

MEDIA RELEASE



Build-A-Whale at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre

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The life-sized Build-A-Whale project has migrated to Sidney's Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre this holiday season. The Centre is encouraging everyone to come and take part in building the real killer whale skeleton, piece by piece. It presents a fantastic opportunity to learn about whale anatomy through an interactive, one-of-a-kind learning experience.

The exhibit is made up of over 50 individual bones and vertebrae which offer insight on how the fascinating mammal once lived. The pieces are assembled around a wooden frame with illustrations of the internal organs. Linda Funk, Education Director at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre, plans on using the interactive exhibit to compare how whales differ from humans and other land animals, but also to show how similar we are. "Most times, skeletons are too fragile to handle, but this is a unique opportunity to get your hands on some real bones," says Linda. Build-A-Whale will be a fun addition to many of the school programs while it's at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre.

The female killer whale, 0120, was found drifting offshore in 1997, and was reported to the Strawberry Isle Research Society in Tofino. After eleven hours of towing, the 18 foot mammal arrived at Strawberry Isle where it was determined that she most likely died from old age complications. It took a year of sun bleaching and nearly 700 hours of scrubbing to get the bones ready for hands on educational use.

The Build-A-Whale exhibit will be at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre until May 31, 2010.

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