

## The National Aquarium celebrates a 1<sup>st</sup> birthday!

*Public invited to help build enrichment toys for Bayley the dolphin and her friends*

(July 27, 2009 - Baltimore) -- The National Aquarium is celebrating a dolphin birthday! **Bayley**, an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin born at the Aquarium on July 27, 2008, is one year old today. The public is invited to share in her birthday celebration during the Aquarium's first ever public enrichment building day on Saturday, August 8.

Bayley is one of 10 dolphins living at the National Aquarium. At one year old she is still nursing from her mother but is also eating about six pounds of fish a day. She spends most of her time with her mother, Chesapeake, and other adult female dolphins, and has even begun participating in dolphin shows.

"Bayley is a very smart and energetic young dolphin. She began interacting with our trainers months ago and is already participating in shows," commented Sue Hunter, director of animal programs at the National Aquarium. "She is very active and eager to play, and we have really enjoyed watching her thrive here at the Aquarium."

The public is invited to share in the celebration of Bayley's first birthday during the Aquarium's first ever public enrichment building day on August 8<sup>th</sup>, which happens to also be the Aquarium's 28<sup>th</sup> birthday. Enrichment Day activities include:

- **Special Animal Encounters**  
Each animal encounter themed around enrichment, animal care staff will bring out animals and a piece of enrichment specific to that animal.
- **Special Keeper Talks and Enrichment sessions**  
Learn how enrichment benefits the animals living in all areas of the Aquarium: Australia, Rainforest, Fishes habitats and Dolphin pool.
- **Enrichment Building**  
Visitors can help the animal enrichment committee staff build toys for Bayley and her friends at the Aquarium, and build toys to take home to their pets.
- **A Special Raffle!**  
A special raffle for recycled tote bags made from banners featuring the Aquarium's dolphins will be held outside of the dolphin amphitheater. Proceeds will help the Aquarium purchase enrichment items for Bayley and her friends.

Environmental enrichment is an important part of an animal's life at the National Aquarium. While these items may be seen as just toys, the animal care staff is actually encouraging natural behaviors and giving the animals something new to investigate in their environment. Play helps many animals, including dolphins, develop behavioral skills they need throughout life.

By providing simple, everyday items, such as jars and basketballs, the animals can practice a wide range of behaviors. Unfortunately, these items are so well used that they need to be replaced often. In addition to participating in the Aquarium enrichment day, the public can now support the Aquarium's animal enrichment fund through mobile donations:

*In lieu of presents, you can TXT to the word ACT to 20222 to give Bayley a gift! Your \$5 donation will support the care and feeding of Bayley and her 16,000 aquatic friends at the Aquarium.*

The National Aquarium, a non-profit organization, is Maryland's most exciting and popular cultural attraction, as well as one of the region's leading conservation and education resources. For close to three decades, it has been a symbol of urban renewal, an economic anchor for the region and a source of pride for Marylanders. It has enjoyed strong, reliable attendance since opening on August 8, 1981. With original attendance projections of 650,000 visitors per year, the National Aquarium has welcomed an average annual attendance of 1.5 million over the past 10 years. Through transforming experiences, the National Aquarium inspires people to enjoy, respect, and protect the aquatic world. It is dedicated to education and conservation through more than a dozen programs that serve the environment and the community.

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