



COMMEMORATIVE REPORT

Celebrating the opening of the Ocean Pavilion



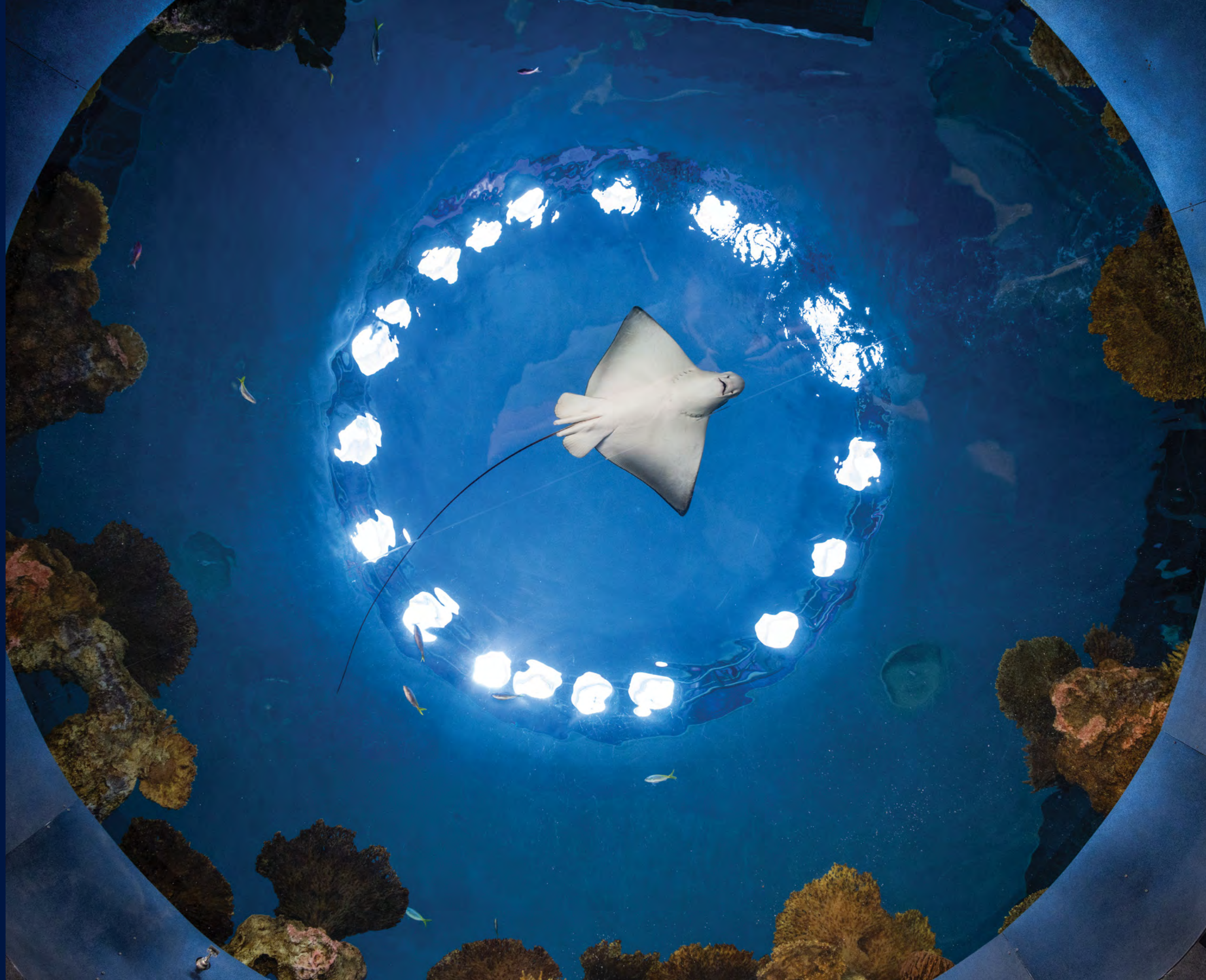
We are honored to be responsible guests on the traditional and contemporary territories of the Coast Salish people, who have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial.

Opening the door to a new era: your expanding Seattle Aquarium

The opening of the Ocean Pavilion's doors in August 2024 opened figurative doors as well—to increased connection with our community, increased engagement with our conservation mission and much more. Please enjoy this look back at some of the key moments that we achieved together.

"THE SEATTLE AQUARIUM'S EXPANSION IS OUT OF THIS WORLD. YOU KNOW HOW, WHEN YOU SEE A FISH HABITAT, YOU WISH YOU COULD BE IN IT? THIS IS AS CLOSE AS YOU'RE GOING TO GET. THE STAFF IS EVERYWHERE TOO, HAPPY TO TELL YOU ABOUT ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING."

