



IT'S ALWAYS PLAYTIME WITH DOLPHINS

As many of you may know, Dolphin Research Center is home to 22 Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins. Since they are incredibly smart and crave fun and excitement each and every day, we strive to make sure no two days are the same for the dolphins. By incorporating play into every session, we can ensure ample variation and stimulation are provided in positive ways that further build strong relationships.

Because the dolphins live in natural saltwater lagoons, they have endless chances to play every day even when not with their human friends. Between the crabs, shrimp, fish, and plant life present, the dolphins can entertain themselves any time. Just imagine the excitement of swimming at high speeds along the surface of the water, chasing that one glistening fish you want so badly. We've recently spotted Pandora doing this and wish she could tell us about



Photo by: Will Wiggins
Luna enjoys pushing Jen around during a playtime session

the fun. Louie also showed his fascination with small sea life when he popped up at the dock with a big crab in his mouth! The dolphins often find live and inanimate objects to use as personal play toys throughout their day.

The family also plays with each other between sessions. It is not uncommon to pass the front lagoon and see the youngsters engaged in one of their favorite games, "slip n slide". They race to swim up on the dock, slide across

the corner, and plop back into the water. Sometimes, the one who gets on the dock will even purposely stay up there to tease the others until they succeed in pushing off the "king of the hill"! Delta is a big fan of this game. No matter if the fun comes from the environment or their friends, when the DRC dolphins are not in session, playtime is a big part of life.

With that in mind, it's not hard to see why our sessions at DRC look like such great times. Whenever we go down on the docks to work with a dolphin, it is our duty to make it a positive experience. The most effective way to do that is simply to have fun. The dolphins feed off our energy and positive attitudes, making their session a success, and strengthening the bond between the trainers and their grey faced friends.

Throughout the week, all the DRC dolphins participate in

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THE COLLEGE OF MARINE MAMMAL PROFESSIONS IS BORN

Dolphin Research Center has always been known as a pioneer in marine mammal and environmental education. From day trips to distance learning and *DolphinLab* (our series of week-long college accredited courses), DRC has always put education in the forefront of our mission. We are continuing that tradition with the College of Marine Mammal Professions (CMMP).

The CMMP is the first institution to offer a college

degree specific to marine mammal behavior, care and training. The idea has long been on our minds. Some of the most common feedback/requests from departing DLab students were, "I wish the course was longer" and "Why is there not a degree offered in marine mammal training?"

We have long been aware that many marine mammal facilities require applicants for training positions to have extensive hands on experience working directly

with marine mammals. Where do you get experience if you can't get the job first? Internships. However, internships are not all the same and therefore employers cannot always gauge the experience level an applicant achieved.

As you can imagine, establishing a college isn't an easy task. Fortunately, much of the coursework and structure had already been established through more than 20 years of developing

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BECOME PART OF THE ADVENTURE

Dolphin Research Center is a not-for-profit organization that conducts innovative research and education projects. We invite you to join our unique family by becoming a member of the Dolphin Society. As a member, your tax-deductible donation will help us provide the best environment and care humanly possible for the dolphins and sea lions who call DRC home. Your membership will also support our manatee rescue program and provide the educational programs that encourage our guests to become ambassadors for all marine animals and the environment we share. Annual memberships are available in several levels:

Individual (\$40 for adults, \$25 for full-time students with proof of enrollment) – receive a subscription to the *Dolphin Society* newsletter, our e-newsletter, a 10% discount on most gift shop items, free admission for one to DRC for one year, and one free guest pass.

Trio (\$70) – receive all the benefits of an individual membership plus free admission to DRC for up to three people for one year.

Gray Cross (\$90) – receive all the benefits of the Trio membership plus a subscription to our quarterly *Gray Cross* newsletter and free admission to DRC for up to four people for one year.

Sponsor (\$150) – receive all the benefits of the Gray Cross membership plus the opportunity to sponsor a narrated session at DRC and admission for up to five people for one year.

Research Team (\$500) – receive all the benefits of the Sponsor membership plus receive a personal tour of the Research Tower (by appointment) and admission for up to six people for one year.

Memberships can be purchased via our website at www.dolphins.org, by phone (305) 289-1121 X229, or by mailing your check or credit card number to DRC, 58901 Overseas Highway, Grassy Key, FL 33050. Please note that memberships are not transferable and the member must present photo identification for admission.



Its always play time , From page 1

a wide variety of session types. On any given day they can take part in guest programs, learn new behaviors, enjoy novel enrichment, play cognition games or participate in voluntary medical sessions. All of these activities are very different, but something they all have in common is the use of play.

Take guest programs for example. Each of them includes certain activities such as backrubs, handshakes, imitations or signals, just to name a few. However, if the trainers came down on the dock and always asked for those behaviors in the same way and in the same order every session, it would become boring, and would eventually result in the sessions not being positive experiences. Instead, we not only vary what types of sessions the dolphins are asked to participate in, but we also add elements of novelty so that they are always exciting to the dolphins and the guests.

