



MYSTIC AQUARIUM

Executive Profile Donor Engagement Associate



Donor Engagement Associate

Mystic Aquarium

Mystic Aquarium's mission is to inspire people to care for and protect the ocean planet through conservation, education, and research.

Mystic Aquarium, a subsidiary of the Sea Research Foundation, is a one-of-a-kind experience and is considered one of our **nation's leading aquariums**, offering exemplary care to a variety of species while also serving as the Northeast's premier marine mammal rescue and rehabilitation center.

The aquarium – now celebrating 50 years -- is a member of the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA) and is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

Robust conservation and education programming along with unparalleled visitor experiences serve to strengthen personal connections to the animals and their environments.

Each year approximately **800,000 guests** experience the splendor of the Aquarium and viewing thousands of animals through structured interpretations, specially curated exhibits, and hands-on interactions. It is truly a place of wonder!



As a **leading research organization**, Mystic Aquarium employs a full staff of scientists, trainers, and specialists engaged in projects focused on the conservation and sustainability of our ocean planet.

Mystic Aquarium in the News

Mystic Aquarium's Arctic Coast, the **largest outdoor beluga whale habitat in the United States** (at 750,000-gallons) made quite a splash in June 2021.

In addition to its existing three belugas (Juno, Natasha & Kela), the Sea Research Foundation imported belugas from Canada.

The belugas, viewable to the public, are participating in non-invasive beluga research. These findings are essential to the advancement of

knowledge and conservation, which will impact our current beluga pod as well as their counterparts in the wild.



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Conservation Impact

Mystic Aquarium is deeply rooted in local and global action for the protection of our oceans and the species that call it home.

Coupled with a resolute concern for community and people, Mystic's conservation work defines its "[One Ocean, One Mission](#)" ethos.

Mystic Aquarium has an unwavering commitment to the region's economic and environmental success, and to advancing conservation impact globally.

This ethos reflects a 50-year heritage and a shared desire to create a better, more sustainable world that protects aquatic animals, assuring the survival of threatened species.

The Aquarium's work is a call for action infused with comprehensive compassion and respect.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Mystic Aquarium embraces the importance of **diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility** in our business and conservation practices. We strive to foster a sense of belonging within our organization, our guests, and the communities we serve, and are committed to dismantling systemic inequities. These are not just words on a paper, but a process and a journey.

Along the way we will make mistakes and it is important that we learn from our mistakes. We all carry implicit bias, and we ask that we carefully examine those biases and educate ourselves such that we are always being respectful of our staff, volunteers, and guests. Being an inclusive workplace entails embracing diversity in all its forms, and creating a safe environment for people to claim their own identity, whether it be race, ethnicity, gender, religious belief, etc.

Development Overview

Mystic Aquarium relies on [philanthropic support](#) and volunteer engagement to support its mission of inspiring people to care for and protect our ocean environment through conservation, education, and research.

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The Aquarium has a \$22 million annual revenue budget. The Development Department, led by **Senior Vice President of Development Tina Couch**, raises \$2 million annually from individuals, corporations, and foundations for critical needs not covered by ticket sales and membership. The Department is developing plans to significantly increase this annual philanthropic total.

The Board of Directors and the Development Committee are strong partners in the identification, cultivation, and solicitation of donors.

The Aquarium is in the early stages of a comprehensive capital planning process to determine the organization's next set of critical priorities, the steps needed to achieve them, and the long-term growth of philanthropy at the Aquarium. The position described in this Prospectus will be integral to the success of those plans.



Donor Engagement Associate - The Opportunity

Reporting to the Senior Vice President of Development, the **Donor Engagement Associate** will oversee all special events for the Aquarium. The primary function is to manage the execution of a wide range of donor cultivation and stewardship events, including, the four main signature events: The Artic Plunge, Annual Gala, Annual Golf Outing, and the Penguin Run. The role also includes all donor receptions, dedications, dinners, community events, and any other on-site Aquarium donor event.

