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New Exhibit entitled "Life on the Reef" Opened at The Living Planet Aquarium on May 29, 2008.

About the exhibit:

Coral reef education and conservation provide the inspiration for The Living Planet Aquarium's newest exhibit, "Life on the Reef," opening May 29, 2008. The exhibit, funded by a grant from the Utah Office of Museum Services, features marine life found in Indo-Pacific tropical waters.

A 1,000 gallon tank surrounded by four jewel tanks offers visitors a close look at the beauty and structure of coral communities and the animals that feed, rest, hide and make a home in this habitat. The large tank offers a glimpse at a bustling coral community with a diverse array of colorful corals and fish.

The jewel tanks show how certain coral reef inhabitants make homes for themselves or find meals on the reef. For example, the clownfish makes a home in the stinging tentacles of the sea anemone without ever being stung while the engineer goby digs a home beneath the coral's surface. Tanks also feature the feeding habits of the camouflaged frogfish and animals considered "reef janitors" that feed off the parasites of other fish.

Aquarium CEO Brent Andersen wants visitors to understand the importance of protecting the earth's coral reefs. "Coral reefs are the largest structures on earth and they are as biodiverse as tropical rainforests. These structures are also in danger. Nearly 10 percent of the world's reefs have been destroyed and reef decimation is occurring at an alarming rate. We hope that by bringing coral reefs to Utah families and school children that we can foster greater knowledge and concern for these amazing structures.

Andersen continues, "We realize that children are the future custodians of the environment. They cannot be expected to meet this challenge without the necessary expertise; yet the majority of our young people have never come in contact with the ocean, nor had the opportunity to understand their own water-dependent environment"

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About The Living Planet Aquarium:

The Living Planet Aquarium is dedicated to celebrating life on Earth by fostering a greater awareness and knowledge of Earth's diverse ecosystems and creating a deeper understanding of our place in the global system of life.

The Living Planet Aquarium presents a peek at Utah's lake and stream ecosystems and tropical coral reef habitats with two exhibit galleries. In the Utah Waters Gallery Visitors can take a virtual boat ride and learn about the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, see fish that are native to Utah and some that are endangered and labeled sensitive species. In the Marine Gallery visitors can come face-to-face with sharks, razor-toothed eels and delicate corals or imagine themselves at the bottom of the sea amidst colorful giant coral, sponges and the ship-wrecked 1830s Albatross. The aquarium brings more than 600 animals and 150 species of animals to people who might not have the chance to see them or their ecosystem in a natural setting.

To date, more than 729,000 guests have visited the aquarium since it opened in June, 2004 and its education programs reach thousands of students of all ages each year. The aquarium's in-house and outreach educational programs have reached a total of over 330,000 students. Due to tremendous growth, the educational programs now reach over 50,000 school children annually.

The Living Planet Aquarium, located at 725 E 106000 S in Sandy, is open for summer hours Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission tickets are \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, students and military personnel, \$6 for children ages 3-17 and free for children 2 years of age and younger. The first Monday of every month The Living Planet Aquarium offers half-priced Family night from 5-7 p.m. Visitors can purchase annual memberships for \$15 for each adult and \$9 for each child. Memberships entitle visitors a full year of admissions plus 10% discounts in the gift shop and for birthday parties in the sunken ship.

About The Utah Office of Museum Services:

The Utah Office of Museum Services (OMS) is a state agency within the Division of Arts and Museums. An 11-member Advisory Board, appointed by the Governor, works with the staff to create programs that assist Utah museums in improving their ability to: care for and manage collections; develop quality educational resources; provide access to collections for research; and identify and successfully compete for financial resources. The mission of the Office of Museum Services is to promote Utah museums and the essential role they play in our state as sources of community pride, centers of public education, and institutions which encourage economic development and tourism.

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