



2021 An OTTERly Impactful Year

MISSION

As the nonprofit partner
of the St. Louis Aquarium
at Union Station,
the St. Louis Aquarium
Foundation engages
the community through
providing access and
education programs,
and serving as the
region's recognized
voice for
water stewardship.



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“NEVER UNDERESTIMATE
THE VALUABLE AND
IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE
YOU MAKE IN EVERY LIFE
YOU TOUCH. FOR THE
IMPACT YOU MAKE TODAY
HAS A POWERFUL
RIPPLING EFFECT ON
EVERY TOMORROW.

- Anonymous

The St. Louis Aquarium Foundation and St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station have a shared bold vision of inspiring people to act to make positive changes to protect water that sustains all living things. The Aquarium Foundation strives for this vision through providing education and access programs and serving as the region’s recognized voice for water stewardship. We want to ensure that our programs are high quality, entertaining, educational, and serving the needs of our community.

Throughout this 2021 Impact Report, you will see feedback we received from our summer campers, K-12 students who took a virtual education class, parents of program participants, teachers, and our volunteers. Hopefully through this feedback, it will help paint the picture of how you – our donors, volunteers, staff, and community partners – are helping to educate our community about the importance of our local waterways, build empathy towards aquatic animals and habitats, and inspire people to make small (and big) changes that positively affect the environment.

“IF I WAS
A GREAT WHITE
SHARK”

... at 7:00pm-10:00pm

I look for small ships to tip them over.

11:00pm-12:00am

I spin in circles because sharks don’t sleep
and then I repeat this process.

JOHN - 2ND GRADE

DEAR FRIENDS,

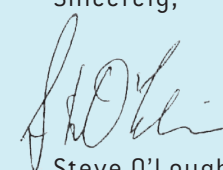
Happy new year from all of us at the St. Louis Aquarium Foundation! As we look back on 2021, we are grateful for the community’s support and our conservation education impact teaching kids about marine animals, their habitats, and the importance of our local waterways to our community and beyond.

After implementing virtual classes in fall 2020 to accommodate at-home schooling, we continued offering virtual programs into spring 2021 and were filled to capacity providing virtual programs to over 2,500 students. We continued to offer free Aquarium visits for families in under-resourced communities through collaborating with other nonprofit organizations, such as Better Family Life, Variety Children’s Charity of St. Louis, Center for Head Injury Services, Giant Steps of St. Louis, Wisdom Academy, and more. We launched our Camp Fins & Friends summer camp, and thanks to generous donors who supported the H₂O Friends program, more than 3,800 people received free Aquarium admission and virtual education classes in 2021!

We ended the year with our inaugural Making Waves gala featuring our special guest Fabien Cousteau, who shared his underwater adventures inspired by his grandfather’s legacy. He also reminded us of the important work we are doing in our community and beyond to inspire people to care about and take action to protect our waterways and the environment.

Just as the Mississippi River impacts the wildlife living in and around the great river, as well as the landscape along it, your support and involvement affect how the Aquarium Foundation positively impacts the St. Louis community. Thank you, and please enjoy this snapshot of our 2021 accomplishments!