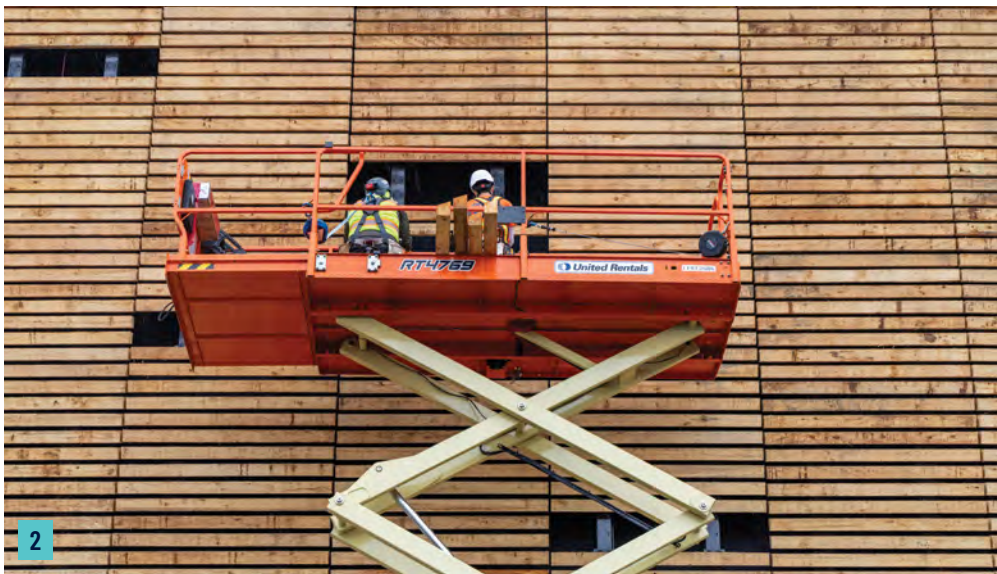
—VISITOR REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2024





A historic debut— years in the making!

Publications near and far celebrated the results of many months of hard work, partnership and collaboration.



1: Workers installing steel rebar as The Reef takes shape. The shape of this spacious habitat is based on the swim radius of the animals living within and required 680 cubic yards of concrete and 355 tons of multi-layered rebar.

2: The Ocean Pavilion's exterior features Forest Stewardship Council-certified, sustainably sourced Alaskan yellow cedar, procured from an Indigenous-owned/managed company. It will gradually fade to gray, just like driftwood on our local shorelines.



3: The main viewing window into The Reef habitat shortly after its installation. This unique window was custom-made for the Ocean Pavilion in Grand Junction, Colorado.

4: Preparation for native plantings on the Ocean Pavilion's public rooftop. The installation was designed with guidance from traditional knowledge-keeper Valerie Segrest (Muckleshoot), pictured second from left.



5: The concrete pour for what would soon become *Grandmother Rock*, part of the *House of Welcome* installation that welcomes guests to the Ocean Pavilion, designed by artist Daniel Joseph Friday, also known as Kwul Kwul Tw (Lummi).

6: A big milestone: water begins flowing into The Reef habitat. Including pauses for checkpoints, it took seven days to completely fill the habitat.

Architect: LMN | Design: Thinc | Contractor: Turner

A new, green landmark on our city's historic waterfront

The Seattle Aquarium already offsets more carbon than we emit, with ambitious goals for energy, water, materials use and waste. With your help, the Ocean Pavilion provided a chance to do more.

The building operates fossil-fuel-free, recirculates nearly all of its seawater and uses recaptured heat from that seawater to warm its indoor spaces, resulting in significant energy savings. It was constructed with carefully selected sustainable materials and plentiful windows to provide natural light.

It's these features that earned the Ocean Pavilion LEED Gold certification. They're also helping us to target Living Future's Zero Carbon Certification, which carries more expansive standards than LEED Gold.

Engineer Ethan Barr and the complex system of pipes and pumps that keep seawater recirculating through the Ocean Pavilion's habitats.



BELOW: West-facing windows with outstanding views highlight the connection between the Salish Sea and Coral Triangle.



RIGHT: Director of Animal Operations Tim Carpenter checking the flow rate as water enters a habitat.



THE SEATTLE AQUARIUM'S NEW OCEAN PAVILION AIMS TO BE A MODEL FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABLE AND CARBON-NEUTRAL PUBLIC SPACES.

—THE SEATTLE TIMES, AUGUST 29, 2024



Bio ball bonanza

Bio balls—tiny but mighty orbs that provide surface area for beneficial bacteria to grow—were an important tool as we readied the Ocean Pavilion's habitats for the arrival of animals. These superhero spheres break down waste, helping to keep the animals in our care safe and healthy.

Water Quality Manager Hannah Mewhirter (right) and team member Tobias Brown gathering bio balls for the Ocean Pavilion's habitats.