For an athletic dolphin like Pax, playing a quick game of throw and catch with a ball in between handshakes gets him screaming with excitement. Louie loves learning new things, so he enjoys it when we ask him to show off his newest behavior for adoring guests before he imitates the last person doing a *Dolphin Dip*.

You will see this same approach during medical sessions and checkups. A good example is Calusa with her hula hoop. For her, nothing is more rewarding than playing with her favorite toy. So when our medical team wants to do an ultrasound, we often give Calusa her hoop and allow her to drape it all over herself during the exam. She absolutely loves it!

We also have sessions dedicated entirely to playtime. We call these sessions enrichment. No fish is involved. Instead, the trainer brings out other things the dolphins enjoy and find exciting. These can be a combination of toys, ice, water

hoses, floating chairs, blow up boats and more. Enrichment sessions are special in that there are no expectations of the dolphins at all. We simply spend time with them in a different context. It's always great to see the dolphins having a blast when we play together. The kids in the front lagoon love it so much, they often pop up, screaming, to familiar people as if to entice them into an impromptu playtime.

Play time not only makes things exciting for the dolphins, but it also provides them with extra physical and mental exercise, and helps strengthen our relationships with these magnificent animals. The impact on the dolphins' lives is evident even to first time visitors. I cannot recall how many times a guest has stopped me simply to comment on how much fun it looks like we have down on the docks, or how they can see what a meaningful relationship we share with the dolphins. Next time you visit DRC and see dolphins goofing around with each other or their human friends, just sit back, soak it in, and remember, it's always playtime with dolphins!

By Christina Tilley

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our *Adult DolphinLab* program, which is accredited through the Florida Keys Community College. However, lots of decisions still needed to be made. These ranged from what type of degrees we would offer and their content, to how many students and the overall length of the program. Even the name of our college was among the numerous details.

Once these other decisions were made, it was time for the application process. Director of Education Kirsten Donald along with Director of Accounting Special Projects Deb Huckabee-Wesson tirelessly worked with the Florida Commission of Independent Education and in September

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of 2012 the College of Marine Mammal Professions (CMMP) was licensed and established.

The first program will be an Associate of Science Degree (AS) in Marine Mammal Behavior, Care, and Training (MMBCT). Prior to applying, applicants must complete the pre-required general education courses, earning a C grade or higher at another accredited college or university. This will be an immersion program with 60 hours of course work a week for 36 weeks straight, not including study time. Not only does this give them an intensive education, but it also prepares them for the type of hours they sometimes may devote as animal care givers.

The coursework is intense. Students have more than 195 hours of lecture on behavior, care and training as well as more than 1770 hours hands on experience in animal care and training focused on marine mammals. You can view the full program content in our course catalog found on our website.

On November 1st, 2012, open enrollment began. After reviewing applications we invited prospective students for an on-site interview and tour in March. Candidates came from all over the country with various backgrounds. After also completing a swim test and an endurance exercise, each student met individually with the candidate selection committee, where they gave an oral presentation followed by an interview. All of the candidates shared a passion for marine mammals, but we only chose six. In our inaugural year, we want to set the students and ourselves up for success, and we feel that with a smaller group we can

provide the best quality education possible. We are looking forward to our August 31st start date. The students will spend their first six weeks in an accelerated foundation in the basics about marine mammals and their care. They will then move on to the "apprenticeship" phase, where they will join the Animal Care and Training Staff in dietary preparation, building relationships with the animals and learning to work with them on their own, interact with our guests, narrate sessions and facilitate some of our interactive programs. The students will also participate in a wide range of activities that include behavioral research observations, husbandry care, other public education presentations, cognitive research, and conducting novel training with dolphins, sea lions, exotic birds and dogs.

As you can see, this will be a college experience like no other. DRC was co-founded by Jayne and Mandy Rodriguez to educate and inspire people for the benefit of marine mammals and the environment we share. Their core ideal of creating strong relationships between marine mammals and people, based on trust and respect, remains today, and we hope to instill this in our students who will be the future care givers of marine mammals around the world.

By Debbie Rose & Kirsten Donald



Photo by: DRC staff

College students will observe and participate in many sessions throughout the program.

Adopt-A-Dolphin

You can sponsor your favorite dolphin or sea lion at DRC through our Adopt-A-Dolphin or Sea Lion program. Experience the warm feeling that comes with knowing that you are helping to provide for the care and feeding of your friend. Your tax-deductible donation for a membership will help us to fulfill our promise to provide the finest home humanly possible for our marine mammal family. Memberships are available in several levels:

E-Dolfriend (\$15) – receive an electronic membership that includes a subscription to our monthly e-newsletter and an e-mailed full-color certificate with your favorite dolphin or sea lion's picture and a biography about your friend you can print out at home.

