

MARINE LIFE STUDIES



RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION

Teaching and Inspiring the Public to Protect Whales and Dolphins

CHILDREN AT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF MONTEREY COUNTY HAVE "WHALE OF A GOOD TIME"

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA (July 2012) – Peggy Stap, Educator and Research Director of Marine Life Studies, along with Jenna Contuchio, Education Coordinator, led the second annual Whale and Marine Wildlife Adventure program for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County, both Seaside and Salinas Units (B&GC). The program included classes, a whale watch, and bus transportation for the children. This program was provided free of charge to the B&GC by Marine Life Studies "Joey Jones Scholarship and Educational Fund". Monies to fund this project were raised through a grant received from the Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation and the Monterey County Gives! 2011 campaign.

The classes included a photographic journey, fun facts and hands-on activities. Children learned how to recognize and identify whales, dolphins and other marine wildlife, plus how and what the animals eat. The children went to the gym to lay out lines of different lengths that represented the size of several whales and dolphins in Monterey Bay. The blue whale line was the longest – blue whales are the largest mammal at over 100' long. "Wow! That is huge, it is longer than the gym!" shouted one of the kids.



The children were so enthusiastic about coming to class they would be waiting at the door the moment Peggy and Jenna arrived to set up. Peggy and Jenna loved to watch the excitement in the children as they realized how large a blue whale really is, were able to see, touch and feel the baleen from a blue whale, a bone from a gray whale and to see the big black eyes of the tiny krill that many whales and dolphins feed on.

The excitement continued to build at the B&GC as the date of the whale watch drew near. The kids were so excited to board the boat "Greatland" with Princess Monterey Whale Watching at Fisherman's Wharf. Most of the kids had never been on the ocean, but a few had gone with Peggy and Jenna last year. The joy on their faces was priceless as they saw sea lions, sea otters, and harbor seals while still in the harbor before heading out to sea.



Soon after leaving port the most amazing thing happened.... humpback whales were sighted. There were many in the area and the children shouted with glee when one humpback breached several times out of the water. It was an amazing sight to behold. Then a pair of humpback whales approached the stern of the boat. The children got a real close look at the humpbacks and could hear their powerful blow. Then amongst the humpbacks a couple of blue whales surfaced. To see the tall blow and the body of the blue whale was so exciting for all. It was such a thrill for them to actually see the animals they had learned about in the classes Marine Life Studies provided in advance.



The fun continued after the whale watch where the kids had a picnic lunch. The kids were still talking about the humpback and blue whales they saw. Many commented that it was great that we laid out the lines in the gym at the Club as in the water you see such a small part of the body it was hard to get a feel of how really big the whales are. They loved the breaching humpback and thought it was so cool to hear the blow of the humpback whales as they passed so close to the boat.

The finale was "Marine Life Studies' Graduation Ceremony". Each child received a personalized Marine Life Studies' Certificate of Completion, a Safeway reusable cloth bag, a folder with fun hands-on activities, and photos of whales and dolphins. This empowers the children with a sense of accomplishment and inspires the children to pursue a career in science. Certainly they will become better stewards of our oceans and this beautiful planet entrusted to our care.

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Marine Life Studies is a registered non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status. Donations and gifts are tax deductible.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF MONTEREY COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Michelle Slade, VP of Impact Advancement
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children Have a Whale of a Good Time! **The Marine Life Studies “Whale and Marine Wildlife Adventure Program” Presented to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County in July**

The Marine Life Studies “Whale and Marine Wildlife Adventure Program” offers children classroom curriculum and an exciting whale watch field trip.

Salinas and Seaside, CA – July 16, 2012. Peggy Stap, Founder and Executive Director of Marine Life Studies, together with her educational coordinator, Jenna Contuchio, present the *Whale and Marine Wildlife Adventure Program* for Club Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County. Children will learn about whales, dolphins and other marine wildlife in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The Seaside Clubhouse will host the program on Tuesday, July 24th, and the Salinas Clubhouse will host the program on Wednesday, July 25th. Children from both Clubhouses will go whale watching on July 31st.

In the classroom, children will learn how to identify whales and dolphins and fun facts, like how and what marine wildlife eats. Then the class will go whale watching on the boat “Greatland” with Princess Monterey Whale Watching at Fisherman’s Wharf. Peggy Stap remarks, “The program is an exciting learning experience for the children. While observing marine wildlife on the whale watch, they see firsthand what they learned in the classroom. They really have a whale of a good time!”

The Marine Life Studies *Whale and Wildlife Adventure Program* at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County is made possible in part by a grant from the Nancy Buck Ransom Foundation.

For more information, contact Michelle Slade at 831-394-5171 or msslade@bgcmc.org.

About the Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County (BGCMC) has played an integral role in the community for over 43 years. With Clubhouses in Seaside and Salinas, BGCMC provides youth between the ages of 6-18 an afterschool safe haven where they are mentored to achieve academic success, acquire healthy lifestyles, and develop good character and citizenship. Over 95% of the total budget comes from generous individuals, corporations and foundations. The Clubs are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. during summer and school breaks, and from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. when school is in session. Additional information is available at www.bgcmc.org or via phone at 831-394-5171.

About Marine Life Studies

Marine Life Studies is a nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching and inspiring the public to protect the oceans and marine life. Through our educational programs, children learn about the oceans and marine life, and the importance of protecting the environment entrusted to us all. Additional information is available at the website www.marinelifestudies.org or via phone at 831-901-3833.

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