SHARKS AND RAYS ARE ONE OF THE OLDEST EVOLUTIONARY LINEAGES ON THE PLANET. LOSING ANY OF THOSE SPECIES MEANS LOSING MILLIONS OF YEARS OF EVOLUTIONARY ADAPTATION.

—RILEY POLLAM,
SEATTLE AQUARIUM SPECIES RECOVERY
PROGRAM MANAGER, 2022–2025



Expertise behind the scenes: populating the Ocean Pavilion

Most of the animals and plants that are now entralling Ocean Pavilion visitors spent months being carefully nurtured by expert staff at our off-site Animal Care Center (ACC). At the same time, skillful teams were hard at work in the new building, preparing the habitats to welcome their future residents.

With habitats ready and conditions right, it was time to begin the process of relocating thousands of individual animals and plants to the Ocean Pavilion. Our teams put their exquisitely detailed plans in motion to transport the species and gently settle them into their new homes. Each move was a testament to our staff's dedication and expertise—and a reflection of your support in action.

Meet Rhina:

Our guests marvel at the critically endangered bowmouth guitarfish in our care—and the story that led her to us. After being caught in a commercial fishing net, her mother gave birth to nine pups. With the help of conservation partners, the pups were moved to the ACC for care; eight were transferred to accredited zoos and aquariums. Rhina, as she's known (from her species name, *Rhina ancylostomus*), remains to inspire all comers.



After careful planning—even rehearsals!—the team gently places a mangrove into its new home in The Archipelago habitat.



From left, Animal Care team members Lindsey Eggers and Kelly Douglas during one of the 127 moves that brought new fish to the Ocean Pavilion.



Senior Aquarist Bryan McNeil transferring the first corals into The Archipelago habitat to grow and thrive.

ReShark



Doing our part to ReShark the ocean

With your support, we continue partnering in the ReShark coalition's project to restore endangered Indo-Pacific leopard sharks to their home waters in the Coral Triangle. We serve as the transport hub for eggs (top photo) laid by sharks in human care at U.S. facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. When ready, the eggs are transported to nurseries in Indonesia to hatch and be reared, tagged and released.



One ocean, our future: a grand opening for the ages

Years of planning and hard work came together when the Ocean Pavilion officially opened to the public on the sunny morning of August 29, 2024. Excited supporters, like you, who had been with us every step of the way gathered to hear from leaders, respected peers and collaborators, including our immediate past president & CEO, Bob Davidson.

With a crew of smiling Youth Ocean Advocates teen volunteers assembled in front of the podium, Dr. Sylvia Earle—world-renowned oceanographer and inspiration for our highest honor, the Seattle Aquarium Sylvia Earle Medal—cut the ceremonial ribbon. As invited guests, staff, volunteers and community members cheered, we opened the doors to a new and hopeful chapter.

With a ceremonial cutting of the ribbon, the Ocean Pavilion is officially open. From left: Campaign Chair Martha Kongsgaard, former Governor Jay Inslee, former King County Executive Dow Constantine, Dr. Sylvia Earle, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, Suquamish Tribal Council Member Azure Boure and Muckleshoot Tribal Council Chair Jaison Elkins.