Dolfriend (\$50) – receive a subscription to the *Dolphin Society* newsletter, our e-newsletter, a 10% discount on most gift shop items, a color certificate with your dolphin or sea lion's picture, a biography about your friend, free admission for two to DRC for one year, and one free guest pass.

Pod Pal (\$100) – receive all the benefits of a Dolfriend membership plus a subscription to our *Gray Cross* newsletter and free admission to DRC for up to four people for one year.

Parent (\$240) – Provide the ultimate support for your friend by pledging \$20 per month to sponsor one of their meals each month. You will receive all the benefits of a Pod Pal membership plus free admission for up to five people for one year and silver bucket stickers for your certificate to represent the meals you provided for your dolphin or sea lion friend.

Adopt-A-Dolphin or Sea Lion memberships make a great gift and can be purchased via our website at www.dolphins.org, by phone (305) 289-1121 X229, or by mailing your check or credit card number to DRC, 58901 Overseas Highway, Grassy Key, FL 33050. Please note that memberships are not transferable and the member must present photo identification for admission.

www.dolphins.org

Innerspace or cyberspace, the dolphins of Dolphin Research Center look forward to your visit.

OCEAN NOTIONS

Did you ever think that even when you are on vacation you can still help, protect and keep our planet clean? Think about all the different things you do while on vacation to get ready for the day. When you brush your teeth make sure that you turn off the water so you don't waste it. The fish in the planet's oceans, rivers and lakes need that to survive! By using the water only when you need it you leave more for the animals that call it home. Turning off the lights, whether at home or in your hotel room, before you go out and explore also saves electricity.

What is the best way to make sure we don't pollute the air we breathe? Riding a bike, kayaking or even walking to many places and activities can help protect the atmosphere! You get some exercise and have a lot of fun too. You need water to stay cool and hydrated. Using your own water bottle or mug decreases the number of plastic water bottles being used. The less plastic used, the cleaner and less polluted our planet!

Reducing, reusing and recycling can be as simple as checking around your picnic or beach area to make sure you

haven't left anything behind. Putting your lunch and snacks in reusable containers rather than plastic bags cuts down on waste. Throwing trash in proper receptacles is a big help. Remember that even if you are hiking in the mountains or visiting the pyramids in the desert, any litter can eventually find its way to the ocean. You can always do your part in keeping our planet clean! A little bit goes a long way, even on vacation.

-Ashley Nolan

Circle the pictures that help you conserve while on vacation



Recycle



Driving to all activities



Leaving the water running



Turning the lights off when you leave



Buying water in plastic bottles



Packing lunch in reusable containers

THE CORRECT ANSWERS ARE: RECYCLE; TURNING OFF THE LIGHTS; PACKING LUNCH IN REUSABLE CONTAINERS.

WHAT MARINE MAMMALS TEACH US

As summertime approaches, we all gear up for some much-needed leisure time! Families take vacations and everyone is in the mood for games and fun. Baseball, fishing, camping, swimming, backyard barbecues and even just hanging out at the beach are common activities for this time of year. While a game of volleyball begins in the sand, marine mammals play in their own way in the ocean nearby!

Marine mammals love to play. It is a sign of their social nature as well as advanced intelligence. Play behavior is more than just fun, however. For many animals, including dolphins, play acts as a way to exercise, receive mental stimulation, strengthen social bonds, and practice important survival skills like foraging and breeding. This is not just for marine mammals in the wild. The dolphins and sea lions that call DRC home also receive similar benefits much to the delight of our visitors!

Like humans, young animals often engage in play more often than the adults. Observing young California sea lions is very much like watching young children on a playground! Juvenile sea lions chase, nip, and wrestle with each other both in and out of the water. They also find objects and toss them back and forth. Young dolphins are quite rambunctious as well. They regularly chase each other, roll around, and rough house. In fact, just like children, marine mammals can get cuts and scrapes from these antics. Tooth raking, or scratching, is also used in play or to show affection. Sometimes you see these scratches on dolphins when you are up close to them here at DRC. This is normal play behavior and usually the sign of a recent good time!

In the summer, human children create entire new worlds



Photo by: Katy Donegan

Sandy (back) and Pax (front) love playing with these floating toys.

in imaginative play. Dolphins have also been observed getting quite inventive in their environment. Pods of dolphins are known to play cooperative games that appear similar to tag, keep away, and volleyball. On occasion, dolphins also leave the group for some solitary play. Individuals investigate objects, rub on the sand and even blow bubbles and chase them. Some clever dolphins have even been recorded blowing bubble rings and playing with them much like children with soap bubbles!

Any object can become a toy for a marine mammal due to their curious nature. Sticks, rocks, sea grass, kelp and even fish are often used as playthings. Sometimes a dolphin may even prefer certain items and select “favorites”. The creativity and complexity of play behavior is another indicator of dolphin brilliance.

