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OCEAN EXPLORIUM KICKS OFF COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN WITH A CHALLENGE

NEW BEDFORD, MA (May 16, 2013) —

The Ocean Explorium is kicking off a community-wide fundraising campaign to 'Save Your Ocean Explorium, Build Your Future'. According to Executive Director Abbey Spargo, "An anonymous donor has issued the Ocean Explorium a challenge match of \$50,000 if we can raise \$100,000 by July 1."

In order to meet the challenge match deadline, the Ocean Explorium will be communicating its message often and through various mechanisms. "Our message will highlight the Ocean Explorium's impact on the region, what the Ocean Explorium means to each SouthCoast resident, and how the Ocean Explorium affects your future."

Ms. Spargo continued: "As we roll out the 'Save Your Ocean Explorium, Build Your Future' campaign, we will be asking for the generous support of our friends, our members, and the community, who recognize the value of our educational offerings and the impacts we have on learners of every age, on students and teachers, and on the region. While only gifts from individual donors received before July 1 will count toward the match, all funds will bring us closer to our fundraising goal of \$300,000."

Ms. Spargo added that "We are proud of what we have achieved in the past five years and we intend to build on that foundation. The Ocean Explorium has an ambitious vision: to become **the** center for informal education in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, through engaging live exhibits, emerging technologies, interactive experiences and strategic partnerships."

"It is not enough to raise the funds previously provided by the University" said Ms. Spargo. "The Ocean Explorium needs to do more in order to grow and to continue offering cutting edge educational opportunities for students, families, teachers, and the public across the SouthCoast. We are aggressively pursuing grants, foundations, corporate sponsors, and other sources of revenue, and now we must ask our friends, our members, and the community at large for their support."

Maureen Sylvia Armstrong, President of Sylvia and Company Insurance Agency and a founding member of the Board of Trustees, shares Ms. Spargo's confidence but cautions that, unless significant funds are raised, the Ocean Explorium cannot remain open. "We worked so hard to open and to expand our exhibits; we built a reputation for excellence and earned recognition as an educational resource for the SouthCoast and beyond. The Ocean Explorium has successfully pursued funding from some of the strongest foundations and federal agencies. It is too important to fail. It cannot be allowed to simply fade away. Every dollar counts. Donate today - in person, by mail, or online at oceanexplorium.org - and 'Save Your Ocean Explorium, Build Your Future' ".

The Ocean Explorium is located at 174 Union Street in downtown New Bedford and is handicap accessible via the rear entrance. Seasonal Hours are Thursday through Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm; Summer Hours, in July and August only, are Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is \$8.50 for adults, \$7.00 for seniors and students with I.D., and \$6.50 for children between 3 and 17 years of age. Children under 3 and members are free. The Science on a Sphere® exhibit is provided by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. To learn more, call 508.994.5400 or visit www.oceanexplorium.org.