

# Volunteers Change Everything

*By Janine Boire, Executive Director*

**V**olunteers are not only the heart of the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, they significantly amplify the institution's ability to make positive change in inspiring conservation of the Salish Sea. Our volunteers featured in this newsletter, like Karen DeLorenzo whose move to Port Townsend was inspired by the Marine Science Center, and Ella Ashford, a home school student with a bright smile and friendly approach, make a difference



*Volunteers on a low tide walk on Indian Island*

in so many people's lives. Each year, over 175 volunteers log over 8,000 hours. These volunteers work on a vast array of projects ranging from:

- Inspiring students visiting from the sixth grade in Neah Bay who participate in a three day Whales of the Salish Sea program.
- Serving as front line responders for the Marine Mammal Stranding Network, working with stranded animals and the people who may come upon a baby seal

resting on the shore or an elephant seal set on exploring Water Street.

- Collecting and providing vital data on a wide range of citizen science projects for research agencies including NOAA, EPA, and the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- Engaging and enriching thousands of visitors' experiences in our marine and natural history exhibits.

Our volunteers engage in powerful work at

every level of our organization. From our volunteer Board of Directors, many of whom also docent in the exhibits, work as citizen scientists or lead wildlife tours, to some of our youngest volunteers-in-training, volunteering at PTMSC is an intellectually rich experience integrating multiple generations. Our senior volunteers work with our youngest ones in not only learning the underlying science, but also in mentoring youth in docenting with visitors to build their skills and

confidence in communication.

We began as a grassroots volunteer organization over 30 years ago and that core value runs strong throughout the organization today. Our volunteers not only make a difference for the creatures of the Salish Sea -- they impact each other and our visitors in meaningful ways.

Our volunteers are indeed the heart that keeps the Port Townsend Marine Science Center pumping.



# From Soup to Nuts—PTMSC Volunteers Do It All!

By Claudia Padilla, PTMSC Volunteer Coordinator

Since coming to the PTMSC in 2010, I've been amazed at the level PTMSC utilizes its volunteers. I cannot express the gratitude felt for the 175 active volunteers that the PTMSC has—100 of which we see on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Volunteers are like fairy godmothers to the organization. A task needs doing and there's a person who offers to do it! They come from all interests, backgrounds, skill sets, and belief systems, BUT all with the common goal of bettering the organization and the world.

From soup to nuts, PTMSC volunteers are behind nearly every aspect of the organization, and frankly, without volunteers the organization would cease to exist. Daily functions such as cleaning tanks and feeding animals, docenting in our exhibits, doing citizen science projects and outreach to donors—necessities that keep

this organization flowing, are in large part, completed by volunteers. Board of director members, auction chairs, helping to balance PTMSC budgets—volunteers are behind all of these roles!

## YOU too could be a volunteer! Below are tasks you may one day find yourself doing:

- Helping to wrangle an elephant seal back down toward the sea
- Creating beautiful decorations
- Caring for abalone
- Walking in the Rhody parade as a fish
- Feeding crabs, sea stars, urchins and more
- Installing a rain garden
- Inspiring the public to make a difference in

their daily routine

- Cultivating donors
- Educating the public on oceanographic equipment
- Participating in a marine mammal necropsy
- Helping to put a whale skeleton together
- Analyzing plankton under a microscope
- Participating in beach walks and science talks

How many of the PTMSC volunteer corps are scientists? The answer? I don't know—maybe one-third of them. But the point is that you *don't* need a science background to volunteer, just a passion and willingness to help, learn, and inspire conservation of the Salish Sea. If I can do it, anyone can!

## Love at First Sight

*A Volunteer's Reason to Retire to Port Townsend*

It's hard to say if it was the idyllic setting of the building on the pier, the tiny touch tank exhibit providing a home for creatures from below, or the briny scent of salty sea air. But when pressed to choose what captivated her most about the Port Townsend Marine



Karen DeLorenzo

Science Center, Karen DeLorenzo said it was all of that, plus more. She was quite taken by the fun and enthusiasm of the volunteers eager to share their knowledge, inviting

her into their midst to discover a new world of marine life for herself.

