



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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One of Largest Living Coral Reef Displays Unveiled at Strong National Museum of Play®

ROCHESTER, NY—Strong National Museum of Play is pleased to unveil its newly enlarged 1,700-gallon *Rainbow Reef* aquarium—making Strong’s coral reef display one of the largest living aquarium reefs in the Northeastern United States.

Rainbow Reef aquarium’s new, state-of-the art filtration system (filtering the water 48 times a day) creates a healthy marine environment that allows museum guests to experience the beauty of a living seascape of brilliantly colored fish, corals, shrimp, clams, starfish, sea urchins, and crabs. A larger, lower viewing surface permits even the littlest Nemo and Dory watchers to have a close-up view of creatures like the Snowflake Moray Eel (who pokes out from among the rocks and corals watching the guests as they pass) and the Blue Spotted Stingray (who loves to hide in the sand).

This true-to-life representation of a living coral reef is designed to closely mimic conditions found at The Great Barrier Reef and other ocean reef environments and contains nearly 150 species of animals, including fish, invertebrates, and coral. With each visit to this progressive aquascape, guests will be able to observe changes over time and make new discoveries. “Called the ‘rainforests of the sea,’ coral reefs are the greatest expression of ocean life and the most biodiverse ecosystem on earth,” says museum entomologist Tad Yankoski. “Although they cover less than one percent of the earth’s surface, they are home to twenty-five percent of all marine fish species. *Rainbow Reef* aquarium complements our other live collection

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2—Aquarium

display, *Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden*[®], a live indoor butterfly garden that brings the biodiversity of a tropical rainforest to upstate New York year-round.”

Guests can watch twice daily as the museum staff feeds the fish, corals, and other invertebrates a special blend of small shrimp, chopped fish, and tiny plankton. “In the wild, many of the fish graze on algae and other plants, but in the aquarium they avidly eat substitutes like lettuce, other leafy vegetables, and even peas and broccoli,” says the museum’s chief entomologist Derek Kellogg. “Our Snowflake Moray Eel and Blue Spotted Stingray like big, juicy shrimp—and lots of them. The staff feed them by hand so that the other fish don’t steal their meals. Some of the soft corals get an extra feeding of shrimp and small fish once a week. As with the eel, the staff carefully puts the food directly into the corals’ mouths.”

Rainbow Reef aquarium is complemented by two flat screen monitors that display videos, images, facts, and questions about animals found in the tank. Two smaller adjacent tanks feature additional marine life displays including sea anemones, a shark, Moray eels, puffer fish, shrimp, triggerfish, and starfish.

All of the aquarium displays are included with general museum admission fees.

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Strong National Museum of Play[®], located in downtown Rochester, New York, is the only museum in the world devoted solely to the study of play as it illuminates American culture.

Museum Hours:

Monday–Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Sunday, 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

Admission Fees:

General Admission (does not include admission to *Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden*[®]): Adults \$10.00; Seniors \$9.00; Children (2–15) \$8.00; Children younger than two free; Strong members free.

Admission to *Dancing Wings Butterfly Garden*[®]:

General Admission fee plus \$1.50 for members, \$3.00 for nonmembers; Children under 2 free. Entry is by timed ticket only. Please call 585-263-2700 to reserve and purchase tickets.

Parking: Free parking is available at the museum for all guests on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note that, on high visitation days, the museum lot may reach capacity early in the day. If space is not available on site at the time of your visit, you will be directed to additional parking at neighboring municipal garages (fees may apply).