun every day at the Tennessee Aquarium. Before your next visit, check the list of FREE PROGRAMS (with your membership or paid admission) to make the most of your day of aquatic adventure: tnaqua.org/animals-exhibits/extraordinary-experiences/.

DECEMBER

6 Caroling With the Fishes
Sunday • 6:30-9PM
We invite you to carol with the fishes! Our galleries will be decked with sounds of the season—including Jazzanooga, Dan Landrum on the hammered dulcimer, flutes, strings and more! Visit with Santa and take home a keepsake photo for a nominal fee. Enjoy holiday shopping with special discounts and extended hours at our Gift Shop. Gift boxes and shipping will be available.
All Ages • FREE/Members
Non-Member: $14/Adult; $9/Child

17 Nature Nuts: Wild Holiday Decorations
Thursday • 5-7PM
For this session of Nature Nuts, Aquarium educators will help your children craft holiday decorations from the wild and for the wild. We may even make some gifts for a few Aquarium animals! This monthly nature club is great fun for the family, especially children ages 5-12.
Ages 5-12 • $12/Member Child

18 PJ’s & The Polar Express!
Friday & Saturday
9:30-11:45AM
Choo! Choo! All aboard the Polar Express for a trip to the North Pole! Begin winter break in a leisurely style. Dress in your favorite pajamas and enjoy a special screening of The Polar Express 3D. This is your chance to meet the Conductor, sip hot cocoa and enjoy brunch muffins before the movie. Fun for the entire family and all who truly believe!
All ages • $6/Member

28 Winter Wildlife Cruise, “Eagle Eyes”
Monday • 2-4PM
It’s prime time to watch for the arrival of wintering Bald Eagles in the our area! With the leaves fallen down and the eagle population soaring up, viewing is even better on the river from the River Gorge Explorer’s observation deck. Bring your binoculars and dress appropriately for an eye-full of our national emblem. Coupons and other discounts are not valid for this cruise. Presented by First Tennessee.
All Ages • Limited to 68 • $24/Member Adult; $18/Member Child (up to age 12)

Full event details & Non-Member pricing at: tnaqua.org/events-programs

NEWS

FOR LASTING
— NOT LAST MINUTE —
GIFT-GIVING:
MEMBERSHIPS
MAKE GREAT GIFTS!

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TNAQUA.ORG/GIFTMEMBERSHIPS

Official sponsor of the Tennessee Aquarium Membership Program.
JANUARY

1 2 Sandhill Crane Cruises
10AM & 2PM Cruises
Join the Aquarium's expert crew aboard the River Gorge Explorer for special two-hour Sandhill Crane viewing cruises offered during the peak of their migration. Passengers will enjoy excellent viewing from inside the climate-controlled cabin and the topside observation deck while circumnavigating Hiwassee Island, the heart of this critical stopover point. This protected habitat is also home to nesting and migrant Bald Eagles, Great Blue Heron, squadrons of Double-crested Cormorants, numerous waterfowl species and occasional sightings of Snow Geese and White Pelicans. Cash bar with wine, beer, soft drinks and snacks available during the cruise. Coupons and other discounts are not valid for these cruises.
All ages • $35/Member

8 Soul Mates For Life: Native Plants and their Fungal Partners
Friday • 6-7PM
Join mushroom expert Tradd Cotter, mycologist and founder of Mushroom Mountain, for a fascinating lecture on native plants and their fungal partners. Plants and fungi have merged and continue to unveil the benefits of collaborating with nature. We have a lot to learn from these relationships, and understanding the respect they have for each other can teach us more than just soil biology. Presented by the Tennessee Aquarium and Tennessee Valley Chapter of Wild Ones.
Lecture held at UTC • Capacity 150
Registration required • $10/person

9 Mushroom Cultivation Workshop
Saturday • 9AM-1PM
We’re proud to partner with Wild Ones to bring expert Tradd Cotter, mycologist and founder of Mushroom Mountain, to Chattanooga for this workshop at Crabtree Farms! You’ll leave understanding the best ways to cultivate delicious mushrooms at home or on your farm. This class will energize your efforts and maximize your production! Topics include: life cycle of fungi, woodland mushroom farming, indoor production and organic pest management...
All ages • Limited to 30 • Held at Crabtree Farms • $30/Member

