

MOODY GARDENS INTRODUCES A NEW EVENT FOR DIVERS, OCEAN LOVERS, AND CONSERVATIONISTS AUGUST 19-21

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GALVESTON, Texas (August 11, 2022) – Moody Gardens invites those who appreciate, dive, study, work or play in the ocean to attend, *Dive into the Gulf: An Exposition* August 19 to 21. This unique event will be filled with speakers, dive equipment, vendors, opportunities to try SCUBA diving, and a Behind the Scenes Tour at the Aquarium Pyramid. A special *Currents in the Gulf Dinner* will feature Lionfish as the main course to focus on an important educational and conservation message. Raffles and prizes to benefit a variety of conservation efforts will also be available.

"We're really excited about this event," said Jake Emmert, Moody Gardens Dive Safety Officer, Chair of the Sanctuary Advisory and Counsel for the Flower Gardens Banks Marine Sanctuary who added the focus will be new and vital conservation and dive topics relevant to the Gulf of Mexico each year. "This year the event will feature a lineup of amazing speakers ranging from a marine artist, underwater photography, and more. The focus is on marine sanctuaries, specifically the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary and how opportunities to get involved or learn more about the Gulf of Mexico and its natural resources."

Presentations will showcase a lineup of speakers from all across the country, who have come together for the first time to share their expertise, educate and inspire. Topics and speakers include:

- "Our Marine World, Through Art," with, Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee, Artist
- "30 Years of Flower Gardens," with, G.P. Schmah, Superintendent of Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary
- "Dive Into Texas' Artificial Reefs," with, Brooke Shipley, Texas Parks and Wildlife Chief Scientist for the Artificial Reef Program
- "Blue Beacon Series: Save Spectacular with Marine Sanctuaries & Gulf Restoration," with, Kris Sarri, President and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Dr. Larry McKinney, retired Texas Parks and Wildlife Senior Director for Aquatic Resources and Kelly Martin, Program Analyst at NOAA
- "Environmental Stewardship for Divers," with, Christine Tamburri, Risk Mitigation Coordinator at Divers Alert Network
- "Using Photography to Capture the Essence of the FGBNMS," with, Jesse Cancelmo, Diver, Underwater Photographer, and Author
- "Dive Into Twilight with the Moody Gardens Dive Program," with, Jake Emmert, Moody Gardens

The *Currents in the Gulf* dinner Saturday evening will feature speaker Mehgan Heaney-Grier. Mehgan Heaney-Grier is a pioneering free diver, ocean explorer, and longtime conservationist with more than 20 years of experience working both above and below the waterline, Mehgan has built a career as a professional speaker, marine educator, podcast host, and television personality.

This team of speakers and community members share the goals of conserving and restoring the planet's aquatic and terrestrial environments in a responsible manner. Through living collections, property-wide conservation and research efforts, and emerging initiatives the event encourages guests to be a part of this positive impact. This also serves as a fundraising event for the Moody Gardens Conservation Fund. This fund provides critical support for field conservation, species preservation, and habitat restoration. Guests have the opportunity to stay at the Moody Gardens hotel to enjoy these experiences, along with many others all weekend long.

Special hotel packages are available for the weekend event. For more information about *Dive Into The Gulf: An Exploration*, please visit moodygardens.org or call 409-744-4673.

Moody Gardens® is a public, non-profit, educational destination utilizing nature in the advancement of rehabilitation, conservation, recreation, and research.

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