The Donor Engagement Associate will join a collaborative team of five who are collectively responsible for creating and implementing a comprehensive development strategy for donors.

Responsibilities

- In partnership with the Senior Vice President, proactively implement a portfolio of annual donor cultivation and stewardship events for the Aquarium.
 - ✓ Manage the main calendar of events.
 - ✓ Produce and manage event timelines and deliverables.
- Carefully organize each signature event inclusive of:
 - ✓ Marketing materials and collateral for events
 - ✓ Invitation lists and create invitations.
 - ✓ Master list of attendees
 - ✓ Seating charts, as needed.

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- ✓ Up-to-date reports on events, as needed.
- ✓ Organizing and securing live and silent auction items, as needed, or work in collaboration with other development staff to secure appropriate auction items and collateral.
- ✓ Stewardship with donors after events
- Adhere to best practices, and diligently track outcomes.
- Collaborate with staff across the organization to shape events that bolster philanthropic priorities and effectively communicate those messages to donors and prospects.
- Collaborate with communications office to create compelling marketing collateral for events.
- Act as main liaison for all event protocols.
- Maintain strong communications with all event stakeholders internal and external, ensuring that all have a clear sense of the event objectives.
- Partner in the production of communications for events, including itineraries, briefings, invitations, correspondence, and other collateral.
- Work in close collaboration with colleagues in other Development program areas to ensure coordinated strategies and clear communications related to all donor events.
- Evaluate, refine, and enhance annual events and event models.
- Ensure excellent customer service, client support, and seamless navigation of events.
- (As appropriate) enlist Aquarium staff to attend events.
- In collaboration with Senior Vice President, select appropriate venues and vendors for each event (caterers, photographers, audio-visual, valet, etc.) and work with vendors to ensure success.
- Effectively play a key role in donor engagement and stewardship pre and post event.
- Responsible for ensuring event and attendance data is accurately captured in the Raiser's Edge database.
- Manage all aspects of event budgets, including forecasting, payment of expenses, and collecting revenues in an accurate and timely manner.
- Keep abreast of the latest event trends and technology.

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Qualifications and Skills

- Bachelor's degree in a related discipline and/or equivalent experience
- 5 years' experience in planning, executing, and managing events.
- **A self-starting and resourceful manager of projects and events who is successful with minimal supervision in a high-stakes environment:**
 - ✓ Ability to establish priorities, manage shifting priorities, and seamlessly manage numerous time-sensitive projects.
 - ✓ Ability to independently anticipate roadblocks, create viable solutions to problems, and manage up and around to decision makers to efficiently decide on the appropriate path forward.
 - ✓ Ability to manage a high volume of work that is characteristic of rhythms of intensity (e.g. preceding event day) while maintaining exceptional attention to detail
 - ✓ Ability to follow through and execute without dropping balls or taking missteps.
 - ✓ Ability and excitement to complete necessary administrative tasks (e.g., capturing notes, disseminating, and tracking next steps, forecasting and tracking budget)
- **An adaptable and growth-oriented professional who can learn quickly and with purpose:**
 - ✓ Ability to receive and retain a high volume of information.
 - ✓ Ability to learn new content quickly.
 - ✓ Comfortability with a fast paced and high stakes working environment.
- **A strong written communicator with the ability to manage self and others to strong outputs.**
 - ✓ A solid to strong command of the written word, producing email communications, documents, project plans, etc. that are free from errors and professional.

The ideal candidate will be an effective collaborator, consummate professional, and quick study who is passionate about Mystic Aquarium's conservation mission.

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Location

Mystic Aquarium is in the heart of historic [Mystic, CT](#), a coastal town close to the Rhode Island border and less than an hour from New Haven. Nearly one million-day trippers and tourists flock to Mystic each year and of those, 80% include Mystic Aquarium as part of their visit to this charming seaside village.

To Apply

Send nominations or cover letter and resume to: **Lisa Vuona, Managing Partner, at** lvuona@boyden.com