

OUR MISSION

is to inspire conservation of the natural world by exhibiting and caring for animals, by excelling in education and research and by providing an exceptional visitor experience.



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Dear Aquarium Family,

On the evening of November 16, an Aguarium technician flipped a switch and watched with satisfaction as a bloom of brilliant lights and luminary installations bathed the building inside and out in a warm glow.

Aguarium Aglow debuted, and a new local family tradition was born. Conceived as a tonic to the previous year's turmoil and uncertainty, the after-hours experience offered a novel way to explore the Aguarium and to celebrate the holiday season.

Little did we know that the seven-week event would not only be well received but would also sell out its initial viewing times. It was a resounding success and one that we plan to recreate and expand upon for years to come.

Symbolically, Aquarium Aglow served also as a vivid reminder that a resilient Aguarium had overcome strong odds and had emerged from the pandemic brighter and stronger than ever. In fact, the entire year of 2021 provided evidence of an organization on the rebound re-engaging communities, rehabilitating animals and replenishing the natural environment.

In the field our conservation team worked statewide to lead the cleanup of compromised waterways and wild spaces. More than half a million pieces of debris were collected and documented in our Litter-Free Digital Journal, a project in the South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app, constituting valuable data for identifying source points of pollution and endemic concerns.

In the historic Maryville township, a team of intrepid scientists from the Aquarium and partnering agencies navigated a beleaguered saltmarsh, replanting marsh cordgrass and giving new hope to an unstable environment.

In classrooms across the state and around the globe, our in-person and streaming digital education programs introduced children to important science constructs and environmental concerns. Aligned with state and national curriculum standards, these programs offered weary teachers a brief respite and captivated students with animal appearances.

The Aquarium itself grew carefully in response to the changing conditions associated with COVID-19, and by midsummer our halls were teeming with new and repeat quests. Our measures to ensure safety were appreciated by most and served to protect our quests, our team and our animals, alike.

By the end of the year, it was clear the Aguarium had triumphed over adversity and was once again positioned to achieve its long-range plans. Record earned revenues, robust fundraising and government support enabled the creation of emergency reserves and a new investment strategy that will help protect the Aquarium from future adversity and "black swan" events.

Now we can look forward with confidence. The future is bright — and you have helped pave the way. For that, we are truly grateful.

Sincerely,

Kevin Mills President and CEO. South Carolina Aquarium



Dear Friends.

The past year will stand out powerfully for me and for the Aguarium family as one marked by a swell of hope, and the promise of a return not merely of normalcy, but the potential for much more. If the close of 2020 felt like survival, the close of 2021 felt like momentum — for the Aguarium family, and for the community we are honored to serve.

The Aguarium's board of directors was engaged throughout the year to consider how best to prudently invest in the programs most central to our mission. We worked to preserve resources where possible and to proceed with cautious optimism, even as we enjoyed record-breaking paid attendance and membership, as well as funding from government sources. We were witnessing a rebirth, and in this transformational moment, we allowed ourselves to return to our most ambitious plans, contained in Landmark 2025.

This year, we finalized our agreement with the City of Charleston to create the South Carolina Aquarium Learning Lab at the Maritime Center. This project is much more than an expansion of usable floor space, or a place to house programs and people. It represents the first step in reconceiving

the way our city connects to the water, and how our students absorb the natural science concepts that will enable them to face a future for which there is no road map. The Learning Lab will be both a gateway to a bustling new east peninsula cultural corridor, as well as a living lens through which future generations will observe and respond to shifting shorelines, and the demands of a planet faced with challenges unforeseen 50 years ago.

This year we celebrated the return of a cornerstone program that will ultimately animate the Learning Lab: the Teen Science Café — a groundbreaking series which connected curious students with astronauts, biologists and coders, all in the service of priming them for careers in STEM. We deepened our investment in providing virtual programming to students of all ages, across the country and globe, exposing them to sea turtles and the tireless teams that care for them within our Sea Turtle Care Center™. We even formalized a partnership with the College of Charleston and Charleston County to develop a Center of Resilience Excellence in South Carolina (CORE SC) which will operate as a center for innovative technological response to a broad range of environmental issues facing our region and the world. We have invested in a return to leadership, and we have invested in the future of our community.

Seizing this moment, returning to leadership and taking our programs and our impact to the next level, has been an effort driven in large part by our donors. This was a year in which we embraced the knowledge that survival is not enough; we are called to lead. The Aquarium team joins me in thanking you for setting us on firm footing and lighting the way to a brilliant horizon.

