



PRESS RELEASE – February 28, 2020

Media Contact: Briana Sapp Tivey
Director of Marketing and Communications
Email: bsapptivey@sbnature2.org
Phone: 805-682-4711 ext. 117

Sea Center Seeks Volunteers to Work with Animals and the Public

(Santa Barbara, CA) — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center on Stearns Wharf is seeking volunteers ages 11 and older to share their passion for the ocean and its inhabitants.

As Santa Barbara's local aquarium and marine science center, the Sea Center gives volunteers the unique opportunity to educate the public about Santa Barbara's coastal environment, perform hands-on demonstrations, and give live animal presentations at the Shark Cove, Intertidal Wonders, Wet Deck exhibits, and more. Volunteers learn about the care and biology of sea creatures such as sharks, rays, sea stars, and anemones. They also gain valuable experience as educators communicating science, translating scientific terminology and technical information into casual language understandable to aquarium visitors of all ages.

Volunteering is an opportunity for high school students to collect the community service hours needed to graduate, but many find it a reward in itself. "I have far exceeded what I needed," high school student Elena Everest reported, explaining why she has remained a volunteer, giving about 150 hours when only 60 hours are required by the SB Unified School District. "I wanted some community service hours, and I needed some people skills. I kinda needed to learn how to talk to people, but as time went on, I really grew to love it here. You learn something new every day."

Volunteers also grow to appreciate the unique biodiversity of the Santa Barbara Channel by seeing it through the enthusiastic eyes of visitors from afar. Volunteer Derek Calzada shared a fond memory of some particularly excited guests: "One of the first weeks that I'm here, I meet this family from the Midwest. They run in here looking for the sharks," after a lifeguard told them they could actually touch sharks at the Sea Center. "They ran up [here] with all their might, and were touching the sharks for 15 minutes, and the mom said that was their best experience in Santa Barbara."

Volunteer Amelia Danko values the opportunity to be an ambassador not just for Santa Barbara, but for ocean health, and its importance to the health of the planet. "Working at the Sea Center, you can not only share your knowledge about the sea creatures we have here, but also remind visitors to protect our oceans." Sharing the beauty of the environment



is a chance to share messages about what guests can do to make a difference: "It's only pretty because we protect it."

The Sea Center welcomes volunteers of all ages, but those under 14 years must volunteer with a guardian. This rewarding experience offers ongoing opportunities to learn more about local marine life, meet new people, and promote conservation of our oceans. Volunteers also get to attend monthly advanced trainings, lectures, and occasional field trips to marine habitats. Past trips have included guided tours to unique areas not typically open to the public.

For more information on the Sea Center's volunteer program visit sbnature.org/scvolunteer or contact the volunteer manager at 805-962-2526 ext. 104 or scvolunteermanager@sbnature2.org.

###

About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center

Located on historic Stearns Wharf, this highly interactive regional aquarium and marine education facility offers guests close encounters with marine animals, and exploration of the Santa Barbara Channel on the Wet Deck. In addition to permanent exhibits, the Sea Center hosts unique events and special educational programming, including Underwater Parks Day, World Oceans Day, and the *Live Dive* series. Visit sbnature.org/seacenter for more information.



A volunteer holds a Swell Shark in *Shark Cove*



The Wet Deck is the Sea Center's open-air science lab, where guests sample marine life, water, and sediment from beneath the wharf.