

# NEWS RELEASE

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October 11, 2023

## **Virginia Aquarium’s “Ocean Commotion” Auction Raises Over \$171K**

*The proceeds will support care for thousands of animals, educational offerings and more.*

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA – The Virginia Aquarium Foundation’s annual event and largest fundraiser of the year, *Ocean Commotion*, raised more than \$171,000 this year through event sponsorships and auction proceeds, netting approximately \$115,000 after expenses. The amount raised is the third largest in the auction’s history while the net amount is the second best behind last year’s net profit of \$125,000.

With support from many sponsors including title sponsor, Capital Group and the auction sponsor, Checkered Flag Motor Company, Inc., the online auction ran from Sept. 25 to Oct. 7 and featured dozens of unique Aquarium experiences, local attraction passes, and more.

Over 917 supporters placed their bids, totaling 888 bids on 122 packages. A few notable winning bids include \$1,000 bid for breakfast and tour with the Aquarium CEO, \$1,200 for a dive in our Norfolk Canyon Exhibit, and \$750 for a behind-the-scenes tour and kiss from one of our resident harbor seals, Hector.

“Thanks to our sponsors, this year’s Ocean Commotion was a great success.” said Cynthia Whitbred-Spanoulis, the Virginia Aquarium’s CEO and President. “The proceeds will have a direct impact on supporting our mission and vision of connecting people to the marine environment, inspiring a more sustainable future, and being a driver in conservation, education, tourism, and sustainability.”

The event proceeds will be used to provide care for thousands of animals, educational offerings to guests, outreach programs to schools, to conduct research and conservation efforts, and to operate our nationally recognized Stranding Response Program.

“As this year’s Ocean Commotion ends, we’re reminded how proud we are to support this organization and its mission,” said Michelle Collins, Senior Program Manager, Vice President at Capital Group. “After 17 years of partnering with the Aquarium, we continue to be impressed by their work and passion.”

Additional event sponsors include PRA Group, OptimaHealth/Sentara, TowneBank, and Virginia Natural Gas.

Explore more ways to support the Virginia Aquarium Foundation by visiting [VirginiaAquarium.com](https://VirginiaAquarium.com).

### Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

The [Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center](https://VirginiaAquarium.com) 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 connect people to the marine environment, inspiring a more sustainable future. 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 by making a [tax-deductible donation](#) to support our programming.*

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