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OCEAN INSTITUTE RECEIVES GROSS FAMILY FOUNDATION GIFT BRINGS JOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

(DANA POINT, CA, DECEMBER 9, 2020) The William, Jeff and Jennifer Gross Family Foundation has brought unexpected gifts to educators this holiday season through a generous gift to the Ocean Institute. The Ocean Institute has provided robust and engaging field trip programs for over 40 years to approximately 50,000 students annually, 10,000 of whom are fully funded through the Adopt-A-Class program. Ocean Institute receives hundreds of requests from educators annually. A recent gift of $200,000 from the Gross Family Foundation enabled good news to be shared to underserved classrooms throughout Southern California, as announcements were sent that their classes were adopted and students would enjoy a fully-funded educational field trip.

“Although we live close to the ocean, few of my students have ever actually seen it,” said Daryth Morrisey, a Fountain Valley educator who was notified that her class was adopted. “We are a Title I school and simply cannot do this without help. My students felt so special that someone that they don’t know wants them to see the world.”

A focus on supporting students has roots in the family’s ethic and experience. “Our children have enjoyed the field trip programs at the Ocean Institute and it was important to our family to provide the same opportunity to enjoy and learn about the ocean to others,” said Jeff Gross.

In addition to supporting the programs, the Gross Family Foundation provided funding to upgrade and maintain the Ocean Institute’s research vessel, the R/V Sea Explorer. As part of the “ride-along” program, the Gross family will experience the programs alongside their beneficiaries. “We look forward to seeing the ocean through their eyes,” says Jeff Gross’ wife, Jenny, who will collect and examine pelagic specimen with students on an upcoming Living Systems cruise.

The impact of the support hits close to home for President of Education and Operations, Dr. Wendy Marshall, who first visited with her on field trip as a 4th grade teacher over two decades ago. “This gift equalizes access to enriching experiences that can be life-changing for the students. We are incredibly thankful for the support to our programs and critical resources that enable us to meet our mission to use the ocean as our classroom to inspire students to learn.”
About Ocean Institute

Ocean Institute is a highly respected ocean science, maritime history and experiential education nonprofit located in Dana Point Harbor, California. Its modern campus is adjacent to the Dana Point State Marine Conservation Area, and encompasses 33,000 square feet of hands-on exhibits, science labs and an aquarium collection of 1,100 live specimens of local marine life. Central to its unique identity throughout California, Ocean Institute operates two impressive tall ships, Spirit of Dana Point and Pilgrim, a replica of the ship made famous by Richard Henry Dana Jr. in his epic memoir “Two Years Before the Mast.” Ocean Institute also operates the 70-foot research vessel Sea Explorer. Over a span of forty years Ocean Institute has enriched the lives of two million California students with a mission of “using the ocean as our classroom, we inspire children to learn.” Ocean Institute serves over 100,000 students, teachers and families each year with a hands-on approach to ocean-related science, research and conservation. Ocean Institute’s diverse elementary, middle and high school program inventory is STEM-focused and aligned with California Common Core Standards. To learn more about Ocean Institute, including the annual Tall Ships Festival presented by Toshiba and the 17th Annual Jazz Festival, please visit www.oceaninstitute.org.

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