

# Spirits Sail as Community Keeps Tall Ship Afloat

*After a mayday call for support for funding for a restoration project for the tall ship Spirit of Dana Point, Ocean Institute is celebrating with the community.*

DANA POINT, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, June 26, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After a mayday call for support to move forward with a restoration project for [Spirit of Dana Point, Ocean Institute](#) is celebrating the generosity of the community.

Ocean Institute had slated major restoration projects, including a new deck, to be completed by December 2022 in compliance with their United States Coast Guard approved plan. The project was accelerated when the organization was given a 30-day notice by their insurance company that coverage for the vessel would be discontinued if the project did not commence. The situation was further complicated by the clause in the organization's lease which stipulates that vessels carry insurance to remain in compliance.

"After having just marched through the challenges of the pandemic, this was unwelcome news," said Dr. Wendy Marshall, "but we did not have time to complain."

Having scheduled a fundraising campaign to begin in September, 2021 for this million dollar project, the organization had to move quickly to garner financial support, while scrambling to find a boat yard that would take on the project.

"As Spirit is a community icon, we were hopeful that we would gain support, but it is a big ask," said Marshall. With budgets already set, city and County funds were not available. "We turned to foundations and their speed and generosity was heartwarming. Within 24-hours of making our request, we had foundation Board members pull together quickly on Zoom to discuss the situation." Support came in quickly from the George Hoag Family Foundation, Marisla Foundation, and the Sahm Family Foundation. Nicholas Endowment had previously committed to purchase new sails. "With this base of support in place, we turned to the public."

Through press coverage, social media, and newsletters, Ocean Institute pushed out their message of need. The response was overwhelming. They received donations from across the country and locally, from teachers, families, children, and volunteers. "The messages we received were as moving as the donations," says Marshall, "This vessel created memories that people want to see continue for decades to come."

To honor and encourage everyone to put their thumbprint on the project, Ocean Institute introduced a “High Five” campaign, with the Sun Family Foundation matching gifts of \$5 or more. Within minutes of deploying the announcement, the \$10,000 match

was met. “We want people to point to Spirit and say, ‘I did that’, regardless of what they were able to contribute.” Approximately 80% of the donations came from new supporters, and within a few days, the campaign crossed the half-way point.

The collective support was impressive, but a gap remained. “I received a humbling phone call with a simple message”, said Marshall. The Swenson Family Foundation committed to closing the funding gap to get the job done.

“We have been caring for and loving the Ocean Institute now for about 35 years. The last year and a half or more have certainly been a trial for Ocean Institute and the whole country. But the Ocean Institute kept going with one virtual or outdoor event at a time,” says Swenson, “It is a no-brainer for the Foundation to make sure that Ocean Institute gets what it needs to continue to support our community. We look forward to welcoming the Spirit back with open arms.”

With funding in place and the boat yard in Chula Vista at the ready, Spirit set sail on Saturday, June 26th, to begin the restoration process.

Ocean Institute continues to collect donations to support the on-going maintenance fund for the vessel. “Each year we invest in routine maintenance – it is just part of owning a wooden boat,” says Marshall, “but this project ensures that Spirit will serve generations to come.

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