Sincerely.

Jonathan M. Zucker Chairman of the Board, South Carolina Aquarium

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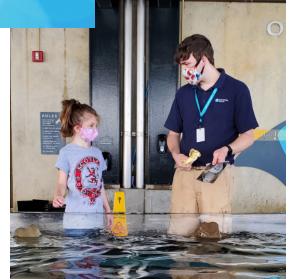
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EDUCATION







THE LEARNING LAB AT THE MARITIME CENTER

In December, Charleston's City Council unanimously approved the Aquarium's plans to develop the new Learning Lab at the Maritime Center. The vision for this unprecedented education facility includes creating a new home for Dominion Energy School Programs, allowing us to nearly double the number of K-12 students currently served by this core standards-based STEM program. The Learning Lab will also house our expanding slate of teen programs, including the Teen Science Café and the newly conceived Teen Conservation Corps, which trains students to embrace innovative solutions for the rapidly changing environment that surrounds them. The facility will welcome community partners to engage in dialogues around environmental and social justice and climate change, among other topics. With the conceptual phase of planning for the facility now well underway, new construction and renovations will commence in early 2023, with plans to open publicly in early 2024.

VIRTUAL LEARNING AMPLIFICATION

With a year of pivoting and perfecting under our belts, the Aquarium expanded virtual learning opportunities to students all over the world. Weekly virtual visits hosted on our social media channels reached 3.000 households per visit, and virtual components were added to several of our program offerings, including our Holland Lifelong Learning series, enabling people to stay connected with us and other scientific experts from the comfort of their own homes. 2021 was also the year that we reached our goal of having programs in all 50 states. Having broadcasted in 30 countries, our virtual learning team has become experts in sharing their knowledge and passion from inside our walls with the world beyond.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERN PROGRAM

A cornerstone of the Aquarium's teen programming, our High School Intern Program was in full swing during the summer of 2021. This program provides paid summer working experience for rising seniors in the tri-county area as well as fieldwork and professional development opportunities. After 99 applications and 60 interviews, 10 local students were selected to participate, representing eight different high schools. Throughout the program, interns were trained on engaging with guests at our touch tanks, handling ambassador animals like our snakes and turtles and providing an exceptional guest experience in our galleries by sharing their animal knowledge. Classes also provided students with practical skills like resume writing and interviewing techniques, giving our interns a solid foundation and a head start as they enter the workforce or postsecondary education.

CONSERVATION



PLASTIC POLLUTION COMMUNITY **ENGAGEMENT**

The Aquarium spent the last year rapidly expanding programming beyond our walls in many different ways. With the help of dedicated volunteers and partners, we were able to increase our reach throughout the state including monthly litter sweeps in 10 different counties. We also supported 35 group sweeps, providing supplies and instruction on data collection, engaging over 1,250 people. Using data collected in the Litter-Free Digital Journal, a project in the South Carolina Aquarium Citizen Science app, we provided extensive analyses to Harbor Island, Kiawah Island, Folly Beach and Isle of Palms, as well as an overall state analysis. This data was also used to provide testimonies to local and state leaders, resulting in many victories including a new smoking ban on Folly Beach.

RETURN OF COLD-STUNNED PATIENTS

In November 2021, the Aquarium admitted eight juvenile Kemp's ridley sea turtles into the Sea Turtle Care Center™ from Cape Cod, Massachusetts. All were part of a mass stranding event where sea turtles become "trapped" as the water temperature cooled guickly, leaving them cold stunned. As the only sea turtle hospital in South Carolina, we care for every sea turtle that is found in need along our coast. We've been fortunate throughout the years to open our doors and assist patients from other states, including patients from these mass stranding events in New England. State needs required all of our focus in 2020, but being able to oper our doors again to these patients and share their journeys with our quests was a delightful holiday treat during the winter. All eight of these patients fully recovered and were released back into the ocean, completing the journey home.

DOLPHIN RESEARCH

Charleston is home to a wild population of bottlenose dolphins, whose numbers fluctuate between 300 and 900 throughout the year. The Aquarium's volunteer and teen programs manager and dolphin researcher, Meghan Galipeau, is part of a research team that noticed resident dolphins exhibiting unique feeding behaviors in the Charleston Harbor. Bottlenose dolphins around the world are known to trap fish against natural or nonnatural barriers, a behavior called "barrier feeding." Dolphins in the Charleston Harbor were observed barrier feeding up against docked commercial shipping vessels at various terminals, which has never before been documented. This behavior, coined "shipside feeding," led the research team to conduct a formal analysis and publish a paper with their findings. Shipside feeding is a unique example of dolphins adapting to their shared environment with humans in their urban estuary home in Charleston.