"I was convinced," Karen remembered. "I knew immediately I wanted to retire to Port Townsend and volunteer at the PTMSC." More than a decade and a half later, she couldn't be happier with the decision, feeling PTMSC is the best place to volunteer in Jefferson County and beyond.

Over the next few years, Karen and her husband Tony wrapped up their careers in Salem, Oregon and bought a house in Uptown where they could walk everywhere and enjoy small town life.

As soon as they were settled, Karen promptly headed to the PTMSC, eager to volunteer. But it wasn't yet meant to be, since no opportunities were available—the Marine Exhibit (ME) was being remodeled and the Natural History Exhibit (NHE) was under construction. When it was completed, her first volunteer job was helping with the grand opening of the NHE.

Over time, she began to learn the ropes at the ME, studying the marine environment and how to docent. Karen had always enjoyed making

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## Fall Volunteer Training

Summer may be over, but things haven't slowed down at the PTMSC! We are gearing up for busy fall with a special training for volunteers. Volunteering at PTMSC offers opportunities to feed aquarium animals, maintain touch tanks, conduct scientific research, assist with education programs, and inform the public in our two exhibits.

Join PTMSC staff for an entertaining, hands-on, and thought-provoking training on **November 12th, 13th, and 14th at 3 p.m.** in our Natural History Exhibit. All volunteers, both new and experienced, are welcome and encouraged to attend, especially if you're new to the PTMSC since summer 2013. For details or to RSVP, contact Claudia Padilla at [cpadilla@ptmsc.org](mailto:cpadilla@ptmsc.org) or call 360.385.5582, ext. 204.

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presentations in her former career, so this was right in line with what she loved to do. John Resick, author of *We Survived Yesterday*, was teaching his last class at Peninsula College and she enrolled. "He was deeply inspiring and encouraged me in developing my knowledge of marine biology," she commented.

The next task she ventured into was the first Sound Toxins project with Karen Lull, a field biologist working on the project with PTMSC. Also called ORHAB (Olympic Region Harmful Algal Bloom), this project was her introduction into Citizen Science—her true love of volunteering at the center.

Karen enjoys meeting other people with similar interests and loves the inspiration from the staff and the AmeriCorps each year. "These are fun people to be around and they fill the place with great energy. It's a shot in the arm to go there and we all need that no matter where we are in our life!"



## Positively Charged

Good news! PTMSC has learned that we were awarded approximately \$90,000 for a two year Public Participation Grant (PPG) from the Washington Department of Ecology. The PPG money comes from a state tax on commonly used hazardous substances such as motor oil and pesticides. Most of the money is used directly to clean up hazardous sites, but one percent is reserved to involve the public in learning about, cleaning up, or preventing contamination of our environment. That's where we come in!

In keeping with the work we've already done on toxics in the marine environment, this grant will help us further articulate the connection between what people do on land and the beneficial or harmful impacts on the ocean. Our funded projects will focus on showing the positive ways individuals can reduce toxics use and pollution.

With the help of volunteers, we'll build a new demonstration rain garden outside the Natural History Exhibit to show how stormwater can be better managed. We'll also install an outdoor, hands-on exhibit on the pier that will celebrate how Citizen Science volunteers contribute to a healthier Salish Sea.

Finally, we'll be developing a six-to eight-week program where individuals will learn how to reduce their individual exposure to toxics and lessen their "toxic footprint" on the Earth. Stay tuned as these projects unfold.



"I love volunteering at PTMSC because it keeps my hands wet with salt water (my favorite substance) and connects me with a critical mission and the special people who support it. I've been doing it for nine years-plus and intend never to stop."