16 Celebrate 2016 with CSO
Saturday • 11AM-Noon & 12:30PM
Join the Chattanooga Symphony & Opera (CSO) as they celebrate the beginning of 2016 at the Aquarium. The Wind Quintet will perform two 1-hour sets, starting at 11:00 AM and 12:30 PM, full of aquatic pieces to delight your ears. Then, hang around and tour the Aquarium!
All Ages • Free/Members

23 Kevin’s Big Year
Saturday • 2-3PM
Join Kevin Calhoun, Curator of Forests, as he discusses his travels while bird-watching. You’ll learn about his “big year” sighting the most birds. You’ll enjoy a presentation, discover what it takes to be a birder and find out more about bird-watching around the world. This event is perfect for bird enthusiasts of all ages.
All Ages • Free/Members

28 Nature Nuts: Aquarium Turtles
Thursday • 5-7PM
Meet turtles that live at the Aquarium! We conduct an important breeding program for Asian turtles that are imperiled in their native habitats. Herpetologist Bill Hughes will show us the in’s and out’s of breeding and caring for turtles indoors.
Ages 5-12 • $12/Member Child

30 Fairy Garden Workshop at The Barn Nursery
Saturday • 1-2:30PM
Create a miniature landscape of wonder with dwarf plants, paths and tiny furniture to make a fun abode for small fairy friends. Leave with tips for how to care for your little world. Includes starter kit to make a complete fairy garden. Additional items will be available for purchase in the Garden Gift Shop. Presented by The Barn Nursery
All Ages • Limited to 35 • $35/Member

31 Meet Groundhog Chuck
Sunday • 2-3PM
Here’s your chance to meet and greet Chattanooga Chuck, one of the leading furriest forecasters in the states, before his big day! You and your family will learn about groundhogs and the prediction of spring. Find out what they like to eat, where they live and how they are related to other common backyard visitors.
All Ages • Limited to 20 • $10/Member

FEBRUARY

4 Aquarium Adventures: The Search for Textures
Thursday • 9:30-10:30AM
This program will take preschool tykes on a quest throughout Ocean Journey before hours. Discover the many different textures of nature, learn about aquatic life and even meet a critter on your quest! While this adventure is intended for explorers ages 2-4, parents and siblings are welcome to join the expedition.
Ages 2-4 • Limited to 20 • Free/Member

7 St. John’s Romantic Seafood Dinner
Thursday • 6-8PM
What better way to start a month of romance than with a date night to make your special someone swoon. Join us at St. John’s Restaurant for a sustainable seafood dinner in support of our Serve & Protect initiative. Includes gratuity, and a glass of wine with main course.
Adults • $60/Member

13 Nature Nuts: Salamanders
Saturday • 10AM-Noon
Love is in the air for salamanders! For this session of Nature Nuts, your child will go to the woods and visit the ephemeral pools where mole salamanders breed. Dr. Josh Ennen from TNACI will be our guide.
Ages 5-12 • $12/Member Child

14 Valentine’s Sunset Cruise
Sunday • 2-5PM
Our romantic three-hour sunset cruise aboard the River Gorge Explorer takes you into the Grand Canyon of Tennessee. Pop the question, renew your vows or even tie the knot! Our captains are ordained ministers. Just let us know beforehand and bring the license and witness! Cash bar available for wine, beer and soft drinks. Coupons and other discounts are not valid for this cruise.
All Ages • Members: $34/Adult; $24/Child (up to age 12)

26-27 Sleep in the Deep: Family Sleepover
Friday-Saturday • Begins at 5:30PM
Join us for an overnight adventure complete with a guided tour of both Aquarium buildings, an IMAX® film and pizza dinner.
Families • Ages 6+ accompanied by Adult
Limited to 40 • $65/Member
Watching a bird flying overhead in the Cove Forest or Delta Country adds to the rich Aquarium experience and helps illustrate the connections between life above and below the surface. There are 31 species of birds living in the Aquarium’s two buildings. More than one dozen species have produced offspring here, including several species rarely bred in captivity.

Managing this richly diverse group of birds is a labor of love for Kevin Calhoon, the Aquarium’s assistant curator of forests. “Kevin’s knowledge of birds and his incredible understanding of their natural behavior has contributed greatly to our success in caring for native birds that are rarely seen in aquariums or zoos,” said Dave Collins, the Aquarium’s curator of forests.

So it’s not surprising that when he’s not caring for birds at the Aquarium, he’s observing them in the wild. Like many avid birders, Kevin keeps accurate records of his sightings, drawing him to seek even more species. “When an American Crow landed in my yard at first light on New Year’s Day, it was my first bird of the year,” said Calhoon. “I had no idea at the time that this crow would lead me on a quest across the country and around the world to make 2015 A Big Year.”