GUEST EXPERIENCE







AQUARIUM AGLOW

A brand new experience in 2021 was the introduction of Aquarium Aglow, a unique holiday light spectacular. As we passed the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aguarium saw an opportunity to bring light, literally, to our still weakened and somber community. Throughout the year, the immersive experience was brought to life, designed and constructed completely in-house. Marketed as an elegant evening experience at the Aquarium, catered to adults but still family friendly, the response was phenomenal. Thousands of lights illuminated indoor and outdoor exhibits, from luxe and innovative to festive and nostalgic, wowed quests and proved a successful formula, hitting 157% of our revenue goal and 111% of our attendance goal. We look forward to establishing Aquariur Aglow as a Lowcountry holiday tradition in the years to come!

NEW ANIMALS

In collaboration with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Specials Survival Plan® Programs for both North American river otters and roseate spoonbills, new animals joined the Aquarium family and have quickly become quest favorites. We introduced two juvenile river otters in the spring, a brother duo that was properly welcomed with the help of devoted fans and followers who chose their new names: Charlie and Beau (short for Charleston and Beaufort, respectively). Both otters have acclimated well to their new habitat in the Mountain Forest and delight guests each day with their curiosity to connect tankside with them. Two roseate spoonbills joined the Saltmarsh Aviary in the fall, the first of their kind at the Aquarium. These two females, named Coral and Pearl, have quickly become fan favorites thanks to their uniquely vibrant pink plumage and characteristic spoon-shaped bill.

IDEA EFFORTS

The Aquarium spent another year making exceptional progress in advancing the Aguarium's ambitious goals for inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA). Striving to expand access to the Aquarium for underserved communities, we created and distributed 3,550 bilingual bookmarks to local organizations and schools, increasing visibility of our discounted Angelfish membership option. Through our partnership with the Charleston County Public Library system, we provided 10 Family memberships for library patrons to check out at no additional cost. These memberships were used 152 times and served 4,590 individuals. Our staff-led IDEA team coordinated multiple trainings and internal discussions to promote belonging and transparency within our team culture.

ANIMAL CARE



OUR WORLD WITHOUT CAMPAIGN

The Aquarium's Our World Without rescue campaign closed in March 2021, demonstrating the overwhelming support of our community of supporters all over the world. With approximately 80% of our revenue being generated by general admission sales and memberships, being closed for 68 days and operating in extremely limited capacity upon reopening was a devastating blow to the entire organization. Facing the threat of losing both our education programming and our Sea Turtle Care Center™, we called upon our leadership, longstanding donors and the public like never before with a goal to raise \$1.6 million. Securing these funds and completing the Our World Without campaign was not only instrumental in keeping these programs operating, but also enabled us to stabilize our operation and lay a foundation to build back stronger than before.

SUSTAINING OUR ANIMALS

This year, the Aquarium marked the launch of a dedicated fundraising effort to secure resources for the multifaceted care of the more than 5,000 animals within our facility. Donors were presented the opportunity to sponsor and sustain elements of the animal care experience, including their favorite exhibits and species. The Animal Care Sustainers Fund drove a powerful movement in philanthropy, and by the close of the year, we secured nearly \$1 million for areas of work less visible than others, including our Nutritional Care Program, our Veterinary Innovation Program and our Animal Ambassador Program, all of which have now been fully funded by generous donors and sponsors. Our annual Conservation Gala live ask opportunity secured over \$200,000 for the Animal Care Sustainers Fund, enabling us to purchase a cold laser therapy machine to aid veterinary staff in treating animals with a wide range of injuries.

OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL FORTIFICATION

As our community emerges from the days of the pandemic, the Aquarium finds itself in an encouraging financial position thanks to the support of our donors, members and quests. Multiple factors contributed to our institution finding its way to its firmest financial footing in our 21-year history. Having secured nearly \$5.6 million in federal relief funds, we enjoyed our best year ever for admission revenue, while fundraising reached the same level as 2020's record year. The launch of the Aquarium Aglow holiday lights experience was a huge success that generated over \$400,000. This infusion of critical funds enabled us to develop, for the first time, an investment strategy to keep our organization strong and stable for the next generation. Each of these exciting successes are due to the community's commitment to our survival, and we will continue to steward these resources with prudence and intentionality in the years to come.