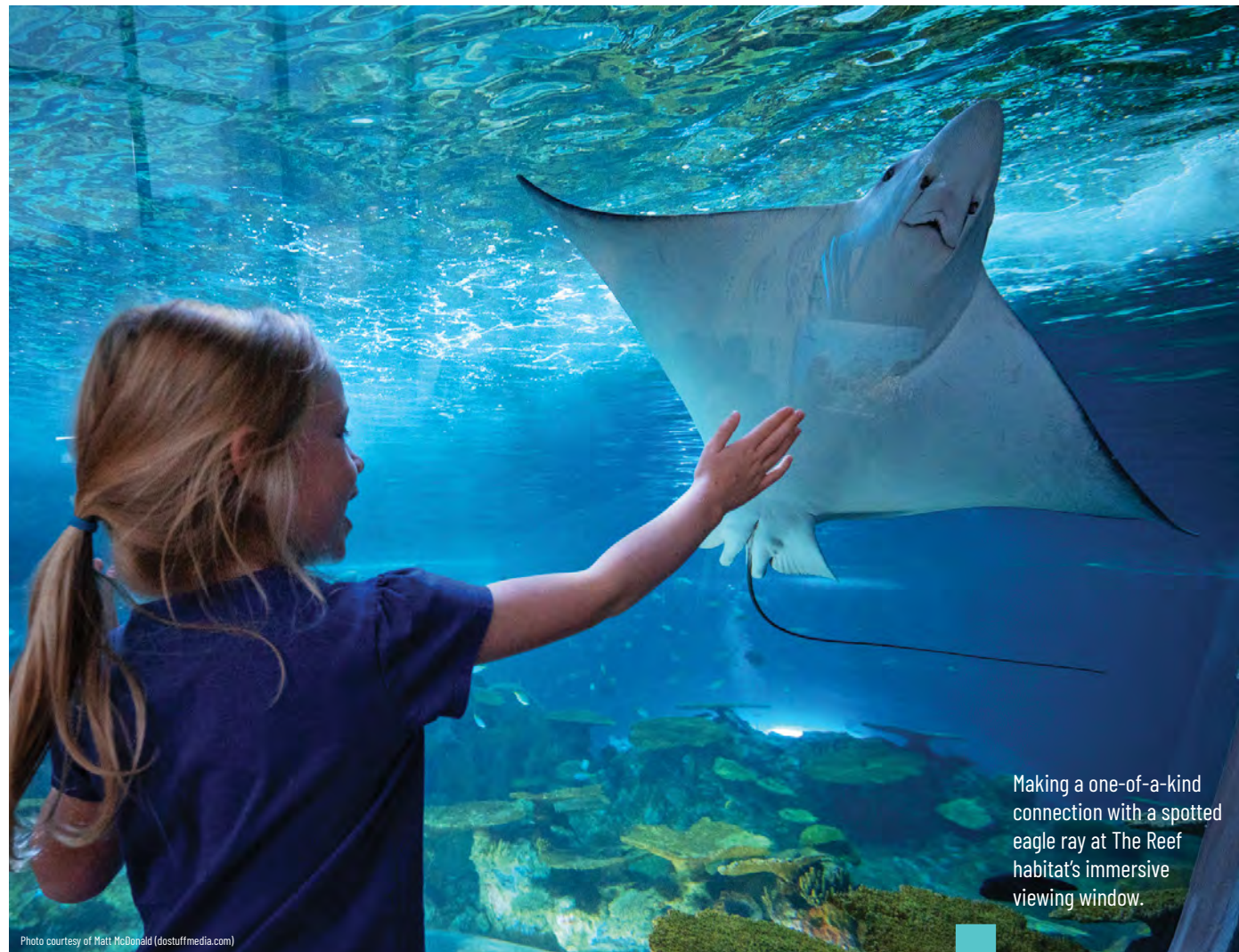
1: Immediate Past President & CEO Bob Davidson thanked all in attendance, noting, "It's taken over 20 years for the Seattle Aquarium's new Ocean Pavilion expansion to go from vision to reality."

2: Dr. Sylvia Earle, renowned marine biologist, oceanographer, explorer and environmental advocate, flanked by Youth Ocean Advocate teen volunteers—many of whom got selfies with "Her Deepness."

3: Supporters, leaders, peers, community members, staff and volunteers gather to celebrate a historic milestone—the Ocean Pavilion's grand opening—and the beginning of a new era for the Seattle Aquarium.

THE OCEAN PAVILION IS HERE THANKS TO AN EXTRAORDINARY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP OF FUNDERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO OUR MOST AMBITIOUS EFFORT YET. WE'RE GRATEFUL TO EACH OF YOU.

—IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT & CEO
BOB DAVIDSON



Making a one-of-a-kind connection with a spotted eagle ray at The Reef habitat's immersive viewing window.

Welcoming extraordinary new species to our care

The Ocean Pavilion brought us the opportunity to greatly expand the variety of animals and plants in our care. For the first time, we're providing homes for several ray species, an Indo-Pacific leopard shark, a bowmouth guitarfish and mangroves (see pages 10–11). We've also welcomed new species of reef fish, invertebrates and other fascinating creatures.

The warm and bright spaces, beautifully designed habitats and immersive experiences of the Ocean Pavilion provide the ideal backdrop to showcase this incredible diversity of marine life—and also help illustrate the important story of the connected waters that create our one world ocean. Thank you for the support that made our shared vision a reality.

WE WENT TO THE OCEAN PAVILION TODAY AND IT WAS BEAUTIFUL. I COULD SIT AND WATCH THE SCHOOLING FISH ALL DAY. THE EAGLE RAYS WERE A DEFINITE HIGHLIGHT!

—VISITOR COMMENT,
SEPTEMBER 2024



1: An ornate spiny lobster (*Panulirus versicolor*), one of 9,518 animals that moved into the Ocean Pavilion in 2024. Come see this amazingly vibrant animal in the At Home in the Ocean habitats!

2: A type of sea cucumber, the Australian sea apple (*Pseudocolochirus violaceus*) earns its name with its colorful appearance and round shape. It's one of 158 invertebrate species in the Ocean Pavilion.

3: Aquarium visitors thrill to the sight of a leopard whiptail ray (*Himantura leoparda*) gliding through The Reef habitat. **Fast fact:** their tails can be two to four times longer than their entire body!

4: Introducing our guests to fascinating new species like the chocolate chip sea star (*Protoreaster nodosus*) helps create those all-important moments of wonder that can lead to a lifetime of marine advocacy.

Bringing joy and wonder to guests of all ages

The sheer delight of guests experiencing the Ocean Pavilion for the first time was ample reward for the years of partnership, hard work and fundraising that went into the creation of this vibrant new space.

