



NEWS RELEASE

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Manatee America Going Back Into the Wild

This Manatee Awareness Month, Miami Seaquarium will release Manatee America with the Help of Miami-Dade County Public School Children

What: This manatee awareness month Miami Seaquarium will be releasing manatee America with the help of Miami Dade county public school children from Mast Academy.

When: Animal loading will begin at **10:00am at Miami Seaquarium**. Media advised to arrive by 09:45am at the park and go through the gate to the right of the main entrance. In an effort to educate students of the importance of wildlife preservation, Miami Seaquarium will offer a first hand look at manatee care and release. Mast Academy's Marine Research Class will accompany Miami Seaquarium animal care staff throughout the process. An animal care speaker will educate the students on the importance of preserving these protected species. Once the manatee is loaded into the truck, animal caregivers and students will depart from the park promptly. Media is welcome to follow the manatee and students to the drop off area. Manatee America will be released in the Naples area. Please contact Public Relations Coordinator Carolina Perrina at 305-365-2525 to schedule your media crew.

Who: Manatee 'America' background:

Manatee America was rescued on the west coast of Florida on July 4th 2007, date that rendered her name. The young adult female manatee sustained severe injuries to the head from a boat propeller accident. "When she arrived at Miami Seaquarium her eyes were virtually non-responsive, her flippers had no pain sensation and could not move and her muzzle was flaccid and paralyzed," said Dr. Maya Rodriguez.

After several months of provided care by Miami Seaquarium animal care and veterinarian staff, Manatee America recovered and is ready to be returned to the wild. The female manatee sustained head trauma as a result of the accident and was unable to eat solid food or drink on her own. She slowly showed signs of improvement when she began to move her upper lip, grind her teeth, and twitch her nose.

"Keeping an 800 pound manatee alive when they cannot even drink a drop of water on their own was an incredible task but when we saw that first nose flicker we were elated that it was all worth it," said Dr. Maya Rodriguez.