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For Immediate Release



PACIFIC MARINE MAMMAL CENTER RECEIVES **\$50,000 DONATION FROM PACIFIC LIFE** **FOUNDATION FOR FLOOD RELIEF EFFORTS**

Long-time supporter Pacific Life Foundation steps up to help Pacific Marine Mammal with funds to get the facility ready to function

Laguna Beach, CA – December 29, 2010 – Pacific Marine Mammal Center (PMMC) announced today that in the midst of its flood crisis from the recent Southern California storms, Pacific Life Foundation surprised the non-profit organization with a \$50,000 donation to help with the relief efforts.

On December 22, 2010, PMMC fell victim to the worst flood damage ever experienced in the 40 year existence of the organization. Due to the heavy rains and an overwhelmed drainage system, the interior of the hospital had over 4 feet of water trapped inside. As a result, a majority of the important medical supplies and diagnostic equipment is unsalvageable and all of the Center's major appliances and cabinetry are ruined. The exterior of the property unfortunately did not fare much better, including damaged fencing, and over one foot of mud covering the majority of the premises. The damage is estimated to be over \$215,000; however, much is still undetermined.

"We have a long way to go, but this remarkable donation from Pacific Life Foundation is a huge step forward in the right direction," said Melissa Sciacca, Director of Development for the Center. "We are inspired by the Foundation's generosity, and for setting such an important example for community and corporate responsibility. Every staff member and volunteer has a brighter outlook today, and we owe that to the wonderful folks at the Pacific Life Foundation."

Staff members were surprised yesterday by the personal visit and check presentation from the Foundation's president Robert Haskell and vice president Tennyson Oyler. "We feel strongly about the mission of Pacific Marine Mammal Center, and the importance of having this organization in our community," said Robert Haskell, President of the Pacific Life Foundation.

“The Center serves a critical need in Orange County so it is vital that the Center’s doors open as soon as possible so their live-saving work can continue.”

The \$50,000 donation will go towards the cost of replacing critical supplies and equipment needed to get the Center up and running again. “Because of the generosity of Pacific Life Foundation, our timeline has been significantly advanced,” said Executive Director Colleen O’Higgins. “Their contribution gives us the strength and courage to keep moving forward, and will make a significant impact on the restoration of our Center.” Pacific Life Foundation has been supporting the efforts of the Center for over 15 years, with contributions totaling over a quarter million dollars. Pacific Marine Mammal Center plans to honor this significant contribution with the permanent naming of one of their ICU pens and with an award to the Foundation.

About Pacific Marine Mammal Center:

Established in 1971, Pacific Marine Mammal Center is among the forerunners in marine mammal rehabilitation science. The only organization of its kind in Orange County, PMMC responds to approximately 300 marine mammal rescue calls each year. Pacific Marine Mammal Center is a non-profit organization with a mission to rescue, medically treat, and rehabilitate pinnipeds and cetaceans that strand along the Orange County coastline due to injury or illness; to release healthy marine mammals back to their natural habitat while preserving species diversity; and to increase public awareness of the marine environment through education and research.

Pacific Marine Mammal Center is located in the large red barn at 20612 Laguna Canyon Road. For more information please contact Melissa Sciacca at 949.494.3050 or visit PMMC on the web at www.pacificmmc.org

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