

## NEWS RELEASE

### **NMLC Scores Fundraising Triumph with Mermaid Ball** **Donors Flock to Signature Event Despite Economic Headwind and Set Fundraising Record**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Buzzards Bay, MA.** The 2009 Mermaid Ball at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy on Friday night, August 7th, set a fundraising event record for the National Marine Life Center.



*Two Gorgeous Mermaids and an Enchanting Seahorse*

I suspect I'm not breaking headline news when I note that economic conditions have been a bit challenging these days and have created a powerful headwind blowing against nonprofit fundraising. Most have cut back operations; many have cancelled signature fundraising events due to lack of adequate subscription to cover escalating costs. With those facts as backdrop, the National Marine Life Center team was floored when ticket sales for Mermaid Ball 2009 burst through the ceiling. More than a week before last Friday's event, tickets were sold out and eager guests were placed on wait lists in case someone dropped out at the last minute. Wow! That's the type of "problem" you want to have during ANY economic conditions.



*Jul3ia Richard and Evan Kaigle Perform **Pearl Diver***

From an entertainment perspective the night scored five stars. Jul3ia Richard and Evan Kaigle debuted their newly minted NMLC theme song **Pearl Diver** at the Admiral's Reception hosted by Admiral Rick Gurnon, President of MMA. Townsend Hornor Environmental Stewardship Awards were given to Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray, State Representative Susan Williams Gifford, U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy, U.S. Senator John Kerry and U.S. Representative Bill Delahunt for their critical support to the NMLC mission of restoring life to the ocean and helping to complete the new 15,000 square foot, 100,000 gallon marine animal hospital in Buzzards Bay for sea turtles, seals, porpoises, dolphins and small whales that strand on Cape Cod, one of the most active stranding hotspots in the Americas.

Three sections of silent auction treasures, a bid board full of adventures and a dozen once-in-a-lifetime experiences, such as piloting a supertanker and skippering a tug boat through Cape Cod Canal, drew enthusiastic, high spirited bidding. The exquisite music of GQ and the Lady kept the hall rocking and the dance floor throbbing throughout the night, as guests worked off a gourmet buffet dinner.

With a few receipts still to be counted, the 2009 Mermaid Ball has set an all time record for NMLC fundraising in a single event, surpassing the 2007 and 2008 balls by 50%. Every penny of that money goes directly to the rehabilitation of marine animals and the construction and operations of the new marine animal hospital. Thanks to a hugely successful \$100,000 Matching Challenge to complete the first wave of hospital construction that also ended on Friday night, the new hospital will open its doors on October 31st, just in time to receive the most endangered sea turtles in the world as its first patients from the fall stranding season.

Quoting a guest from Newton, Massachusetts, "The Mermaid Ball was fabulous from top to bottom. The mood was fun and festive, and I loved all the costumes! Next time we are going to come as sea creatures and pirates, for sure. The room truly looked amazing and the auction prizes were great. Most important was that the Mermaid Ball was truly a celebration of all the wonderful things that the NMLC is doing."

It's never too early to start planning for Mermaid Ball 2010. If you can't wait that long to celebrate the NMLC vision of restoring life to the ocean, the Discovery Center is open 7 days a week from 10 am to 5 pm. Volunteering and donating in support of this great mission are a 24/7, 365-days-a-year opportunity. Visit the NMLC web site ([www.nmlc.org](http://www.nmlc.org)) or call 508-743-9888.

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