



Education and Exhibits Update: July 8, 2020

1. Since the Coastal Center reopened to the public on June 10th, the Education team has been focused on providing safe, captivating, and inspirational programming for our daily guests. This has been an “all hands on deck” endeavor, as we have been operating without the assistance of our dedicated volunteers. In addition to providing daily educational programming at the Coastal Center, the Education Department has been working closely with the Admissions team to help ensure that all COVID-related guest policies are being adhered to. To date, the vast majority of guests have been supportive of the policies that FOS has implemented
2. Florida Oceanographic’s popular marine science summer camp program, led by Camp Director Shannon Dack, kicked off on June 29th. Through some creative rescheduling, we were able to salvage 6 of the 8 originally scheduled camp sessions. We have developed a set of new policies to ensure that parents feel comfortable sending their children to camp at the Coastal Center. While we have had some last-minute cancellations, numerous parents have praised Florida Oceanographic Society for offering this fun and educational opportunity for their children – many of whom have missed out on social interactions with peers over the last few months. Below are examples of letters we’ve received from summer camp parents:

Hi Shannon,

Just another huge thank you to you and the staff! Finley and Maisie had an amazing week. They learned, had fun, got tired, and eased into being in the world with all the craziness going on. You created a safe, welcoming environment and we are super grateful and appreciative! Both kids have struggled in various ways with all the things happening and it was nice for them to be able to break away and feel a little "normal". I know there is a waitlist for next week, but if you find yourself with last minute cancellations, I know they'd love to come back. Either way, we'll be making good use of our membership for the rest of the summer!

I hope you have a safe and restful weekend!

Sincerely,

Kelli

Hi Shannon.

I dashed off at pick up on Friday but I meant to thank you for such a great week at camp. Fletch had an amazing time. I knew it was going to be a hit because he LOVES animals but he also made some new friends which made my heart smile. Quarantining/homeschooling has been tough on my boys as they miss being around their friends and just hanging with other children.

Have a wonderful summer!

Marnie

3. Florida Oceanographic's **nighttime sea turtle nesting watch program kicked off on June 18th**. The program will run through August 6th. To provide a safe atmosphere for guests, staff members, and volunteers, we have cut our maximum group size in half, from 25 attendees to 12 attendees, while doubling our price from \$12 per person to \$25 per person. Feedback from guests has been positive, and the walks are nearly booked to capacity.
4. This year, we have debuted **two new single-family sea turtle walk options**. Our goal was to provide a safer turtle walk experience for families, while making up for income losses that occurred while the Coastal Center was closed to the public. There are two different price points for single-family sea turtle walks – \$300 and \$500 – depending on group size and the type of walk. While we did not have high expectations for this costly educational opportunity, we are pleased to report that **4 families have booked \$500 walks, and 2 families have booked \$300 walks**.
5. Education Specialists Yasmeeen Fadlallah and Dakotah Tanczuk created an **audio tour of the nature trail**. Guests use QR codes located along the trail to play short educational audio clips through their phones.
6. **Two college interns have joined the Education Department** for the summer of 2020. Gabby Casini is heading into her sophomore year at Iowa State University, where she is majoring in Animal Ecology. Gabby's previous work experience as an Educator in Training at the Blank Park Zoo, volunteer experience at the Iowa State University Wildlife Care Clinic, and a senior project focused on training sharks and rays will all serve her well during her time at Florida Oceanographic Society. Meagan Knoll will be starting her senior year at Florida Atlantic University this fall, where she is majoring in Marine Biology with a minor in Geographic Information Systems. Meagan is no stranger to the Coastal Center, having participated in our TEAM Ocean high school volunteer program during the summers of 2015 and 2016. Her past experience working in the Education Department should speed her transition into her new role. Gabby and Meagan will both serve as full-time members of the Education Department for 8 weeks, helping to fill some of the void that is created as Shannon steps out of her usual role, and into her summertime Camp Director role.
7. Director of Education Dr. Zack Jud **submitted an amended Statement of Work to the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program** with the goal of repurposing grant funding from a program that was canceled due to COVID-19. We are hopeful that the revised Statement of Work will be accepted so FOS can utilize these funds for several other educational projects.
8. Zack made a **silicone casting of a section of sabellariid worm reef** to help our exhibit fabricators cast exact replicas of worm rock for one of the focal aquariums in the Ocean EcoCenter.

