



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ocean Institute's 40th Annual Maritime Festival: A Celebration of History, Community, and Ocean Education

Dana Point, CA | September 13, 2024 – As Ocean Institute prepares to host its 40th Annual Maritime Festival from September 13th to 15th, 2024, the organization invites the community to embark on a journey that not only celebrates the rich maritime heritage of Dana Point but also empowers the next generation of ocean stewards. This year's festival promises to be more than just a weekend of entertainment—it's an opportunity to make a lasting impact on the lives of children, offering them the chance to experience the wonder of the ocean through the Institute's Adopt-A-Class program.

Four Decades of Maritime Magic

For 40 years, the Maritime Festival has been a beacon of history and tradition in Dana Point, drawing thousands of visitors to the harbor to witness the splendor of tall ships, engage in hands-on maritime activities, and celebrate the sea. What began as a small gathering has grown into one of Southern California's most beloved annual events, deeply rooted in the community and the maritime culture that defines it.

This year, the festival will be more vibrant than ever, offering an unforgettable experience for visitors of all ages. The festivities will kick off with the lively **Sails N' Ales Kickoff Party**, where craft beer enthusiasts can savor local brews while enjoying live music and the stunning harbor views. The magic continues throughout the weekend with **Mermaid Swim Shows**, where graceful mermaids will captivate audiences with their underwater performances, bringing fairy tales to life before your eyes. Young adventurers can enroll in the **School for Scallywags**, an interactive experience where they'll learn the art of swashbuckling, treasure hunting, and pirate etiquette.

For those who crave action on the high seas, the **Cannon Battles** will deliver thrilling reenactments of naval skirmishes, as tall ships (*The Spirit of Dana Point*, *Bill of Rights*, *The Curlew*, and *The Mayflower*) exchange cannon fire in dramatic encounters. The **Mermaid Breakfast** offers a more serene start to the day, where guests can enjoy a whimsical meal in the company of enchanting mermaids, creating memories that will last a lifetime. Indulge in a whimsical **Afternoon Mermaid Tea**, where guests can sip on specialty teas and

enjoy delightful treats with enchanting mermaids in a setting that brings oceanic fantasy to life.

Adding to the excitement, the festival will feature **free Pirate Adventure Shows**, a series of dynamic performances that you can enjoy from the shore. These shows will bring pirate legends to life with sword fights, daring escapades, and plenty of swashbuckling fun, all set against the picturesque backdrop of Dana Point Harbor.

But the fun doesn't stop there. Visitors can unwind in the **Beer Garden**, where live music from local bands will set the perfect tone for a day by the sea. Families will find plenty to explore at **Sailor's Camp** and **Lil' Lads Landing**, areas specially designed for younger festival-goers. Sailor's Camp will offer hands-on activities that immerse children in the life of a sailor, while Lil' Lads Landing will be filled with carnival games, crafts, and educational booths that provide both fun and learning opportunities.

Stroll through **Peddler's Village**, where artisan vendors will showcase their unique merchandise and food trucks will offer a variety of delicious bites to satisfy every craving. For those seeking a more relaxed experience, the **Salty Seadogs Saloon** offers a waterfront lounge and bar with specialty cocktails. Here, you can marvel at the majestic tall ships, enjoy the ocean breeze, and watch the pirate shows unfold right before your eyes.

The crown jewel of the weekend is **The 3rd Annual Pirate and Mermaid Ball**, a magical evening under the stars that invites guests to don their finest pirate or mermaid attire. This exclusive event combines gourmet dining, live music, and dancing, creating an unforgettable night where fantasy and reality blend seamlessly. Not only will attendees revel in the enchanting atmosphere, but they'll also be supporting a noble cause, as proceeds from the ball contribute to Ocean Institute's educational programs, ensuring that the magic of the ocean is passed on to future generations.

To make your festival experience as smooth as possible, we've arranged for free parking and free shuttle service to help you avoid the traffic and hassle. On Saturday, you can park at **Marco Forster Middle School**, and on Sunday, parking is available at **Dana Hills High School**. Shuttles will pick up every 25-30 minutes from 6:30 am to 8:15 pm, making it easy to get to and from the event.

For Friday events, there is limited parking available at Baby Beach South Lot, but please note there will be no festival parking or shuttles on Friday. We highly encourage ride-sharing or utilizing the Dana Point Trolley to make your visit more convenient and stress-free.

A Ticket to Transform Lives

Every ticket purchased for The Maritime Festival holds the power to transform lives. The proceeds go directly to funding the Ocean Institute's Adopt-A-Class program, which has been instrumental in providing thousands of children with the opportunity to explore the ocean in ways they never imagined. In a time when budget cuts and rising costs are limiting access to field trips, Adopt-A-Class ensures that students from underserved communities can experience the educational programs at the Ocean Institute, many of them seeing the ocean for the first time.

Through Adopt-A-Class, students embark on hands-on learning adventures aboard tall ships, participate in labs that uncover the mysteries of the sea, and develop a personal

connection to marine environments. These experiences are not just educational—they're life-changing, sparking curiosity, inspiring stewardship, and laying the foundation for a lifelong passion for the ocean.

The Mission Behind the Festival

The Ocean Institute's mission is to inspire ocean stewardship through education. For nearly five decades, the Institute has been at the forefront of marine science education, offering programs that blend learning with adventure. The Maritime Festival is a cornerstone of this mission, serving as both a celebration of maritime history and a critical fundraiser that supports the Institute's educational initiatives.

"The Maritime Festival is a celebration of our past, but it's also about investing in our future," says Kaitlyn Davidson, Growth Marketing Manager at Ocean Institute. "Every ticket purchased for the festival is a step toward giving a child the experience of a lifetime. It's about more than just attending an event; it's about making a difference."

Join Us in Making Waves

The 40th Annual Maritime Festival is not just an event—it's a movement. A movement to preserve our maritime heritage, to engage our community, and to ensure that every child has the chance to connect with the ocean. Whether you're attending the festival for the history, the entertainment, or the community spirit, know that your participation is making waves that will ripple through the lives of countless students.

Tickets for the Maritime Festival and the Pirate and Mermaid Ball are now available for purchase on Ocean Institute's website. Join us for a weekend of adventure, history, and impact—and help us continue to inspire the next generation of ocean stewards.

For more information on the festival, ticket sales, or sponsorship opportunities, please visit www.maritime-fest.org or contact Ocean Institute at 949-496-2274.

About Ocean Institute

The Ocean Institute, founded in 1977, is a community-based 501(c)(3) organization that educates 100,000 children, teachers, parents, and visitors annually through over 60 marine science and maritime history programs. We are located on 2.4 acres in the Dana Point Harbor; adjacent to a Marine Protected Area. The facility is an ocean education center that offers in-depth marine science and maritime history programs.

The Institute includes state-of-the-art teaching labs, the spectacular Maddie James Seaside Learning Center, a historic tall ship, and an oceanographic research vessel. Immersion-based field trips range from one-hour science labs to multi-day programs at sea. All programs are designed to maximize immersion, spark curiosity, and inspire a deep commitment to learning.

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