Plans and dreams became real as families gazed into the depths of The Reef habitat, exclaiming over the thriving community of marine life—with excited “oohs” each time a ray came into view. Children danced and played with the interactive displays of One Ocean Hall. At Home in the Ocean—a series of intimate habitats—provided opportunities for up-close viewing and learning. And upstairs, The Archipelago offered guests the chance to view mangroves and schooling fish from above and below the surface.

Children are irresistibly drawn to the life within The Reef habitat. Thank you for the partnership that makes such moments possible.



The Archipelago habitat allows our youngest guests, as well as guests in wheelchairs, to view a thriving habitat at eye level—with schooling fish darting between the roots of mangrove trees.



Blue-spotted stingray



Children love exploring the Coral Reef Encounter, an intimate, kid-sized space filled with opportunities to learn more about the reef community through videos and interactive displays.



Leaf scorpionfish



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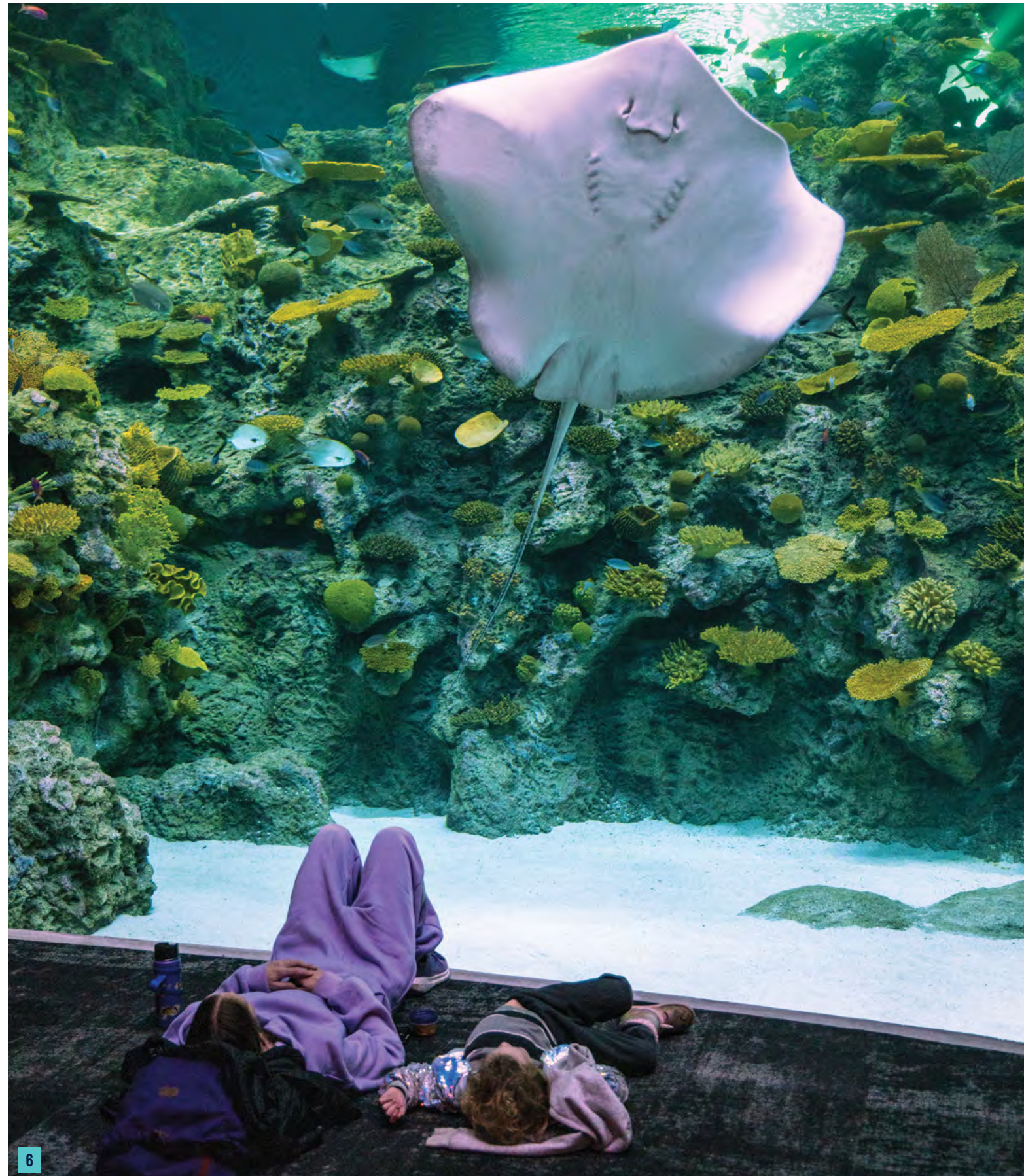
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1: The viewing windows of the At Home in the Ocean habitats are ideally sized for children to peer inside and learn about the animals within.

