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NEWS RELEASE

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CRIS Radio and Mystic Aquarium Launch New Service for People with Print Disabilities

Mystic, Conn. –CRIS Radio and Mystic Aquarium are working together to offer visitors with low-vision or other print disabilities a new way to access print information displayed at the Aquarium's exhibits. The program, called CRISAccess ™, is a pilot program funded by the American Savings Foundation.

CRISAccess offers instant audio versions of print information displayed at the Aquarium's exhibits through a visitor's personal smart phone that scans QR (Quick Response) Codes. The QR Codes link the phone to an audio version of an exhibit sign and an audio description of the exhibit, typically less than three-minutes.

All recordings feature human narration provided by CRIS volunteers.

"CRIS Radio has been providing audio access and inclusion for people who are blind or print disabilities for 36 years with broadcasts of articles in newspapers and magazines," said Paul Young, treasurer of the CRIS Radio Board of Directors. "CRISAccess is an extension of our services for people with print disabilities."

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy praised the initiative. "Tourism in Connecticut is growing, and expanding opportunities and enhancing destinations for those with types of vision or print disabilities is important in ensuring that all citizens, including those with disabilities, are fully supported as valued, capable, and active members of our communities," Malloy said. "In

Connecticut, we believe in expanding opportunities for all. We should celebrate this new program."

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The goal of the CRIS Radio and Mystic Aquarium collaboration is to provide visitors with disabilities with the same experience enjoyed by their friends, classmates and family.

"This program is exemplary of the types of service that make it possible for all our citizens to lead a good life—one full of all the activities and possibilities that other citizens experience," said Molly Cole, director of the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. "We congratulate CRISAccess and the Mystic Aquarium on this initiative."

"As Connecticut's largest cultural attraction, Mystic Aquarium is excited to help launch the CRISAccess program to our 700,000 annual visitors," said Stephen M. Coan, Ph.D., president and CEO of Mystic Aquarium. "This program offers more opportunities to our guests with disabilities which were not previously available, thus introducing new approaches to learning about our ocean planet and creatures inhabiting various underwater environments. We applaud CRIS Radio for working diligently to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn what is happening in their world, not only here at Mystic Aquarium, but from news sources, event listings and even grocery store ads."

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"Mystic Aquarium is one of Connecticut's true treasures, bringing joy to countless students and families. This wonderful new partnership between CRIS Radio and the Aquarium means that all visitors—regardless of visual impairment—will have access to the same educational experience that has enriched the lives of so many," said U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

About CRIS Radio

CRIS (Connecticut Radio Information System) is a 36-year-old nonprofit based in Windsor and is Connecticut's only radio-reading service providing audio access to news and information for people who are blind or print-challenged, including those unable to read due to physical, learning, intellectual or emotional disabilities. CRIS operates with more than 300 volunteers at its broadcast center in Windsor and regional studios located in Danbury, Norwich, Trumbull, West Haven and at ESPN in Bristol. For more information, visit www.crisradio.org.

About Mystic Aquarium

Mystic Aquarium is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, and is counted among the nation's leading aquariums with more than 300 species and an extensive collection of marine mammals, including New England's only beluga whales. Mystic Aquarium has been a pioneer in offering guests a variety of up close encounters with a wide range of marine animals. The mission of Mystic Aquarium is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through conservation, education and research. Mystic Aquarium receives major support from United Technologies Corporation, The Coca-Cola Company and Foxwoods Resort Casino. Learn more at MysticAquarium.org.