Sincerely,



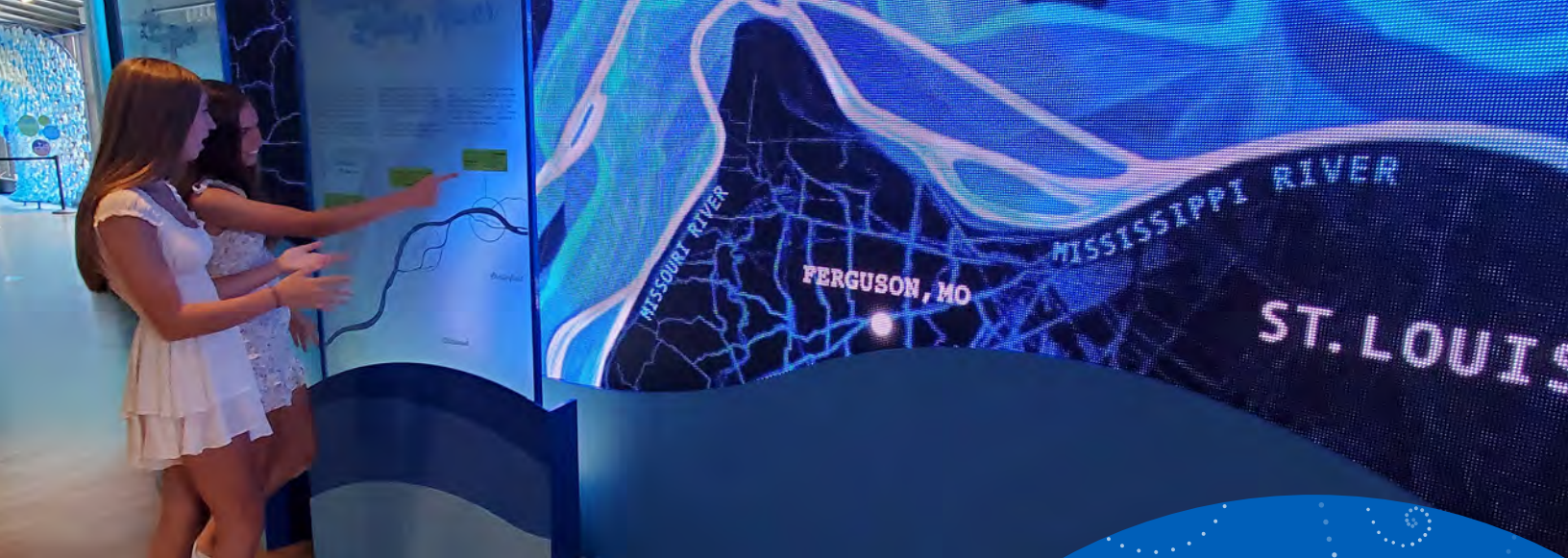
Steve O'Loughlin
Chair

St. Louis Aquarium Foundation



Diane Bauhof, CFRE
Executive Director
St. Louis Aquarium Foundation





Water Stewardship

We are honored to have been a part of the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution research initiative presented by the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, University of Georgia, and United Nations Environment Programme. The Aquarium Foundation hosted two river clean-ups – at the Chain of Rocks Bridge in Alton, IL and at Cliff Cave Park in South St. Louis County – and used the Marine Debris Tracker app to track our results. Interestingly, the top five trash items documented in the three designated research areas (St. Paul, MN; St. Louis, MO; and Baton Rouge, LA) were cigarette butts (made from tiny plastic particles), food wrappers, beverage bottles, foam fragments, and aluminum/tin cans. Overall by material 75% of items collected were plastic. The intention of this program was to generate information about plastic waste concentrations in specific areas, which all stakeholders – policy makers, businesses and citizens – can use to take action within their communities.

We also hosted our Chalk the Town Blue event in honor of World Ocean Day on June 5th. Hundreds of Aquarium guests participated by drawing chalk art on our Union Station sidewalks to show why they love the ocean.

In partnership with Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper and Blue2Blue Conservation, the Aquarium Foundation sponsored a “trash trap” in River des Peres located at Deer Creek Park. A trash trap is a simple device made of a floating boom connected to each side of a river that collects debris as it moves down a waterway. The trap kept 896 items – 46% being foam pieces, 32% plastic, 15% tobacco related products – from flowing into the Mississippi River and eventually the Gulf of Mexico!

“THANKS FOR AN OPPORTUNITY THAT OUR STUDENTS WOULDN'T HAVE OTHERWISE BEEN ABLE TO ACCESS WITHOUT A SCHOLARSHIP!”

This year of virtual education has been challenging and community partnerships like yours allow our kids to experience engaging, unique programs that keep them interested in learning.