2: Follow the sound of excited “oohs” at the Ocean Pavilion and you’ll likely see a cluster of kids, full of amazement as the bowmouth guitarfish in our care glides past.

3: The next generation of marine conservationists playing and pretending to swim with immersive projections of ocean habitats around the world in One Ocean Hall.

4: Adults also welcome the opportunity to get eye to eye with amazing animals from the tropical Pacific—and learn about the connected waters of Earth’s one ocean.

5: Providing glimpses into our animal care space creates empathy and helps our visitors understand that animals, just like humans, need regular medical care to stay healthy.

6: A moment of awe at The Reef habitat, which allows kids and families to experience the wonders of the Coral Triangle from many different perspectives—including the floor!

Honoring place with meaningful works by Indigenous artists

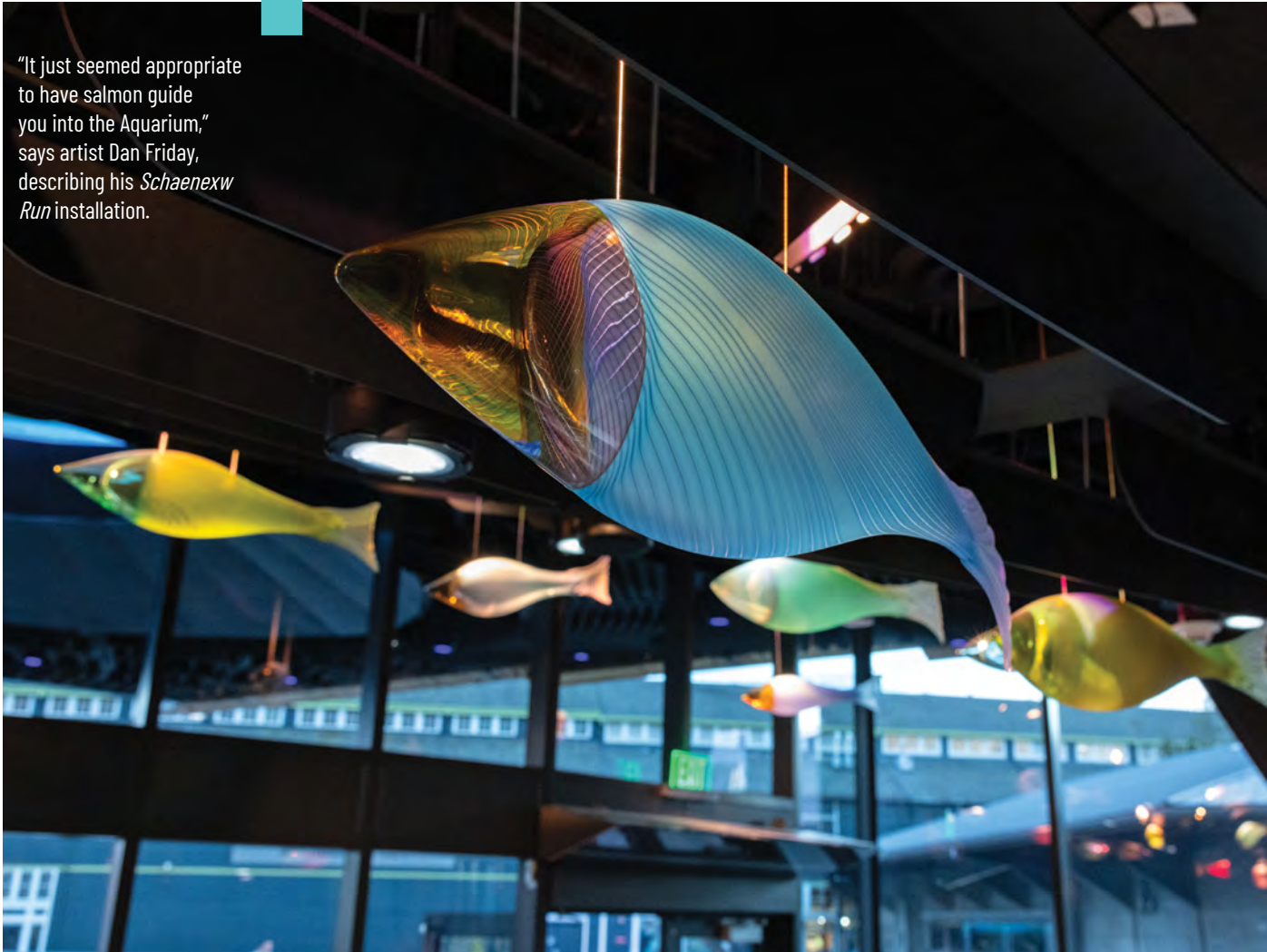
WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE OCEAN PAVILION, I AUTOMATICALLY THOUGHT OF THE FISH—THEIR STORY AND HOW THEIR LIVES ARE INTERTWINED WITH THE LIVES OF THE COAST SALISH PEOPLE.

