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## **OCEAN CONSERVATION AWARDS GALA RAISES OVER \$300,000 FOR THE AQUARIUM OF THE PACIFIC**

**Over 350 guests dined with the fish in support of the non-profit Aquarium of the Pacific**

**The Leonardo DiCaprio Fund, the Ocean in Google Earth, and Panasonic Corporation  
honored as the 2009 Ocean Conservation Award Recipients**

(Long Beach, Calif.—June 17, 2009)—Attendees in elegant evening gowns and tuxedos touched sharks and rays as they showed their commitment to the ocean at the Aquarium of the Pacific's annual Ocean Conservation Awards Gala on Saturday, June 13, 2009. The Leonardo DiCaprio Fund, the Ocean in Google Earth, and the Panasonic Corporation were the recipients of the Aquarium's 2009 Ocean Conservation Awards. This year's Gala theme, *Art, Entertainment, Science, & Technology*, celebrated each honoree and their respective contributions to society and the planet. Over 350 supporters attended the Gala, which raised over \$300,000 for the nonprofit Aquarium's ocean conservation education initiatives.

Irmelin DiCaprio, president of The Leonardo DiCaprio Fund at CCF, accepted the award on behalf of her organization. "We have a choice to continue to destroy or to preserve our planet. Here at the Aquarium of the Pacific it's about preserving. The Aquarium serves as a resource to teach about the importance of caring for the ocean," said Irmelin DiCaprio. Established in 1998 the organization fosters awareness of environmental issues by participating with such institutions as the Natural Resources Defense Council, where Leonardo DiCaprio is on the board of trustees; Global Green USA, where he is a board member; and the International Fund for Animal Welfare, where he is on the honorary board of directors. The foundation has spearheaded several environmental media projects, including the short web-based films *Global Warning* and *Water Planet* and the documentary *The 11th Hour*. "Leonardo DiCaprio, his mother Irmelin DiCaprio, and The Leonardo DiCaprio Fund are among Hollywood's leaders in promoting sustainability on all levels using film, philanthropy, and advocacy," said Dr. Jerry R. Schubel, Aquarium of the Pacific president.

Accepting the award on behalf of Google was Jenifer Austin Foulkes, business product manager of Google Earth & Maps. "It is our hope that the Ocean in Google Earth continues to serve as a tool to increase ocean knowledge and to inspire solutions to the problems facing this important ecosystem, and we're proud to bring this feature to the Aquarium through its new kiosk exhibit," said Foulkes. Google Earth lets people fly anywhere on the planet to view high resolution satellite imagery and now, the depths of the ocean. With the new ocean feature, people can plunge all the way to the floor of the sea, view photos and videos, and explore shipwrecks like the Titanic in 3D. It is possible to find the best surf and dive spots, learn more about underwater habitats, and cruise around seamounts from the perspective of sharks, whales, and turtles. "The Ocean in Google Earth will inspire, educate, and encourage people to continue protecting one of our most precious resources," said Schubel.

The Aquarium also presented a 2009 award to the Panasonic Corporation. "Around the world, Panasonic is committed to protecting our environment through a wide range of eco-responsible initiatives, including a global focus on creating energy-efficient products and technologies, sponsorship of environmental initiatives, and utilizing the power of employee volunteerism to make a difference in the communities they reside in," said Schubel. In the U.S., Panasonic Corporation of North America is a strong proponent for the responsible recycling of electronics. The company's recycling efforts include a nationwide consumer electronics recycling program. Currently, Panasonic's recycling program offers more than 325 recycling drop-off locations covering all 50 states. "We will expand our recycling program to over 400 locations by December 2009 and over 800 sites are expected to be in the program by 2011," announced Eisuke Tsuyuzaki, VP, corporate development & GM, Blu-ray Disc Group of Panasonic Hollywood Laboratory, who accepted the award on behalf of his company.

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Guests were seated beneath a life-size model of a blue whale in the Aquarium's Great Hall and were treated to a decadent dining experience featuring a fully sustainable, eco-friendly menu by SAVOR..., the Aquarium's exclusive caterer. Attendees dined on a variety of culinary creations, including grilled petite filet with a forest mushroom reduction; jumbo farmed shrimp with an herb reduction; roasted vegetable strudel with a shallot cream; a white and dark chocolate ganache torte with espresso cream; and more. The Gala also featured live music, a cocktail reception where guests were treated to a special viewing of Panasonic's new 103-inch full HD 3-D plasma screen television and a special presentation from Ocean in Google Earth featuring a sneak peek at bringing the virtual ocean to the world's aquariums, and an after-hours lounge with a cordial and coffee bar. Attendees explored the Aquarium's exhibits at night, including the new animals of Shark Summer.

The Gala was made possible through the sponsorship of KUD International (silver sponsor) and Molina Healthcare, Inc. (bronze sponsor). The underwriters for the 2009 Gala included: The Boeing Company; BP America, Inc.; Carlton Forge Works; GeoEco, LLC; Milbank Tweed Hadley & McCloy; Occidental Petroleum Corporation/Tidelands Oil Production Company/Thums Long Beach Company; Sidley Austin LLP; and Southern California Edison. The 2009 Ocean Conservation Awards Gala Co-Chairs were Stephen and Fran Conley and Steven and Niko Mayer. Proceeds from the Gala will support the nonprofit Aquarium's diverse environmental, education, and conservation programs. **The 2010 Ocean Conservation Awards Gala will be held at the Aquarium of the Pacific on Sat. June 12, 2010.**

The Aquarium of the Pacific, a nonprofit institution, is dedicated to instilling a sense of wonder, respect, and stewardship for the Pacific Ocean, its inhabitants, and ecosystems. The Aquarium houses over 10,000 animals and features a variety of programs both on and off-site to engage the public in ocean conservation and environmental education, including Aquarium on Wheels outreach programs for low-income inner city schools and cleanups efforts to help local wildlife. The Aquarium is located at 100 Aquarium Way in Long Beach, Calif. For more information, visit [www.aquariumofpacific.org](http://www.aquariumofpacific.org) or call 562/590-3100.

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