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VANCOUVER AQUARIUM CELEBRATES ITS VOLUNTEERS

Vancouver, B.C. – Every year, hundreds of volunteers dedicate their talents, passion and time to the Vancouver Aquarium. In 2010, a total of 1,043 volunteers contributed a total of 80,994 hours to the Aquarium in over 45 roles across the organization. From all ages and backgrounds, this diverse team participated in various aspects of the Aquarium’s education, conservation, research, and animal care programs.

“Volunteers play an integral role at the Vancouver Aquarium and we consider them a key part of our team,” says Dr. John Nightingale, president and CEO. “In recognition of National Volunteer Week, we celebrate and thank our devoted volunteers. These individuals are vital resources and help us further our mission in connecting people to the natural world.”

From Board members, gallery educators to scuba divers and Marine Mammal Rescue Centre care takers, an average of 35 volunteers can be found every day at the Aquarium. The Aquarium embraces a diverse group of volunteers: the youngest is 14 and the oldest is 86 and, collectively, they speak 22 different languages, including Vietnamese, Sri Lankan and sign language.

Meet some of our volunteers

When visiting the Aquarium, you can expect to meet people like Nikki Cloutier who is the longest standing volunteer with 44 years of service. Now 80 years old, she is one of the oldest volunteers and holds a wealth of information and stories from her many years of involvement. She spends most of her Saturdays at the Aquanews desk, engaging visitors in stories about our changing oceans and the actions each one of us can take to create a better future.

Personal trainer by day, jelly expert by weekend, Joe Cheng had been volunteering as a gallery educator and presenter on microphone for two years before being invited to join the animal care team in the jelly lab. Joe also applied his skills as a personal trainer to volunteers and staff who participated in fundraising marathons in support of the Aquarium.

The Aquarium also provides hands-on internships and work experience programs, which offer on-site training, supervision, and evaluation for volunteers. A variety of internships include communications, interpretive delivery, and marine mammal training. “The Vancouver Aquarium is a fascinating living lab that provides direct learning experiences to graduate students,” adds Dr. Nightingale. “We have developed extensive mentoring programs that reflect our commitment to education. When pairing our staff with interns, we share our expertise and knowledge; and, ultimately, help students shape their careers.”

More information on volunteer opportunities can be found at <http://www.vanaqua.org/volunteer>.

About the Vancouver Aquarium

The Vancouver Aquarium is a global leader in connecting people to our natural world, and a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display

and interpretation, conservation practices, education, research, and direct action. Learn more at www.vanaqua.org.

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