Marine mammal curiosity can, unfortunately, lead them into trouble when they find objects that shouldn't be in their environment. Dolphins have been known to interact with trash such as rope, nets, fishing line, bags and other plastic debris. These items are not safe and can cause serious injury. Just as we “baby proof” our homes, it's up to every one of us to do our part to ensure a healthy and safe ocean for dolphins and other marine animals.

Dolphins might even include other species in their activities. Large whales, fish and other species of dolphins can all make for great playmates. Dolphins also approach humans on boats. Many people report watching dolphins cruise right alongside a moving vessel. This is much like people enjoying surfing or waterskiing. The boat creates a slipstream that allows dolphins to move quickly with less energy. It's a great way to hitch a ride. However, if you do spot dolphins nearby from a boat, be very careful. Make sure to slow down, avoid changing course, and give the dolphins the right of way so that they can stay safe.

Although dolphins occasionally approach people in the wild, it is important to remember that it is unlawful for us to approach them. Although wild dolphins spend a great deal of time playing, they must spend most of their time engaging in survival behaviors like foraging for food, avoiding predators, caring for their young and finding mates. When we try to chase after dolphins in the wild to get closer, we can interrupt these behaviors. This can lead to stress-related health issues and population decline. This is why the only place that is safe and legal to play with dolphins up close is at a marine mammal facility like DRC.

Whether we are at the beach enjoying the warm sunshine or on a boat fishing and relaxing, we should keep marine mammals safe by only observing their play from a distance. No matter where you live, now is the time to get out and enjoy the sunshine. Marine mammals teach us that play is important. We all can benefit from a fun, relaxing and safe summer vacation!

By Noelle Belden

REMEMBERING KIBBY



Photo by: Katy Donegan
A gentle manner and sleepy eyes were Kibby trademarks.

It is Easter week and I am rushing out to my next session, a baby training appointment with Santini's 3 month old son, Reese. I pass the sea lion habitat, glancing to my left and seeing Karen and Lina sun bathing on the floating dock as admirers snap photographs. I approach the "Boys Beach" and look to my right, expecting to see that goofy grin, that twinkling eye, and to hear that scream that says, "Welcome to my beach! What's your hurry? Slow down and stay a spell!" Then it hits me again, in the pit of my stomach. Kibby is not at the beach, at least not this beach on the shores of Grassy Key. In my heart and mind I see him on a beach in Paradise, alongside his partner in life, Delphi, people-watching and inviting our loved ones who have gone on before us to "slow down and stay a spell!"

When asked what the most difficult part of our jobs as care givers is, we all respond with the same answer. Saying goodbye to someone you love, someone you grew up with, someone who was your teacher and mentor. Kibby was all that and more, to everyone who had the privilege of knowing him. As most of our DRC family knows, Kibby passed away unexpectedly on January 18, 2013. In less than 12 hours he was gone. He appeared to feel fabulous the day before he passed. Late that afternoon when the volunteers had a "jello party", Kibby was first

in line, rolling upside down and giggling as they tossed him the gelatin treat. The next morning he came to his session, but didn't quite complete his breakfast. His trainers, knowing him so well, reported his behavior to the supervisors. The DRC team swung into action, asking Kibby to come into the shallow pool - actually his favorite place, the "Boys Beach". They took blood samples and monitored him closely. By late afternoon he was being supported by his family, and it was in our loving arms that he took his last breath. The necropsy showed evidence that his heart had failed. We know that Kibby was a "senior citizen", guesstimated to be in his late 30s. A wild dolphin's average life span is 20 years or less based on research out of Sarasota, Florida and off of Texas. While we have seen some female dolphins (like Theresa and Molly) live into their 50s, the males, as in most species, generally don't live as long.

Not all animals or people are born as robust or healthy as others. Early in his life, Kibby was not expected to even make it into his teens. He had some serious health concerns, and probably was a dolphin that - had he lived his life in the wild dolphin - would not have survived to adulthood. Kibby was one of our first critical care cases and an example of our excellent "medical plan" that all of our animals receive. He was also the dolphin that pioneered the voluntary watering behavior at DRC. To help him recover, we needed to tube him with fresh water every day. Many years ago, this meant putting nets in the water, catching Kibby, holding him in a stretcher, putting the

tube down his throat and into his stomach, attaching a funnel, and pouring in several liters of water.

We heard that Sea World had trained a dolphin to accept the stomach tube voluntarily, and immediately began to train it to Kibby. He mastered the behavior and in the process taught us the wonderful benefits of voluntarily watering dolphins. Now all of our dolphins and sea lions either know or are learning this life-saving behavior. Kibby continued to get drinks of fresh water every day. We believe this not only extended his life, but also kept him healthier. He was fit and active right up until the very end. That is why this came as such a shock. Unbeknownst to us, Kibby was at that place in his life where, even with all of the excellent health care he received, his heart was tired and just gave out.

