

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT – VICKI TALES

Enthusiasm, exuberance, passion, and dedication...those words express only a fraction of what Vicki Tales has brought to our Center every week for the past ten years. We often joke that Vicki deserves the “Golden Pom-Pom” award because she is our best cheerleader. Anyone who knows Vicki will attest to the fact that she is a wonderful ambassador for our seal and sea lion patients and they are always in the forefront of her mind.

Vicki first starting visiting the Center many years ago when she was being treated for cancer. She would come and watch the seals and sea lions and, at that time, decided that she needed to be involved with the Center.

“I got involved with the Center when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. On my worst days, I would go and watch the sea lions play and it always made me feel better. After that, I knew that I had to start volunteering...after my ordeal with cancer I felt there was nothing I couldn’t do...I showed up one day in boots and slickers and said, ‘I’ll cut fish and clean poop!’ That was ten years ago...” Vicki Tales



Vicki Tales (right) with Animal Care Volunteer Debbie MacCarter at 2005 Holiday Event

Over the years, Vicki has always been quick to pitch in and help out wherever needed. She is a bookkeeper by profession and has advised the Center with regard to finances for many years. Vicki has served on the Board of Directors for over seven years, was instrumental in the revitalization of our gift shop, is the founding chair of the Fundraising Committee, always thinks of the other volunteers and brings snacks and lunch on her shift, and has always been willing to get dirty and help out in Animal Care when things are busy around here. During the last El Nino, we had more than 90 animals at one time at the Center. Vicki’s husband Larie bought her rubber boots to wear and she started coming in early Saturday mornings to clean the nursery (it has never looked so spotless) and bathe the multitudes of harbor seal pups we had at the time.

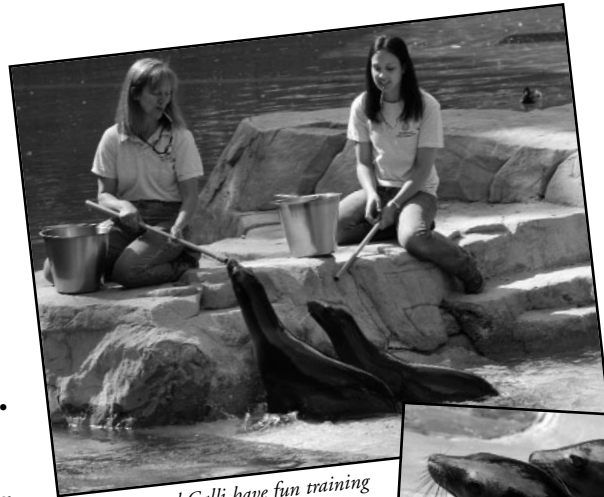
When we are required to restrain a large animal, it is often the case that we need more than one restrainer. As the majority of our volunteers are female, the person on the rear of the animal has affectionately become known as “the butt girl.” During the 1998 El Nino storms, Vicki had the opportunity to play this role for the first time. Although this was eight years ago, when Vicki tells the story about this experience, her excitement at helping out in this way is just as fresh as if it had happened last week. That unflinching excitement is just another one of the things we love about Vicki.

Many of our volunteers often comment that one of the great things about our organization is that it feels like a family here. We are truly thankful to you Vicki, because it is people like you that make it feel that way!

NEWS FROM OUR NATION’S CAPITAL...

Pacific Marine Mammal Center Sends Two Very Special Ambassadors To Washington, D.C.

Summer and Calli, the two little hand reared sea lion pups from the 2005 birthing season, are happily acclimating to their new home at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo. Their new pool mate, Maureen, a twenty-five year old sea lion, is finally getting used to the young pups and they are now one big happy family. Don’t forget to visit them next time you are in our nation’s capital!



Summer and Calli have fun training at their new home.



Summer and Calli's press photo!