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THANK YOU

As evidenced by a turbulent 2020, you never leave our side, even in moments of darkness and instability. Whether inspired by our award-winning education programs, our world-class animal care operations or the powerful spirit of a place that draws your family closer to one another, your belief in our work and our people is what makes us who we are, and renders us resilient.

2021 was a year of returning to the unique corners of our mission and re-engaging with the diverse array of projects that make our institution so unique. You found your way back to our mission, perhaps even your unique corner of that mission, and because of you, we are positioned to lead as never before. We are all honored by your willingness to walk alongside us on a journey unlike any other. You truly make us what we are.



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Anne and Robert Ostrom Caroline and

Kevin Pennington Patricia and Zeke Petryszyn

Kevin Phillins James Poulnot Pournelle Insurance Agency, LLC

Amanda B. Price, M.D. and Kevin C. Price, M.D.

Kevin and Chervl Ouinn Susan and Christopher Riley * Ellis Ripley

River Runner Outdoor Center Marcelle and Nick Ross

Jane and Robert Sandel, Fd.D. *

Peggy Schachte and Hal Currey

Robert Schofield Mark Shaffer and Tamala Conner

John and Bonnie Sirianni The Small and Greif Families *

Anne and Will Snelgrove Ann Snipes

Steven and Susan Strohm * Patricia Swart

Judy and Larry Tarleton * Barbara Testor

Jim and Cynthia Thompson

Ann and James Truesdale Gina Werner Jollie and Wesner Families Naideen and Killough White III * Beth Williams Gina Wurst-Yeager and John Yeager Nicholas and Amanda Yaeger Kim and Brett Young

VOLUNTEERS

Olivia Carson

Alexis Cavey

Ronald Cavey

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Diane Chronis Lisa Ciolek Katie Clark Marley Collett Will Collett Candvce Colonna Maura Condon Mary Corbett 1 Callie Cornett David Corvette Christine Cotton Eric Craia Abigail Crawford Jessica Cutler Mirabelle Cutler Marielle Debbas Erica DeCarme Dan Delantv Daniel Delanty Janis Dempsey Matthew Dixon Hailev Dolbow Tracev Dreiss Josephine Durham Angela Dzvonik Barbara Eager * Sarah Edwards Jessie Eichman Susan Elliott ' Keven Ellis Jessica Ervin Anna Ewing Amv Ferguson * Robert Ferguson * Charles Fosler Bridget Fountain Ella Fowle Lori Fox Sherry Fox * Amv Funderburk * Nora Futrell Annie Garzilli Ben German Zackery German Dennis Gettelfinger * Lynne Gettelfinger * Mike Gibbons

Catherine Christensen

Maureen Glass Sarah Glover Faythe Goins James Goldman Katherine Goldman Sue Googer Ellen Gower Robert Graham Peter Green Kaitlin Gregoire Laura Gregoire John-Henry Gross Braden Haggart Kaitlyn Haggerty Theodore Hair Sophia Hallam Stephanie Hansen Robert Harris Jovce Harrison Amv Harrod Nancy Heinz * Megan Hendrick Patricia Henlev * Mike Henry * Bettv Hill Melissa Hiller Linda Hollander Emily Hoops Jeff Hooven ' Mary Horres Chase Howard James Hubbell ' Rita Hueston Yale Huett Brent Humphrev * Kellev Hwang ' Dorothy Ingram Taylor Jackwood Katherine Jahn Michayla Jennings Tyler Jernigan Margie Jewell

Sophia Job

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Garv Neiman

Carl Nelson

Rose Noehring Sarah Norris Daniella Nov Isabelle Noy Vanessa Oltmann Lucia Oswald * Kayli Paterson Richard Peppler Ashley Peralta Kathryn Perry Keilie Perry Warren Petersen Maci Petrolle Kayle Pitts Tom Proctor Kenny Puckett Kelly Quinlan Ricardo Quintero Sarah Rabon Liam Radeke Tajay Ramos April Rasberry Madeline Revkin John Richardson Theresa Richardson Judy Roberts * Alayna Robertson Suzanne Rodgers * Susan Rohr Chris Rosendall Jim Rosenthal Tollison Rosol Linda Rowe Lvnn Russell William Rutherford Ela Sanyal Kathryn Sanyal Aaron Saramak Aspen Scarberry Gail Schiffer Kiera Schneider Virginia Scully Marie Setser Catherine Shapiro Corinne Shea Paul Siegel Kate Silvia Matthew Silvia