As heart broken as we all are at losing our dear friend, we get through the days by remembering what I like to think of as Kibby's



Photo by: DRC staff
goofy charm and enthusiasm brightened everyone's lives.

motto, "Don't worry, be happy!" With his grinning face in my mind, I would like to share some memories of Mr. Kibbles and Bits. This is how he would want to be remembered, not with a tear but with a smile, a chuckle, or a full-on belly laugh! Some of these are DRC family memories, but many come from you, also part of his family,

who have loved him over the years from afar. You visited whenever you could, and always went to the beach to check in with the ultimate Beach Boy, our own "Jimmy Buffett" in his DRC Margaritaville. Thank you for your memories, your support, and most of all your love.

"Kibby's partner in life was Delphi. Male dolphins form pair bonds that can last for a life time. Before Delphi knew Kibby, he was bonded with another male named Duffy. When Duffy died, Delphi met Kibby and those two became inseparable. The only times they were not together were when we were breeding and wanted one or the other to father the baby. The first time Kibby had a "date" with an eligible girl (Aleta), he stayed away from her at the far side of the lagoon. Then we observed him at the fence, talking with Delphi on the opposite side. Moments later, Kibby approached Aleta and the date progressed from hand-holding to ...well, you get the picture. Did Delphi tell his friend how to please those finicky lady dolphins? It sure looked like it!"

"As far as we know, Kibby is the only non-human ever to get credit as a designer/creator of a product. His nickname in his younger years was Houdini. Whenever he wanted to visit dolphins in an adjoining lagoon, he would go through the fence - and it was often difficult to even find out where! He'd split the plastic fence like a zipper and slide through. Mandy was working with a fence company at the time, and every time Kibby got through a fence, he would report back the technique that was used. The company and Mandy kept working until they came up with a fence that was safe and secure for dolphins. The funny thing was that Kibby never dismantled the perimeter fences.

He didn't want to break out, he wanted to be in with lady dolphins! Mandy asked the fence company to credit "Kibby the Dolphin" with the design of the now famous Dolphin Mesh used by DRC and facilities world wide."

"He was such a loving dolphin, the one who looked at you with gentle sleepy eyes and I will forever treasure my personal time spent with this playful guy. One time he almost rested on my shoulder as if to ask for an extra hug."

"You showed me that love is kind and training requires patience,



Photo by: Krissy Wejebe

Kibby was always up for fun, even if we asked him to wear hats or, like in this picture, a life preserver!

especially when you like swimming around with your eyes closed. I'm sure you were saying, 'Haha! I can't see you!' You taught me that it is not about what the trainer has in mind to do, it's about what you want to do."

"I will miss Kibby's giggle!"

"The day I left DRC as a *DolphinLab* student I thanked you for all you taught and I promised that I would embark on a mission to use that knowledge to change the lives of countless animals who I have had the honor of caring for."

"It's so sad to hear that Kibbles has passed. He added such great character as a member of the "beach bum boys"! It was always nice to hear him scream at the top of his lungs at anyone who didn't stop by and chat. At DRC the people get trained by the dolphins. Kibby was good at that!"

It is clear that we all celebrate the life of the one-and only Kibby. Most of these memories include how Kibby touched us and taught us. He was a great teacher, usually one of the first dolphins that apprentice trainers were introduced to. His approach to the lessons he taught was always, first and foremost, have FUN! I always tell new trainers or guests that they cannot "break" the dolphins. Be yourself and accept them for who they are and have fun. Kibby exemplified that philosophy and taught us all so much. It is therefore very fitting that one of our family members has established a memorial fund in his name -- the Kibby Memorial Scholarship. Each year we will honor Kibby's memory by giving this gift to a student enrolled in DRC's College of Marine Mammal Professions (CMMP) that is in need of funding. That student will get the opportunity to live the dream of working with marine mammals. We invite you to join us by donating to the Kibby CMMP Scholarship in his memory. I can hear Kibby now screaming with enthusiasm at the idea!

To come full circle I must close by letting you know that when Kibby was missing from the Boys Beach that Easter week, my heart didn't hurt for long. There was Rainbow, practically beached in the shallow water, grinning up at me as I arrived at the shore, honoring his friend's memory. The tradition of the Beach Boys goes on! We are also blessed that Kibby still smiles at us every day through his kids: Pandora, Delta, and Gambit, and his granddaughter Luna. Smile when you remember Mr. Kibbles. Don't Worry, Be Happy!

- Linda Erb

For more memories of Kibby please read the online version of this Newsletter in the members only area of our website.

POD UPDATE

A.J. - In Tune sessions allow the dolphins to show off their favorite dance moves and high energy behaviors. One afternoon, an education staff member walked by our back lagoons to find A.J. dancing to the music. Although there were no trainers on the docks or guests to watch him, A.J. enjoyed the music on his own.

Aleta - Aleta proved that she is quite the babysitter when she moved in with her sister, Santini, and nephew, Reese. Aleta takes Reese on dives and speed runs, swims with him around the lagoon, and provides much needed breaks for the new mom. Although Santini is an amazing mom, it's always nice to have a little help with a new calf, and Aleta has certainly swum up to the plate.