— *Katherine Jensen, PTMSC Volunteer*



## Holiday Cruises

**Saturday, Nov. 30th & New Year's Eve, Tuesday, Dec. 31st**

We invite you to go with us on our annual Holiday Cruises around Protection Island or south toward Port Ludlow, weather permitting. Cruises leave from the Point Hudson Marina, 1-4 p.m.

Tickets: \$55 per person

(\$50 for PTMSC, Burke Museum, Audubon or WOS members)

Reservations and information:

(360) 385-5582 ext. 104, (800) 566-3932 or [cruises@ptmsc.org](mailto:cruises@ptmsc.org)

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# Welcome to our New AmeriCorps!

One of the highlights of fall at the PTMSC is the arrival of our new AmeriCorps and the opportunity to welcome them into our midst. They come from around the country and bring a spirit of fresh energy, enthusiasm, intelligence and new ideas.

These individuals are an important part of our organization, working closely with our staff, volunteers and board, teaching students and the public about the various aspects of our mission of "Inspiring Conservation of the Salish Sea."

We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce them to you.

**Danae Presler** is returning for a second year as our Marine Mammal Stranding Educator.

Danae graduated from the Minnesota State University with a BS in Biology with an Ecology emphasis and she studied in Ecuador with MSU. Prior to her time at PTMSC she was involved in several undergraduate research projects in the Galapagos Islands and rainforest ecosystems of Ecuador.

She was inspired to come to the PTMSC

because of her love of the ocean and her desire to help preserve and protect the watery world that holds her in awe. Her favorite things about the PTMSC are: 1) A good smart-aleck conversation with our spunky volunteers, 2) Teaching science classes to curious kids, and 3) Wrangling elephant seals. Her personal goal while she's here with us is to reduce her toxic load (household and consumptive), saying, "If I'm going to talk the talk, I better walk the walk! Not only will this make me healthier, but it will help make the Salish Sea healthier too."

**Allison Kellum** will be our Natural History Exhibit and Volunteer Program Educator. She graduated from the College of William and Mary with a BS in Biology and studied abroad at the University of Adelaide in Australia. She has also worked as an Aquarist Intern at the Virginia Living Museum and a counselor and teacher at the Burgundy Center for Wildlife Studies in West Virginia.

Allison is inspired to work at the PTMSC because of the depth and breadth of volunteer and community involvement—plus she loves the ocean and mountains! She appreciates being encouraged to try something new, discovering how much hard work goes into supporting the wealth of projects and programs PTMSC offers. As she says, "I

never thought I'd be participating in a seal necropsy my first week on the job." She's excited to develop her teaching skills and can already see that being at PTMSC has fueled her own personal sense of wonder. "I hope to become a better scientific communicator and to pass that spark on to others."

**Annie Thomson** will be our Citizen Science Assistant, having graduated from the University of Washington with a BS in Oceanography and minor in Marine Biology. She worked as a research assistant and scientific diver at UW's Friday Harbor Laboratories this summer and completed an internship at Western Washington University with the American Academy of Underwater Sciences and Our World Underwater Scholarship Society, where she worked with Pinto Abalone restoration research. She also worked with Sound Citizen and as an intern at the Seattle Aquarium.

Annie was inspired to come to PTMSC because of our Citizen Science program. She thinks it's cool because it has the potential to accomplish outreach and science at the same time. Annie loves meeting all the volunteers and staff and is looking forward to strengthening her communication skills.

**Shannon Phillips** will be our Marine Exhibit Educator. Shannon graduated from the University of Oregon with a BS in Marine Biology with minors in Business Administration and Geology. She also studied abroad at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia. She worked as a Marine Birds and Mammals teaching assistant at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology this past summer. She has also worked as a Marine Biologist at the Portland Aquarium and as a Research Expedition Assistant in Ireland.