—ARTIST DANIEL JOSEPH FRIDAY, ALSO KNOWN AS KWUL KWUL TW (LUMMI)

For over 10,000 years, the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest have stewarded the lands and waters of this region—and they continue to do so today. The Seattle Aquarium honors our location in this revered space on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples.

Co-creation with consultants from the Indigenous community has guided our Ocean Pavilion project since the beginning. Indigenous knowledge and expertise are reflected in the building’s design, programming and cultural framework—and also represented in stunning works, both inside and outside the building, created by Indigenous artists.

We thank the partners, consultants and artists who participated in invaluable cross-cultural collaborations.



"It just seemed appropriate to have salmon guide you into the Aquarium," says artist Dan Friday, describing his *Schaenexw Run* installation.



1: Artist Dan Friday and Senior Director of Capital Projects Susan Bullerdick—who led the Ocean Pavilion project—at the dedication of the three-part art installation, *House of Welcome*.

2: Dan Friday wanted his art pieces, including *Grandmother Rock* (below the oculus) and the *Spindle Wheel Portal* (surrounding it) to be accessible to all community members, including those just passing by.

3: An interactive seasonal round, created by visual artist Paige Pettibon (Confederated Salish and Kootenai), illustrates the cycle of life in the lands and waters of the Salish Sea.

4: Paddles symbolize the universal connection between people and the ocean—and the Ocean Pavilion displays paddles made by Indigenous carvers from the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Samoa and the Indo-Pacific.

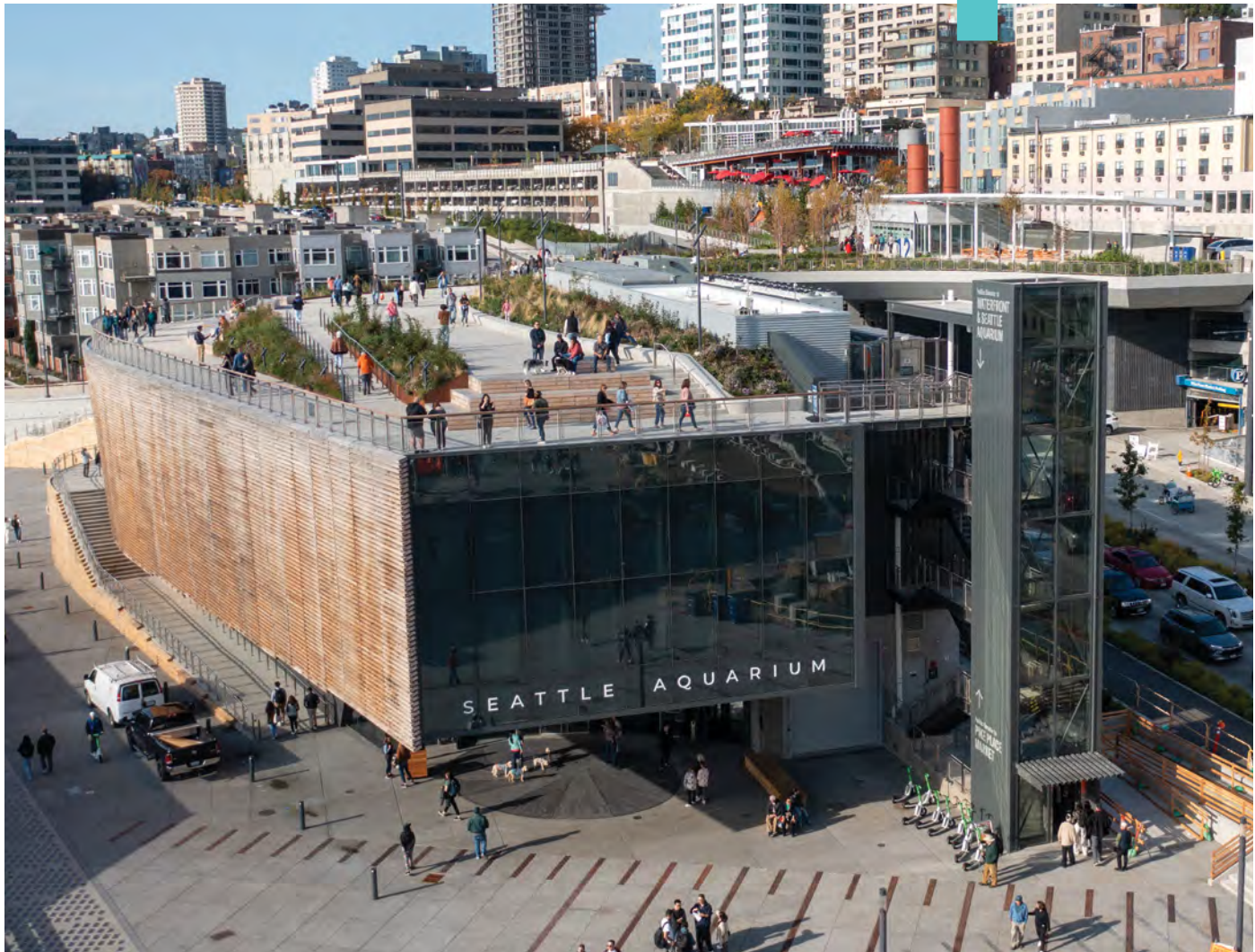
5: Immersive projections in One Ocean Hall help underscore that all waters are connected in our one world ocean. We thank the Coral Triangle Center for their partnership on the Indo-Pacific videos.