Calusa - Calusa is a very observant dolphin. Not only does she watch guests as they pass by on the causeway, but since she moved in with Molly, Calusa picked up on some 'Mollyisms'. When Molly moved to DRC she knew a different set of hand signals. Calusa, ever curious, noticed that Molly had a 'different language' for certain behaviors. Always up for a challenge, Calusa quickly learned the new signals.



Photos by: Cathy Jones
Karen (left) and Lina are almost mirror images of each other during their snooze time on the dock.

Cayo - After one of her

sessions, Santini threw a dive ring into another lagoon. Cayo happened to swim right where it landed, and scooped up the ring. Cayo spotted a few guests up on the boardwalk, and flung the ring up to them. One person caught it and proceeded to throw it back, which resulted in a game of catch that lasted a few minutes and piqued the interest of the other dolphins.

Delta - DRC dolphins are no strangers to Florida Keys wildlife, but recently Delta seemed to have a particular fascination with a juvenile pelican. The young bird landed on a dock in the front lagoon and Delta immediately swam over and popped up in front of it. After a few moments he even touched the tip of his rostrum to the bird's beak.

Flagler and Luna - New faces are always welcome with the dolphins, especially when they are there to play. During an enrichment session, Flagler and Luna met their *Trainers for a Day*. Each of the dolphins picked out their own TFD guest to focus on. They stayed loyal to their new friends for the entire session, and had fun as they screamed, splashed water, and played with toys.

Gypsi - DRC dolphins sure do have a sense of humor, and new staff members are often the target of their tricks. While some recently hired employees were down on the dock, Gypsi took

advantage of a moment when no other dolphins were around. She popped up out of nowhere, right in front of a Guest Services employee, and gave her quite a scare. Gypsi didn't only do this once, but two more times. She enjoyed the reaction she got out of the staff member.

Jax - Although Jax is one of



Photo by: Arielle Valle
with guests or on their own, cousins Luna (left) and Flagler are always up for fun!

the smaller male dolphins, he has no problem hanging with the big boys. When Rainbow and Sandy moved into the lagoon with Jax, he quickly formed a bond with the two. He often hangs with Rainbow under the dock or swims in pair with Sandy. Although he does still play with his old pals, A.J. and Tanner, Jax has shown that his size is no issue in making new friends.

Karen and Lina - Out on habitat, the sea lions sun themselves for hours at a time. Recently, guests are seeing double. Karen is a role model for her younger companion, Lina. Every time Karen makes even the slightest adjustment in what she does, her energetic friend looks over and copies her action. Whether it is the way she sleeps or how she stretches, Lina follows Karen's every move.

Kilo - All of the dolphins and sea lions participate voluntarily in their own health care. At the

moment, Kilo often practices new medical behaviors, including voluntary ultrasound. This behavior enables the medical staff to get images of his internal organs, which assists in his preventative healthcare.

Louie - Louie is a big fan of research games, especially one called "Match to Sample". To play, we present Louie with three objects- a sample, a correct match, and an object that does not resemble the other two. He is then asked to touch the object that correctly matches the sample item. One day in the middle of this game, a pelican swooped down and crashed into the water behind him. Although all the other dolphins got startled and quickly swam off, Louie did not even seem to notice. He was so focused that even the commotion could not distract him from his favorite game.

Merina - DRC guests often ask if the dolphins catch the fish in their lagoons. Merina gave the perfect example of how the dolphins have fun with their smaller marine friends. While a trainer interacted with one dolphin, she heard a scream behind her. When she turned around, Merina sat upright with a live fish in her mouth. The trainer bent down and took the fish, and then showed the crowd the present Merina had brought up. Since it was still alive the trainer returned it to the water. Merina caught it again and presented it to the trainer for the second time, as if to say, "You dropped this!"

Molly - Just like people, as dolphins' age, they can begin to have vision problems. Although her eyesight is still intact, Molly has started to learn behaviors on verbal and touch cues along with

the standard visual cues, which will prepare her in case her vision ever declines.

Pandora - In the event of a severe hurricane, the dolphins are trained to wear a neoprene band around their peduncle which



Photo by: Kathi Rogers
Reese is a curious kid and mom Santini is also showing him how to like the spotlight of our attention.

displays DRC's contact information. One of the trainers decided to ask Pandora to practice wearing her peduncle band. She wore it with no problem, so the trainer decided to see if Pandora would expand her new fashion by wearing a red baseball cap. Unlike the peduncle band, Pandora took one look at the hat and quickly decided it was too weird.

Pax and Talon - Tursi's oldest sons, Talon and Pax, have moved into their own lagoon and now enjoy quality family time. They talk and wave to people at the bridge and chat with the girls on the other side of the underwater 'phone'. (A pipeline between the lagoons.) During sessions, guests can watch as the boys try to outdo one another on high energy

behaviors, usually soaking the trainers with water in the process.