FIFTH GRADE TEACHER



H₂O Friends Program

The “Help to our Friends” program provides free Aquarium admission, free education classes and programs, and free bus transportation to students and families in under-resourced communities. This program is funded through many generous donors, including the Kent Family Foundation, Enterprise Bank & Trust Foundation, Nance Frost, Dana Brown Charitable Trust, O'Loughlin Family Foundation, George Bauer, Chase, Ameren, First Bank, and many individuals like you! In 2021, we collaborated with Title I schools and nonprofit organizations to bring 1,262 individuals to the Aquarium and another 1,357 students received a free virtual class as most schools were not able to visit in person due to the pandemic.

Thanks to the Hunter Family Foundation and Blueprint4Summer, 26 kids in need received a free Camp Fins & Friends Summer Camp experience and after-care – representing 19% of our campers!



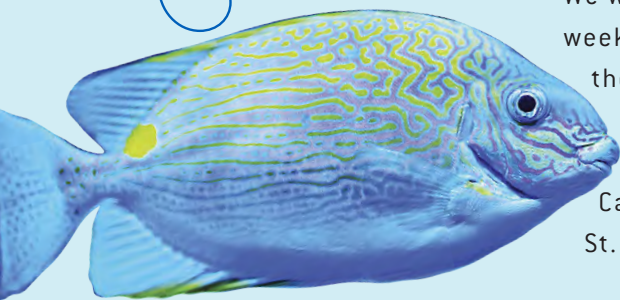


Virtual Education Programs

Our virtual education classes for K-12 students were quite the hit this year! With most schools not being able to go on in-person field trips, teachers were looking for unique learning opportunities for their students, and our curriculum-based classes featuring our Ambassador Animals met their goals. Overall we presented 2,950 students with a virtual program, 46% of which were free through our H₂O Friends program. Thanks to a donation from Chase, in December we presented four live STREAM programs featuring our live-stream cameras installed at the Shark Canyon and the Otter habitats. These programs reached an estimated 1,280 students!

It was the inaugural year for our in-person summer camp! We were thrilled to welcome 144 kids ages 6 to 11 over eight weeks for a week-long camp. In addition to daily visits to the Aquarium, campers visited the behind-the-scenes water filtration systems and Shark Canyon to see how the biologists and engineers keep the Aquarium habitats in tip-top condition as the health of our animals is always of top importance! Campers also enjoyed other attractions at Union Station, such as the St. Louis Wheel, the carousel, mini golf, and a visit to the trains.

