

NEWS RELEASE

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Rescued Baby Manatee Rehabilitating at Miami Seaquarium

Miami, Florida (November 10, 2008) – Orphan baby manatee Kiandra is rehabilitating at Miami Seaquarium after being rescued from Key Largo this past summer.

Baby Kiandra was first observed alone in the FL keys and was monitored for a few days until her rescue on father's day, June 15, 2008. Baby Kiandra was then brought to Miami Seaquarium for rehabilitation.

Kiandra was severely dehydrated, weighing 65 pounds and measuring 3 feet. The baby was immediately bottle fed by Miami Seaquarium animal care and veterinarian staff, and received around the clock care to monitor her recovery.

"Kiandra was a very unique baby. She took the bottle right away. It usually takes a few days to get the babies to bottle feed. She was that dehydrated," said Dr. Maya Menchaca Rodriguez, Miami Seaquarium veterinarian.

After a few months of bottle feeding baby Kiandra, Miami Seaquarium animal care staff began introducing solid foods into her environment. She is currently responding well to her mixed milk and solid food diet, and has been placed in the company of 3 older female manatees, two of which have been recorded spontaneously lactating.

Manatee Juliet, one of the older female manatees, has served as a surrogate mother for baby Kiandra, as she has for many other orphans. *Miami Seaquarium is the first facility to document spontaneous lactation in manatees.* "We believe the baby elicits the behavior in the older female by latching on to her. This causes the hormonal release in the older female to begin lactating," said Dr. Menchaca Rodriguez.

At approximately 6 months of age, the baby is recovering well and has high hopes of being reintroduced to her natural environment in the future.

In Honor of Manatee Awareness Month (beginning November 15th), press is invited to witness a special behind the scenes on baby Kiandra and the rescue &

rehabilitation team on **Thursday November 13th, 2008 at 10am** at Miami Seaquarium.
Baby feeding photo opportunity.

In an effort to create awareness and raise funds for protected Florida manatees like Kiandra, Miami Seaquarium launched the promotion, '*Change for a Change*' this month. Manatee lovers can deposit their spare change at any Bank of America nationwide and help the Manatee Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP). Donors will also receive \$7.50 off their next visit to Miami Seaquarium.

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