Rainbow - The female dolphins tend to be the better shoppers at DRC. They thoughtfully pick out the best rock or piece of sea grass they can find and present it to the recipient with excitement. However, Rainbow decided to give the girls a run for their money. A guest patiently waited as Rainbow shopped around the bottom of his lagoon. When he emerged he proudly carried an old walkie-talkie radio.

Reese - As the newest member of the DRC family, Reese learns quickly, and shows that he is quite an independent calf. Reese goes along with Santini on behaviors, but also ventures out on his own. He chats with the youngsters on the other side of the fence, and also plays with trainers' fingers and target poles. Reese is already shaping up to be just as stellar as his mom.

Sandy - There is plenty of natural enrichment in the dolphins' environment, but sometimes they

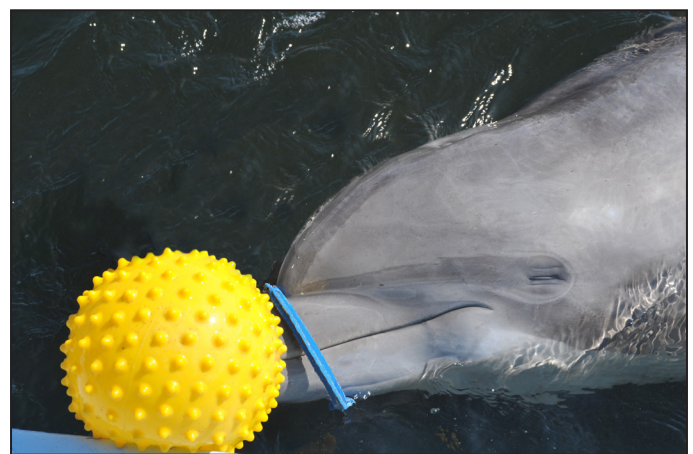


Photo by: Arielle Valle
It's a blast to see a big dolphin like Sandy show off his playful side with toys like a ball and ring.

get extra creative to entertain themselves. One morning, Sandy was spotted with a bright green dive ring on his rostrum. For over an hour he threw the toy as far

SPOTLIGHT ON CALUSA

As a beautiful Florida Keys day draws to a close and the sun is setting in the sky, a slapping sound can be heard from a distant lagoon. Could it be by any chance be our little Miss Calusa making a point by smacking her flipper on the water?

As our beloved girl heads rapidly towards her teen years you can certainly see those typical teenager characteristics developing. One moment she is like a little girl, gleefully swimming with her half hula-hoop and up to all kinds of cheeky antics. Then, suddenly, she decides to liberate herself from 'kid' status and take on the more mature role of hanging out with her older lagoon mate, Molly, and making sure that all is well with her.

If Calusa were a human child, she would be continually outgrowing her clothes. For periods of time she has that gawky teenage look then gradually transforms into a sleek, streamlined beauty as she moves toward adulthood.

That sassy twinkle in her



Even though Calusa's growing up, she still shows off her mischievous side.

eye still remains the same. You can almost see her brain working in there - curious, questioning, challenging and more.

Calusa is now very particular about style, just as some of us

can be about designer labels. Yes, Calusa still loves her hula-hoops, but give her a nice pristine intact one and within a short space of time she will have broken it in half into her preferred, half-circle fashion, similar to kids who prefer their jeans with rips and holes in the knees. If she has stored her beloved half-circle hula-hoop somewhere for safe keeping and catches her sister Pandora trying to pick it up, she whizzes across the lagoon to grab it first, as if her sister is trying to 'borrow' her favorite fashion item without her permission!

Ask Calusa for a present, and she will spend a lot more time looking for the perfect gift 'at the mall' (the bottom of her lagoon as we know it), rather than grabbing the first thing that she can lay her flippers on. Recently, while observing a session across from Calusa's lagoon, I suddenly felt something soggy and wet hit the back of my legs.

When I turned around I discovered a plastic ring covered in seaweed behind me, and Calusa's beady little eye peeking at me through the mangroves. Yep - she wanted to ensure that my focus was on her. She then proceeded to merrily giggle now that she had



*Photo by: Peter Clark
Calusa doesn't leave her toy behind when she goes out for high energy behaviors.*

grabbed my attention!

The one thing we've always known about Calusa is that she is very good at expressing herself. Whether it be screams of excitement when she is rewarded while learning a new behavior, flipper slaps to demonstrate to her companions that one of them has possibly displeased her, or is just saying, "I'm bored - entertain me!", Calusa makes her point.

Then there is that competitive streak. Sometimes, in the middle of a session she decides that she does not feel like doing something that is being requested. Of course, that is her choice, and is fine by us.

However, call over her older sister Pandora and request the same of her and, before you know, Calusa speeds back and appears in front of the dock screaming, as if saying, "I can do it, I can do it!" As I see different sides of Calusa's character develop it makes me wonder what the future holds. If she becomes a mother will she be an easy-going Mommy like Merina or, knowing her own minx-like qualities as a child, will she want to keep her children close so she can keep an eye on exactly what they are up to? Either way, Calusa will continue to fascinate and amaze us with her ever evolving dolphinity.