New public spaces and a waterfront for all to enjoy

As a gift to our city and community, the Ocean Pavilion offers a variety of experiences that are available free of charge—no ticket required. All comers can marvel at The Reef habitat's diversity of marine life while gazing up into the oculus just outside the building's entrance. Then jump in the elevator for a quick lift to the public rooftop to explore native plantings and Indigenous artwork while taking in 180°-degree views of Elliott Bay before heading to Pike Place Market via the Overlook Walk.

With your partnership, the Ocean Pavilion is helping to usher in a new era of civic pride for our city—anchoring our reimagined waterfront and revitalizing our downtown core.

With your support, the Ocean Pavilion's rooftop—accessed via a new, public elevator—and its stunning views are free for all to enjoy.



I THANK ALL THOSE WHO
HAD THE VISION TO MAKE
SOMETHING BETTER SO WE CAN
BE TOGETHER, WELCOME PEOPLE
FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE
WORLD, AND CREATE COMMUNITY
IN GREAT CIVIC SPACES.

—FORMER KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE
DOW CONSTANTINE



1: The Ocean Pavilion serves as a public gathering space both day and night—offering new ways to activate our waterfront neighborhood.

2: Everyone can look overhead into the Ocean Pavilion's largest habitat, The Reef, and even watch for rays swimming by—no ticket needed.

3: On the Ocean Pavilion's public rooftop, sandblasted designs by Owen Oliver (Quinault/Isleta Pueblo) lead the way to unforgettable views.

4: Bob Davidson and Mayor Bruce Harrell, along with civic and city leaders, at the ribbon-cutting for the Ocean Pavilion's public rooftop and Overlook Walk.





With your support and partnership, the vision became real

Our deepest gratitude to the 4,400+ community members* who came together in support of our *One Ocean, One Future* campaign. You’ve helped forge a path for visitors of all ages to understand the story of Earth’s one ocean—and the critical importance of protecting it—through our magnificently expanded campus.

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*As of May 19, 2025.



Dear Community,
For more than seven years, it has been my privilege to chair the Seattle

Aquarium's *One Ocean, One Future* campaign to build the Ocean Pavilion. It has been a transformational experience for me to work alongside campaign cabinet members Mike Anderson, Bob Davidson, Bob Donegan, Michael Guidon, Stephanie Kornblum and Charles Wright, Jr. Their unflinching leadership and service kept us strong and focused on our ambitious goals. A great city deserves great institutions, and we are delivering on this promise.

To the co-creating tribal partners and the thousands of philanthropic partners, consultants, contractors, artists, fish enthusiasts, board members, volunteers and staff who brought this vision to life—thank you. I am humbled by your commitment to reimagine how aquaria in the 21st century can lead and innovate in a climate-challenged world.

Together, we are shaping the future of the Seattle Aquarium, the city of Seattle and the blue planet's one world ocean. Thank you for your support.

With gratitude,

Martha Kongsgaard
Campaign Chair

Staff and volunteers, thank you for making it all happen

The hard work and dedication of our incredible staff and volunteers have always been an inspiration—and were even more so as we prepared to open the Ocean Pavilion. Thank you again and always for everything you did, and continue to do, in service of our conservation mission.



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- 1: Marine Science Performer Jay Chavez delighting kids during one of 2024's 450+ marine science story times/puppet shows.
- 2: Research Technician Megan Williams with our ROV, which we're using to better understand the health of local kelp.
- 3: Thank you to our volunteers—adults as well as Youth Ocean Advocates (one of whom is pictured here)—who enrich every visit for our guests.
- 4: Animal Care staff completed 804 assessments in 2024, working hard to ensure the animals in our care are thriving.
- 5: From left, volunteer and donor Maurice Warner chats with Senior Philanthropy Officer Jason Puz.
- 6: Visitor engagement staff presented 1,059 diver programs in 2024—including the ever-popular Diving Santa events.
- 7: Gathering in community at an all-staff meeting. As Bob Davidson says, "It's a happening place."

WWW

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