Sara Skeels Mara Southard Kirk Spletzer Kelly Stafford Marlene Stagnaro Louis Steinke Kacey Stephens Richard Stifel John Swink * Christopher Taylor Grace Taylor Mary Lena Taylor Julie Tecklenburg * Benjamin Thépaut Lauren Thomas **Richard Thomas** Miles Thompson Adam Tiberian Emma Tiberian Greg Trende James Trusso * Jacob Tucker Samantha Turner Pam Utziq * Kristen Van Buren Valerie Van Tine Milena Vauclair Isabella Verdecia Avery Vista Robin Wagner George Washington Jennifer Welch Mikael Wiel Daniel Winters Lori Wohlgemuth Madisen Workman Hal Wynne Melissa Wyzan Sara Zimmerman



NAUTILUS SOCIETY

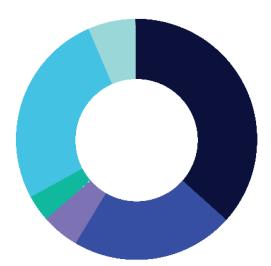
Members of the Nautilus Society have pledged their support to the James L. Ferguson Permanent Endowment, ensuring the South Carolina Aguarium will be a source of magic and wonder for generations to come. We are thankful to these individuals who have included us in their estate plans.

Jim⁺ and Esther Ferguson Tom Tate and Lori Fox Dr. and Mrs. Dennis Gettelfinger Karen and Jack Higgins

BY THE NUMBERS

SUPPORTS AND REVENUE

SOLI OKIS AND KEVENOE	
Admissions	\$ 7,748,001
Contributions	\$ 4,645,266
Memberships	\$ 1,082,866
Concessions	\$ 768,750
Miscellaneous	\$ 26,183
Other Income	
PPP2	\$ 1,425,833
ERC	\$ 1,286,260
SVOG	\$ 2,926,861
Programs and Events	
Special Events	\$ 658,111
Fundraising Events	\$ 376,798
Program Revenues	\$ 91,331
Supplemental	\$ 212,340



22% of total revenue contributed by donors

42% of total revenue earned through admissions and memberships

27%

of total revenue through federal relief funding

\$1,665,302 spent on Animal Care

74%

applied directly to education, conservation and animal care missions

EXPENSES Program Services

Total Revenue

Facilities	\$	2,213,019
Guest Programs	\$	2,109,495
Animal Care	\$	1,665,304
Education	\$	1,042,710
Conservation	\$	775,269
Memberships	Ś	386.910

\$21,248,600

Supporting Services

•	Management and General	\$ 1,839,124
•	Annual Campaign and Fundraising	\$ 946,892
	Membership Development	\$ 86,030

Total Expenses	\$ 11,064,753



* Charter Member Deceased

2021 marked the triumphant return of Landmark 2025, our road map that charts a path to a unified and connected east peninsula waterfront and reimagines the exhibits and experiences within our walls. We are eagerly anticipating the opening of the Learning Lab in early 2024, marking the emergence of the peninsula's first dedicated interdisciplinary waterfront educational facility that will serve thousands of schoolchildren every year. As our classroom programs migrate to this revolutionary new space, a new opportunity will begin to take shape in our central facility's classroom spaces vacated by those programs. This reimagined gallery space will serve as a rotating, immersive exhibit environment, enabling us to provide regularly refreshed exhibits and experiences. On the not-sodistant horizon as well are plans for us to spearhead a revitalization of Liberty Square, in partnership with the City of Charleston and our cultural partners along and on our city's vibrant east peninsula. the waterfront. A vision for a brilliantly animated

outdoor space that serves our community year round lies at the heart of the Liberty Square concept. In the coming year, we will connect with communities throughout our city to engage their creativity and feedback as to how this space should look and feel.

A central plank of Landmark in 2022, we will also deepen our commitment to serving teen audiences with the launch of our Teen Conservation Corps. This program will engage teens to interact with and learn directly from innovators in resiliencerelated fields, from conservation planning to water management. Ultimately housed within the Learning Lab, this program will activate the next generation of environmental stewards to formulate solutions to our planet's most pressing challenges.

The future is brighter than ever at the Aquarium,



