

NEWS RELEASE

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Virginia Aquarium Certified as Sensory Inclusive by KultureCity

The Virginia Aquarium announced new partnership with KultureCity to promote inclusive programming

(Virginia Beach, VA) On World Autism Awareness Day, the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center is proud to announce a new partnership with KultureCity, an organization dedicated to helping businesses become more inclusive of guests with sensory processing disorders.

As part of this new partnership, the Virginia Aquarium has been certified as Sensory Inclusive by KultureCity. This certification included staff training on sensory processing disorders and the best ways to help guests with them, creation of a social story to prepare guests with sensory processing disorders prior to their visit, creation of quiet zones, and acquisition of on-site resources, such as noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, and feelings thermometers, for guests feeling overwhelmed. These on-site resources are included in bags guests may check out upon their arrival. Learn more about the bags and how to check them out at the [Aquarium's website](#).

At the Aquarium, we recognize the importance of finding ways to inspire all of our guests so they, too, can learn about, appreciate, and protect our marine environment," said Cynthia Spanoulis, Executive Director of the Virginia Aquarium. "The certification by KultureCity is an important first step to engaging all of our audiences, and we are proud to be a Sensory Inclusive facility."

The Sensory Inclusive certification is in addition to the Aquarium's inclusionary programming, Special Needs Under the Sea. This before- and after-hours event allows guests with special needs to visit the Aquarium in a calm, comfortable environment. Sounds are turned off, lights are dimmed, and crowds are reduced to ensure a positive experience for all. To learn more about the Special Needs Under the Sea events, please visit the [Aquarium's website](#).

The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums whose mission is conservation through education. The Aquarium is located at 717 General Booth Boulevard, just south of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach. For more information on exhibits, movies, boat rides and special events, call (757) 385-FISH (3474), (TDD 385-4305) or visit www.VirginiaAquarium.com.

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