Shannon was inspired to come to PTMSC because of our mission. She feels that by offering a taste of the different conservation issues found in the Salish Sea, PTMSC evokes a desire in people to get involved. Her favorite thing so far is the volunteers—they're the most caring, dedicated and knowledgeable group she's ever worked with. Each volunteer has an incredible story, along with a strong connection with the ocean. And she praises her co-workers, saying, "Every day, I learn more about them, from what brought them here, to what makes them so passionate about conservation. I've never worked with a team so driven to inspire those around them."

If you haven't met them already, be sure to stop by and say hi to these amazing young women. We're so thankful they're with us this year!



*Left to right: Allison Kellum, Danae Presler, Shannon Phillips, Annie Thomson*

**Look for 2014 Summer Camp information coming soon to our website, [www.ptmsc.org](http://www.ptmsc.org).**

## In Memory of Mary Jo Nichols

Long time volunteer Mary Jo Nichols passed away on August 27th, 2013. Fellow volunteer, Linda Martin offers this remembrance:

Mary Jo will always be my "old lady" role model. Whenever I was inclined to turn down an opportunity requiring athletic endurance, or the addition of one more task to my service day, I'd think of Mary Jo, always hurrying off to volunteer for yet another non-profit or her daughter's catering business.

"If she can do it, so can I," was the message I'd give myself. After seeing her, frail and angelic looking in her big hospital bed, but serene, I knew that she would continue to be my role model. Her quiet courage and acceptance reflected the love and care she held in her heart for us all, family and friends alike.

I never sang or danced with Mary Jo, but she taught me how to LIVE.

Thank you,  
Mary Jo.



Mary Jo Nichols

## Donors as Change Agents

Like volunteers, donors are agents of change at the Marine Science Center. Here are some of the ways that donors effect change through their financial support:

- Children discover a passion to become scientists
- Grandparents and grandkids fall in love with marine creatures
- Families reduce their household "toxic footprint"
- Citizen scientists protect public health by detecting harmful algae blooms
- People who find a stranded marine mammal know how to help

All of these changes in behaviors, knowledge, values, and actions are funded by donors to the Marine Science Center. Thanks to the many donors who make a difference through their gifts.

### Opportunities to be a Change Agent

- End-of-year gift
- Endowment fund
- Become a member
- Estate planning
- IRA charitable roll-over
- Legacy gift

Visit the website at [www.ptmsc.org](http://www.ptmsc.org) or call Liesl Slabaugh, 360.385.5582, ext. 101 for more information.

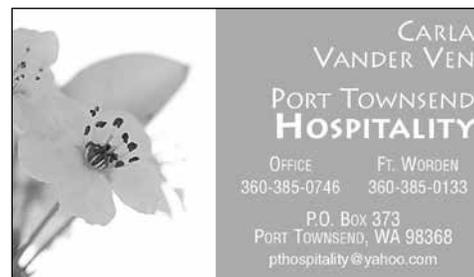
## Holiday Gift Shop Sale

The Marine Science Center Annual Gift Shop Sale tradition continues with a big holiday sale on **Thanksgiving Weekend, Friday, November 29th through Sunday, December 1st**, from noon to 4 p.m.

Volunteer Gift Shop Manager, Janine Scott, has greatly expanded our collection of "green" gifts and books for both kids and adults. All merchandise is at least 15% off, with larger savings on some items. Gift memberships to the PTMSC and gift certificates in any amount are also available.

## Tides of March Benefit Auction: Save-the-Date March 8, 2014

Mark your calendar now for the 2014 Tides of March Benefit Auction on March 8th at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. We are again planning a festive evening of warm camaraderie, delicious eats, fabulous shopping, and joyful giving in support of conserving the Salish Sea.





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Touch tank volunteers  
Dana Kovak and Larry Montague



Volunteers Ella Ashford and Roger Wilson



Kevin Long, Danae Presler, Chrissy McLean and Sue Long corral an elephant seal, coaxing it into the water

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