Camp Fins & Friends



**96% RATED
CAMP FINS & FRIENDS
SUMMER CAMP AS
EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD.**

**OUR DAUGHTER WAS
ALREADY ASKING TO
GO BACK NEXT YEAR.**

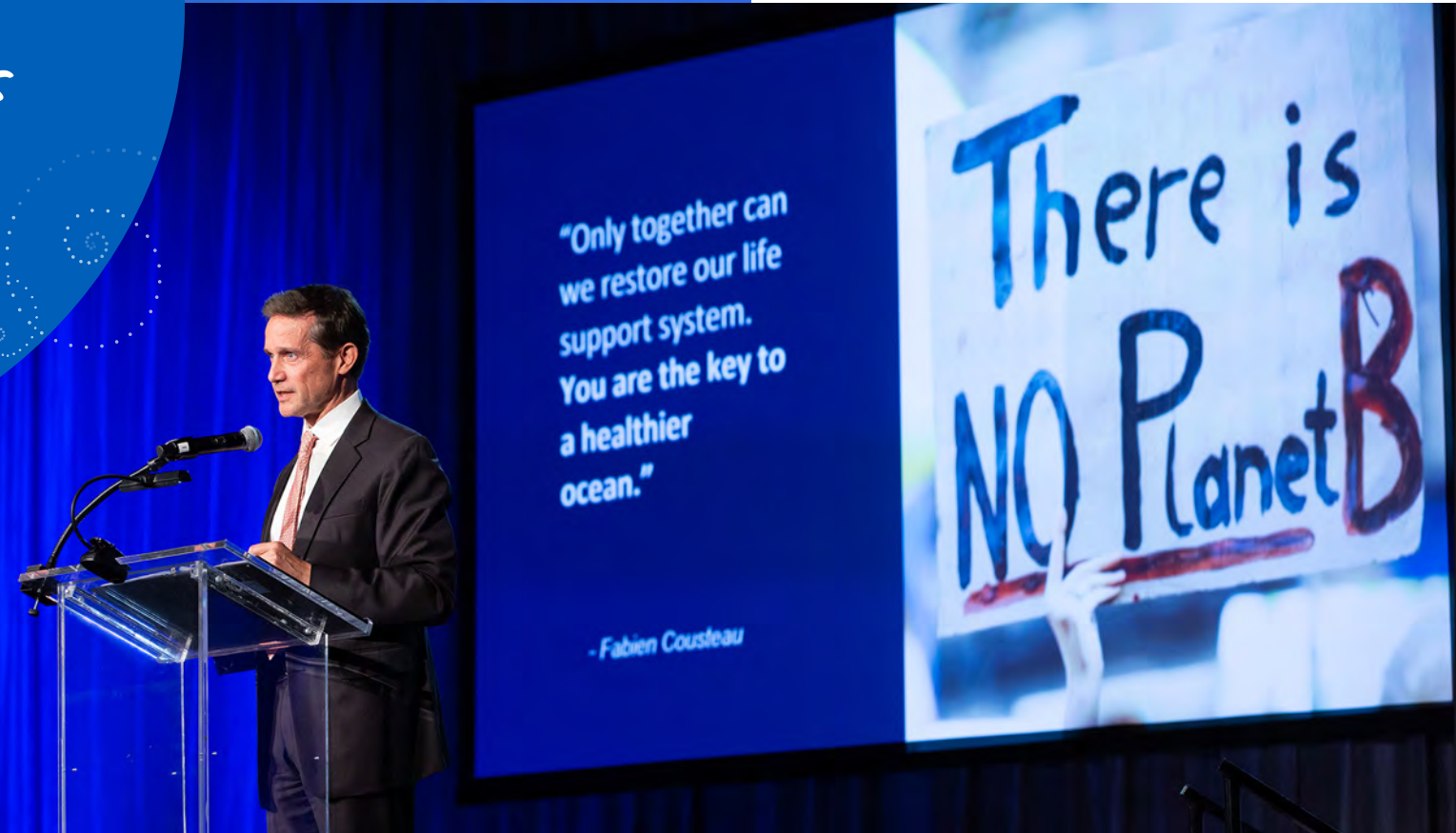
PARENT FEEDBACK SURVEYS
FROM SUMMER CAMP 2021



Inaugural Making Waves Gala

We were eel-ated to host our first gala in November with 325 people ready to celebrate under the sea to support the Aquarium Foundation's mission and the Aquarium's presence in downtown St. Louis! The event featured Jacques Cousteau's grandson and ocean conservationist Fabien Cousteau and sold out two months before the event.

Thanks to our event sponsors, auction donors, attendees, planning committee, Committee Chair Linda Hunter, and everyone who touched the event, we raised \$385,000!





Conservation & Education Center

IF I COULD BE ANY SEA ANIMAL, I'D BE A SEA OTTER MAMA. I WOULD ROLL AND SPLASH AND DIVE WITH ALL MY CHILDREN.

ESSAY CONTEST SUBMISSION, SPRING 2021 PEARL, 2ND GRADE



In 2021, we welcomed 179,124 people to the Conservation & Education Center (CEC), and we hope you were one of them! If you haven't been yet, we invite you to check it out. The admission-free CEC is open the same hours as the Aquarium and is a great extension to your Aquarium visit with interactive exhibits about our local waterways, the effects of plastic on our rivers and oceans, and ways we can make an impact on water conservation efforts in our community.

We added a new aquaponics tree exhibit in 2021 – donated by Mastercard. This exhibit shares an important message about the symbiotic relationship between the fish in the habitat and the plants. We also invited our guests to engage in hands-on celebrations, such as Climate Change Action Week in November by leaving notes about the positive ways we can help the environment, and our river otters' birthday in January with messages about why we love otters.

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\$50,000 - \$99,999

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The St. Louis Aquarium Foundation makes every effort to recognize our donors accurately. However, if you notice an error, please let us know so we can correct it in the future.



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