Birch Aquarium Reports Record Scholarship Year

The aquarium distributed more than $375,000 in scholarships to 22,000+ Pre-K-12 students this school year.

La Jolla, CA (June 28, 2023) — Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego is closing out the 2022/23 school year having distributed more than $375,000 in scholarships, an all-time record for the organization which has served more than 41,000 Pre-K-12 students since September.
From onsite programs such as Discovery Labs and Beach Teaches to Aquarium Express Outreaches in schools and self guided field trips, more than 22,000 students received financial support thanks to generous donors.

"Our education programming is a vital part of our mission to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet. We are delighted to be able to offer scholarships to so many students who would not traditionally have the opportunity to experience hands-on science in this way," said Executive Director, Harry Helling. "We are so very grateful for the generous support from Birch’s community of corporations, foundations and individuals who continue to see value in Pre-K-12 STEM education,“

This year’s major donors include Dr. Seuss Foundation, Illumina Corporate Foundation, The JEMProject, the Pincus Family Foundation, Price Philanthropies, SDG&E Foundation, U.S. Bank Foundation, Hervey Family Fund, and Dr. Charles F. Kennel and Dr. Ellen J. Lehman.

The Pincus Family Foundation's support of scholarship-based programs for middle school students enabled Birch Aquarium to reach more communities with vital STEM education programming. The JEM Project supported curriculum development and outreach for 38 high school classes with onsite Deep Sea Debris programming in partnership with Scripps Institute of Oceanography's Choy Lab. Price Philanthropies supported free outreach programs to K-8 students in the City Heights neighborhood. Illumina, Hervey Family Fund, and the Dr. Seuss Foundation all supported general scholarships for students in grades Pre-K-12.

“We greatly appreciate all the hands-on experience taught by quality educators and scientists in the field. The ability to have scholarship funds available to our students has made the likelihood of becoming involved with science in their future more possible and within their reach,” said Megan Beckman, a 6th Grade Science Teacher at Monroe Clark Middle School.

All of Birch Aquarium’s programs for students Pre-K-12 align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and support students’ in-class learning, while also serving the aquarium’s mission to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet. Students explore topics from ocean habitats, to animal adaptations, to how scientists conserve species through a variety of hands-on programs whether at the aquarium, in the classroom, or in the field.

As the aquarium’s Education Team begins preparations for the 23/24 school year, opportunities are available to support next year’s programming. To learn more about how to give in an impactful way, please reach out to Rachel Wyman, Director of Development, at rwyman@ucsd.edu.
To learn more about Birch Aquarium’s school programs as well as how to apply for future funding for your school, visit aquarium.ucsd.edu.

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About Birch Aquarium at Scripps
Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Birch Aquarium features the groundbreaking work of Scripps Oceanography and UC San Diego scientists as well as conservation breeding programs, and interactive exhibits. Birch Aquarium’s mission is to connect understanding to protecting our ocean planet, which the aquarium achieves by engaging, hands-on learning opportunities for more than 500,000 guests as well as 40,000+ Pre-K-12 students each year. Visit aquarium.ucsd.edu for more information.

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