The term “Big Year” is known by birders as recording as many bird species as possible in a specific area during one calendar year. This quest was made popular a few years ago when Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black starred in the comedy “The Big Year.” The sometimes slapstick film was loosely based on the true story of three birders trying to break the one year record for most species seen in the U.S.

“I attempted my first U.S. Big Year in 2003, finding 522 species. In 2009, I recorded more than 1,000 species during a World Big Year,” said Calhoon. “I was pretty satisfied with those totals, but I always wanted to break my own records.

So in February, Kevin traveled to India and saw nearly 300 species, including 220 birds he’d never seen before, known as “life birds.” He recorded two more life birds in March while birding in California. One was the Rustic Bunting, the other was the California Condor. “As of October 1st, I’ve logged 545 U.S. species and 780 globally,” said Calhoon. “That puts me in the number two spot of U.S. birders so far for this year.”

It may be called bird watching, but it’s also bird listening. Kevin’s global adventures also pay off for the Aquarium’s birds and guests. “Kevin’s finely tuned ear for bird songs and calls, invaluable for locating and identifying birds in the field, is extremely useful in the care of Aquarium birds in our large, very natural exhibits,” said Collins.

“His many field experiences around the world provide a wealth of stories that Kevin shares with our guests, enriching their visit immensely.”

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At left: Kevin Calhoon in Antarctica. Don’t miss a special member’s program, “Kevin’s Big Year: A Birder’s Journey” on January 23. Details on page 9. Birders will also want to register for special Sandhill Crane cruises. See back cover for details.
Some of the birds Kevin Calhoon has photographed on his journey:
1. Golden-fronted Woodpecker (CA)
2. Allen’s Hummingbird (CA)
3. White-tailed Ptarmigan (CO)
4. Varied Thrush (India)
5. Burrowing Owl (CA)
6. American Bald Eagle (AK)
7. Juvenile Spotted Owls (AZ)

Opposite page, top right: Chinstrap Penguin and Chick (Antarctica)
CELEBRATING MILESTONES

FRAN HIESTAND
When the Aquarium opened in 1992, Fran Hiestand’s family was among the first to become members. Her first visits were so memorable, she decided to dive deeper by becoming a volunteer docent in 1993.

Since then, Fran has logged more than 10,000 hours of volunteer service working in virtually every department. She has cared for plants and animals, greeted guests, led Backstage Pass tours and even delivered education outreach programs to area schools. “Fran is one of the most dedicated volunteers I’ve ever seen,” said Chris Bowman, the Aquarium’s manager of volunteer services. “She’s lived so much of the Aquarium’s history and knows so much about the animals and exhibits.”

Fran’s amazing record of non-profit service continues. She’s here four days each week. “The staff is excellent to work with and I get to do something different just about every day,” said Hiestand. “It’s just a lot of fun.”

Bowman is looking for more volunteer SCUBA divers in January. But that’s the only area that doesn’t interest Hiestand. “I’ll do anything at the Aquarium I can with my head above water. I don’t dive.” Interested divers can apply online: tnaqua.org/volunteer-opportunities.

PETER BURMAN
Nearly two years before the Aquarium opened, and almost one full year before the Internet was “born,” Peter Burman became one of the Aquarium’s first employees when he accepted the position of System Administrator–Programmer on October 1, 1990.

The Aquarium had received a large donation of computer equipment, so on his first day he began unpacking the boxes and building out a network. “I was starting from scratch,” said Burman. “Part of the system launch included setting up an e-mail system which was internal. We didn’t connect to the World Wide Web until 1993, when it was still in its infancy.”

Among Burman’s firsts: developing the Aquarium’s first reservation system, first website (which almost no one saw because hardly anyone was connected to the Internet), first retail point of sale system, accounting system, payroll system and human resources system.

Today he keeps busy at the Aquarium with mobile cash registers, a new ticketing system (that will launch soon) and setting up the connections that will allow IMAX technicians to remotely monitor and adjust the performance of the new laser projection system. “The Aquarium has always been on the leading edge of technology,” said Burman. “We’ve always had great support to keep things current.”

That includes deploying virtual desktop technology, Wi-Fi in all of the Aquarium buildings and aboard River Gorge Explorer and even making sure Miguel Wattson, the Aquarium’s Tweeting eel, is connected to the Internet.

