

NEWS RELEASE

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VIRGINIA AQUARIUM VIRTUAL AUCTION A SUCCESS

THANK YOU FOR HELPING RAISE OVER \$100,000 FOR EXCEPTIONAL ANIMAL CARE & CONSERVATION WORK

(VIRGINIA BEACH, VA) – The Virginia Aquarium’s annual Night at the Aquarium fundraising event sponsored by Capital Group went virtual this year for the safety of our guests and staff. Through event sponsorships and auction proceeds, the event raised more than \$150,000 with the net after expenses totaling approximately \$105,000. The net significantly exceeds the prior highest net of \$89,551 in 2014-15.

Generous corporate partners sponsored the event, including Capital Group, Fain Family Fund, Checkered Flag Motor Company, MEB General Contractors, OptimaHealth, Virginia Natural Gas, and others.

The online auction ran from September 21 through October 3 featuring exciting Aquarium and local attraction experiences, summer camps, artwork, wine tours, one-of-a-kind items, and even a 2020 Toyota Yaris! The 2020 Toyota Yaris was generously provided by Checkered Flag. "The Virginia Aquarium is a wonderful asset to our community for the residents that live here and visitors to our area, and our Checkered Flag family greatly values all that the Aquarium offers. We were pleased to support the auction fundraiser with the donation of a sporty new Toyota Yaris," said Steve Snyder, President of Checkered Flag Automotive Dealerships.

More than 400 supporters registered to participate in the auction, bidding for approximately 100 items. The winning bids ranged from \$60 for bags of compost to \$2,025 for Lunch with Our Veterinarian to \$13,250 for the 2020 Toyota Yaris. The online auction allowed the annual Night at the Aquarium fundraising event to reach a vastly broader audience this year with supporters participating from Virginia Beach to Chicago to New York.

All event proceeds will be used to help care for thousands of animals, provide educational offerings to visitors, offer outreach programs to schools, conduct research and conservation activities, and operate our nationally-recognized Stranding Response Program. "Thanks to everyone who supported us during our annual, premier fundraiser. Gifts and bids help the Virginia Aquarium animals, our marine life research, and the Virginia Beach community", stated Aquarium Executive Director Cynthia Spanoulis.

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. The Aquarium is also a member of World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Virginia Aquarium’s mission is to inspire conservation of the marine environment through education, research and sustainable practices. It is located at 717 General Booth Boulevard, just south of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach.

The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, supports the work of the Virginia Aquarium. The Foundation procures and maintains the Aquarium's exhibits, including the animals and habitats. It is also responsible for annual and capital fundraising, administration and funding for the Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program, conservation and scientific research efforts, and the Aquarium's mission-related education programs. You can be a part of our mission: make a tax-deductible donation to support our incredible programming. ###