-Gail Murray

Dolphin Research Center would like to thank members and friends for your kind words of condolence on the loss of our good friend and DRC Director of Membership & Development, Patrick Bogan. We are incredibly grateful for the love and support of our extended DRC family during this difficult time.

So many people asked about donating in his memory. We thought about what Patrick would have wanted and realized that he would be delighted for his legacy to help extend the commemorative paver walkway to more areas of DRC grounds. With that in mind, we decided to dedicate the next phase of the walkway to Patrick. Those wishing to give in his memory are encouraged to donate for an engraved Walkway paver or to make a general donation toward the cost of installing the pavers. The next phase of the walkway will be near the Veteran's Park. There will be picnic tables there so that families can enjoy time together. Patrick would be pleased to play a part in the expansion of DRC's walkway.



Photo by: Katy Donegan

Patrick loved the dolphins, and enjoyed sharing a kiss with his buddy Jax.

Patrick had strong roots in the Florida Keys even before he moved here full time and joined DRC back in 2006. He brought a lot to the community and his circle of friends, as well as to our organization. In his honor, we have also planted a key lime tree. It's fitting that, like his contributions to the Keys and DRC, this tree will bloom and bear fruit far into the future.

Thank you again for your dedication to DRC. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful member family.

By Rita Irwin
President/CEO

Pod Update, from page 9

as he could across the water, and then quickly raced after it before it sank to the lagoon bottom.

Santini -

Sibling rivalry is not only found among humans, but in dolphins as well.

Santini's sister, Aleta, left the dock to bring their trainer a piece of sea grass as a token of her love.

Not to be outdone, Santini quickly dipped below the surface and

came back with three times the amount of sea grass. She presented it to the trainer with squeals of delight. Once again, Santini was the center of attention.



Photos by: Cathy Jones

Although he explores on his own and plays with friends, Gambit (left) still spends a lot of time under mom Tursi's watchful eye.

Tanner - We know dolphins are great imitators, but one of our educators put Tanner's brain to the test. As she walked down the causeway, she noticed Tanner

watching and did a handstand to see how he would react. Sure enough, he flipped himself upside down and stuck his tail out of the water. The dolphin version of the stunt!

Tursi and Gambit - Tursi, whose favorite occupation is mom and babysitter, enjoys being one of the only adults among our large juvenile group. With almost every other dolphin under the age of six, Tursi has plenty to keep her busy. Gambit still swims with mom, but he also spends time with his fellow youngsters as they explore and cause mischief. All, of course, when Tursi approves.

-Danielle Brown



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THE ANNUAL MEMBERS' ONLY EVENT

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our wonderful members and guests who attended Dolphin Research Center's annual Members' Only Event on March 3rd. Every year, we close our doors to the public so that those of you who support DRC and contribute to our mission to Teach, Learn, and Care for marine mammals and the environment we share can spend some quality time with the dolphins, sea lions, and staff members. The weather was a little chilly out by the back lagoons, but the smiles and enthusiasm from you warmed



Photo by: Arielle Valle
The members loved seeing the dolphins in action – and the dolphins, like the youngsters up front, had a blast showing off their spectacular behaviors.

our hearts.

We're proud to say that every year this event grows and we're able to connect with both old and new faces of our member family.

The event began at 2:30pm and ended at night fall. Staff and volunteers chatted happily as we shared our experiences, stories, and time with more than 330 members and their guests who gathered to share love for the flippers family members. Together, we enjoyed boardwalk tours, special presentations, snacks, and a sunset celebration.

DRC wouldn't exist without the support we receive from every single one of our members. Your contributions allow us to provide excellent care for all the animals that reside at the facility. We cannot say thank you enough for everything you do for us. We hope to see more new faces at the next Members Event!

-Nessa Collins

SAVE THE DATE – FOUNDERS' WEEKEND 2013

Saturday and Sunday, November 9th and 10th, will be special days indeed when DRC celebrates with our bi-annual Founders' Weekend! Founder level donors and Guardian Circle members, please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. As always, DRC closes to the general public on those days so that you can spend quality time with the dolphins, sea lions, old friends and staff.

There will be special presentations, activities, and lots of discussions on what's new with DRC and exciting plans for the future. We'll gather under the tent to share meals, including the gala dinner with live and silent auctions.

Official invitations will be sent in the months ahead. Founders are those donors who give at least \$1000 a year in support of DRC's mission. The Guardian Circle is comprised of members who have given at the Adopt-a-Dolphin level or higher for at least five years. If you're interested in becoming a Founder in advance of this event, please contact Director of Membership Sandy Dennison at 305-289-1121, ext. 205 or via email at sandy@dolphins.org. Hope to see you all in November. The more the merrier!