Burman is the first of more than one dozen Aquarium employees who will be celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2016 and 2017, the year of the Aquarium’s 25th anniversary. Congratulations to all!

PENGUIN PICASSOS
Some of the Aquarium’s penguins love to create works of art. Several times each year, the penguins are given the opportunity to waddle through non-toxic paint in the backup area as an enrichment activity. Gentoos are known as “brush-tailed” penguins. You’ll often see their brush strokes along with their footprints. The art may be abstract, but these ice Cubists have a lot of fun showing their creative sides.

Stop by the Ocean Journey Gift Shop and purchase a penguin painting. Each one has the “artist’s” name on the back. These original works of art are available in a variety of colors for just $20 each.
A BOOST FOR NATURE NUTS

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums awarded the Aquarium a $5,000 “Nature Play Begins at your Zoo & Aquarium” grant for the Nature Nuts program. These competitive grants, supported through a special gift from the Disney Conservation Fund, were awarded to AZA-accredited facilities to encourage family nature play and conservation education.

Nature Nuts is a monthly club that’s created for children ages five to 12 and their families who love to discover more about the diversity of creatures living in our backyard and in vastly different habitats around the world.

“Our goal is to offer an experience that’s similar to a junior naturalist program,” said Tim Baker, the Aquarium’s education director. “Kids have opportunities to delve into the Aquarium in different ways and explore the unique habitats in our area with our experts. This helps spark a life-long appreciation of the natural world.”

Research shows that free play in an outdoor setting is key to connecting kids to nature. The value of these experiences is reinforced when shared as a family.

Register online for upcoming Nature Nuts adventures: tnaqua.org/events-programs.

A SECRET NO MORE

When Ocean Journey opened in 2005, the Aquarium offered guests a chance to discover a secret reef. This exhibit replicates the Flower Garden Banks, one of 14 National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS), and completes our story of a raindrop falling in the mountains and traveling to the ocean. Along with large sharks and colorful fish, guests are introduced to the network of NMSs and their mission to, “protect the natural and cultural features while allowing people to use and enjoy the ocean in a sustainable way.”

For the past decade, we’ve done this through interpretive graphics, touch screen computers and daily dive shows. Thanks to a recent grant from the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, we have new opportunities to tell the story of these protected places in ways we think you’ll find fun and exciting.

We invited others to dive into the brainstorming process with us. Three audience panels have already generated great ideas with three more panels in the planning stages. Aquarium members and school groups were part of these panels, but others helped as well just by visiting. While you watched the fish, you may have been watched by summer interns. We used these informal observations to better understand how guests are interacting with the space and its resources. So what changes might you expect to see in future visits?

- New graphic panels focusing more information around the animals. We think you’ll like the details and design.
- A new video wall informing guests that a dive show is in progress. HD videos will take guests on quick, virtual trips to multiple NMSs in between dive shows.
- A new interactive app on iPads which will be located throughout the space allowing guests to spend more time investigating the reef. Best of all, for the first time ever you’ll be able to take the Secret Reef with you by downloading the app to your own device for use at home or school.

These technological upgrades are being made possible by our continued partnership with Tennessee Technological University. This collaboration afforded their students another opportunity to gain experience while our staff gets to utilize state-of-the-art tools to inspire ocean appreciation.

SMALL FRY 2015-2016

Want to spend some quality time with your little one while learning about the world around us? Join us for Small Fry — a program designed to build on the incredible curiosity and wonder of 2-4 year old children (and their parents)! This program is designed to be a drop in program so join us for the whole time or stay for just a little while. Programs have a variety of activities that may include story time, games, experiments, crafts and live animals. Small Fry programs are free with Aquarium admission. Each 45 minute session begins at 10:15am (Free with Aquarium admission).

REMAINING 2015 DATES
Tuesdays: Nov. 17 and Dec. 1, 8 & 15
Wednesdays: Nov. 18 and Dec. 2, 9 &16

Each week we will be exploring a new topic starting with different groups of animals (i.e. turtles, snakes, ocean animals and more). As we approach the holiday season, we will create gifts for our backyard wildlife friends by making special treats for the animals!

We have one day for giving thanks. Two days for getting deals. Now, there’s a global day that’s dedicated to giving back. On Tuesday, Dec. 1st, join others who passionately support the Aquarium’s non-profit mission. Your contributions make our robust portfolio of education, conservation and research programs possible. Donate today: community.tnaqua.org/GivingTuesday, then celebrate your gift on social channels. Encourage others to join you by sharing your involvement in #GivingTuesday.
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