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Highline’s MaST Center Aquarium Hosts New Plankton Exhibit
Free Exhibit Open to Public Saturdays Through March

DES MOINES, Wash. — Highline College’s [Marine, Science and Technology \(MaST\) Center Aquarium](#) has a new exhibit open to the community from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday now through March.

The MaST partnered with researchers at [foundry10](#), graduate students with [University of Washington’s Museology](#) program and the [Community Marine Centers of the Salish Sea](#) to develop “Plankton: Wanderers of the Salish Sea,” an interactive traveling aquarium exhibit for students and families to explore.

Engaging in hands-on educational activities throughout the exhibit, attendees will leave with an appreciation for the critical role that plankton play in our ecosystem and food web, they’ll learn their method of travel through ocean currents and will discover ways to actively support the health of plankton populations in the Salish Sea.

“We’re grateful to our partners for bringing this engaging plankton exhibit to our community,” said Aerial Wauhob, the MaST’s Community Engagement Coordinator. “Plankton is more than just a character in the kid’s TV show, ‘Sponge Bob.’ It’s a vital food source for fish and is necessary for our food chain.”

“When children collect and observe plankton under the microscope, they clearly light up by engaging through direct experience,” said Travis Willingham Windleharth, senior researcher at foundry10. “It is incredibly rewarding as an educator and researcher to measure how youth are learning about the critical role plankton play in our ecosystem, and witness them learn how they can take action to support the health of the Salish Sea by exploring how their landside behaviors impact plankton.”

In addition to plankton collection in the field, students can play a fun “Plankton/Not Plankton” guessing game, and “Franken Plankton,” a dice game modeled after Cootie. Visitors can create their own plankton craft and see them displayed in a 3-D space. A large touch screen mounted on the wall enables youth to take quizzes (*What Kind of Plankton are You?*), read comics and more.

An accompanying online experience allows users to download plankton coloring sheets and continue learning from home.

The MaST is located at 28203 Redondo Beach Dr. S. in Des Moines and is the first location the exhibit will be at for a total of eight locations around Puget Sound.

For more information, visit mast.highline.edu.

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Attachment: Students from Why Not You Academy learn about plankton during the “Plankton: Wanderers of the Salish Sea” exhibit at the MaST Center Aquarium.

Links within this release:

- <https://mast.highline.edu/>
- <https://www.foundry10.org/>
- <https://www.washington.edu/museology/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/1water1future/>

About Highline College:

Founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County, Highline College annually serves 13,000 students. With over 75 percent students of color, Highline is the most diverse higher education institution in the state. The college offers a wide range of academic transfer, professional-technical education, basic skills and applied bachelor’s degree programs. Alumni include former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, entrepreneur Junki Yoshida, Dr. Tom Jackson, president of Cal-Poly Humboldt and former Washington state poet laureate Sam Green.

About MaST Center Aquarium:

The MaST Center Aquarium is a multi-purpose facility available for both public and private use. Its aquarium houses more than 250 native Puget Sound sealife creatures in 3,000 gallons of seawater throughout multiple multiple tanks. In addition to being a space for art and oceanic exhibits, a classroom and laboratory for college level courses is available to students of Highline College. These students also have the opportunity to get involved in [volunteer opportunities](#), work study programs, and partake in internships. The MaST also offers research space with a flow through seawater pump system, which is available for scientific experiments. Community members are welcome to enjoy the MaST Center Aquarium on Saturdays for free and a yearly [summer day camp](#) is available to children in 4th, 5th and 6th grades.

About foundry10:

foundry10 is an education research organization based in Seattle with a philanthropic focus on expanding ideas about learning and creating direct value for youth.

About University of Washington Museology:

The University of Washington’s Museology program offers a Master of Arts Museology degree

in addition to internship opportunities for students who are interested in the science or practice of organizing, arranging and managing museums.