



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 26, 2012

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Andrea Smalec
Shedd Aquarium
312-692-3258

asmalec@sheddaquarium.org

Laurel White
Public Communications Inc.
312-558-1770, ext. 144

lwhite@pcipr.com

SHEDD AQUARIUM WELCOMES OVER 2.1 MILLION GUESTS IN 2011

*Shedd Celebrates Fifth Straight Year of Banner Attendance;
Remains Top Draw among Chicago's Cultural Institutions*

CHICAGO – Over 2.1 million guests from all over the world explored the wonders of the water world at [Shedd Aquarium](#) last year, making 2011 the best attended year on record for the aquarium in the last decade. With these recent figures, Shedd strengthens its position as Chicago's most-attended cultural attraction for the fifth year in a row.

"During a year of changing and challenging times, the entire Shedd Aquarium organization is extremely grateful for the continual support we receive from our extended family – guests, members, donors – that continues to make Shedd the World's Aquarium," said Ted A. Beattie, president and CEO of Shedd Aquarium. "It's encouraging to see that Shedd's mission of connecting people to the living world resonates with millions of people."

Officially welcoming 2,120,900 guests in 2011, Shedd remains one of the most-visited aquariums in the United States. Sixty-five percent of guests last year visited at a discounted rate, demonstrating the aquarium's commitment to be one of Chicago's most accessible cultural and education organizations.

"2011 was an exciting year at the aquarium as we launched a new special exhibit, [Jellies](#), and welcomed back popular extended-hours programs like our summer concert series *Jazzin' at the Shedd*," added Beattie. "We also offered more holiday programming with the Wreath-Cycled Classroom Challenge -- where students decked Shedd's halls with wreaths built of 100 percent recycled materials – and the second year of our holiday tradition, the aquatic show *A Holiday Fantasea*."

Additionally, Shedd helped more than 314,000 school children learn through free field trips and both on-site and off-site educational classes.

As part of its commitment to youth education, Shedd Aquarium teamed up with Target®, which provided financial assistance for field trips to economically disadvantaged schools in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system during the 2011-2012 school year. The Target Bus Fund program at Shedd provides up to two buses a year per school for round-trip transportation to the aquarium, where students can see in real life the animals and ecosystems they learn about in school.

"The best lessons are often taught through first-hand experiences," said Beattie. "Our learning programs help to bring the pages of science books to life for students, and ultimately create a lasting impact that can inspire future generations of environmental stewards - a critical part of our everyday mission."

Marking its 81st year, Shedd welcomed new adventures with the opening of *Jellies* in April 2011. Scheduled to run through May 28, *Jellies* showcases pulsing, translucent sea jellies and their mysterious natural history. From beautiful moon jellies, to unique and fascinating upside-down jellies, to a variety of intriguing and eerie sea nettles, guests encounter more than 10 species of jellies throughout the new temporary special exhibit.

With more than 32,500 animals representing nearly 1,500 species from around the world, Shedd Aquarium continues to directly engage guests through its amazing animals, education programs and [conservation initiatives](#) – from our neighbors in the Great Lakes to global projects spanning multiple continents – living up to its role as the “World’s Aquarium.”

Shedd Aquarium is proud to be one of the 10 museums that comprise Museums In the Park (MIP), a coalition of Chicago museums located on Chicago Park District property.

#

*Shedd Aquarium is supported by the people of Chicago and the State of Illinois.
Shedd Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the
Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums*

Connect with Shedd Aquarium online through [Facebook](#); [Twitter](#); [YouTube](#); and [Flickr](#)!