



CLEARWATER MARINE
AQUARIUM™

PRESS RELEASE

Fisherman who found Winter makes emotional return to CMA Grandniece granted visit by Make-A-Wish

Clearwater, FL (September 19, 2016) – On Tuesday, September 20, 2016, Grace Savage, a 10-year-old girl from Make-A-Wish Oregon, will see her hero Winter, the star of the *Dolphin Tale* films. However, she is not the first member of her family to meet the world-famous dolphin.

Grace's great uncle is Jim Savage, the fisherman who discovered Winter entangled in the rope of a crab trap on December 10, 2005 near Cape Canaveral, Florida. Jim's swift actions led to Winter's rescue, the globalization of her story, and inspiration delivered to families worldwide. Children with life-threatening conditions who are granted one true wish by the Make-A-Wish Foundation choose to visit Clearwater Marine Aquarium on a daily basis. Nearly 11 years later, Jim's grandniece has made the same choice to travel across the country and see the dolphin who inspires her to keep fighting.

Also called DiGeorge or velocardiofacial syndrome, Grace has 22.q11.2 deletion syndrome, which is a chromosomal disorder that results in poor development of several body systems. This condition can cause heart defects, poor immune system function, a cleft palate, and low levels of calcium in the blood.

"My husband and I always welcome the opportunity to get the word out about the 'most common syndrome you've never heard of,'" says Katie Savage, Grace's mother. "Lives could be saved from increased awareness, and that's our goal whenever we discuss Grace's many struggles and battles."

For the Savage family, Winter has provided light during dark circumstances. "Getting through the difficult times without Winter's amazing story to keep her going would have been a lot harder...this is going to be a lifetime dream come true for Grace," states Katie.

Grace's wish trip will also unite the Savage family with Jim for the first time since Grace was an infant. Grace will meet her great uncle and her favorite dolphins, Winter and Hope, on Tuesday, September 20th at 1:30pm.

Essential Details for attending media:

The dolphin interaction is scheduled to begin at 1:30pm on Tuesday, September 20th at Clearwater Marine Aquarium, 249 Windward Passage. Media are encouraged to arrive no later than 1:00pm.

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About Clearwater Marine Aquarium:

Clearwater Marine Aquarium (CMA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working marine rescue center dedicated to inspiring the human spirit through leadership in education, research, rescue, rehabilitation and release. CMA is home to rescued dolphins, sea turtles, river otters, stingrays, nurse sharks and more. Winter the dolphin's story of survival, after the injury that caused her to lose her tail, has impacted millions of people around the world. A major motion picture, *Dolphin Tale*, highlighted her life story in 2011. The sequel, *Dolphin Tale 2*, was released in September 2014 and features the incredible story of Hope, a young resident dolphin of CMA. The mission and potential to change people's lives differentiates Clearwater Marine Aquarium from any other aquarium in the world.

WE BELIEVE in preserving our environment while inspiring the human spirit through leadership in the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of marine life, environmental education, research and conservation.

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