



## **Explorer Ballard Uses Thrill of Live Scientific Expeditions**

**Immersion** Presents Ocean Exploration

**Coachella Valley Kids Will Participate in the Expedition Live at the Cal State San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus via Telepresence April 20-25**

**PALM DESERT, Calif. – April 21, 2009** – How do you get kids to say “I want to be a scientist when I grow up?” Dr. Robert Ballard, known for discovering the *Titanic* among other scientific breakthroughs, may have the answer. The renowned oceanographer’s latest quest is not to discover underwater secrets, but to inspire the next generation of ocean explorers by introducing kids to the thrill of discovery and encouraging them to pursue the science and environmental careers so critical for the health of the planet.

From April 20-25, 2009, Immersion Presents *Ocean Exploration*, a cutting-edge, interactive educational program led by Dr. Ballard and a team of scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other institutions, will use telepresence technology – a combination of satellite and Internet connections – to transport young people live from the Cal State San Bernardino, Palm Desert Campus, to a scientific expedition in Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Aegean Sea, and the Black Sea

Students will explore in real-time one of the planet’s most spectacular and most important biodiversity hotspots where they will experience majestic 100-foot-tall kelp forests, take a day trip out to the deep sea in NOAA’s research vessel *R/V Fulmar*, and study endangered marine mammals like the grey or blue whale and the threatened California sea otter.

“When kids see scientists in action, whether diving a kelp forest, exploring with an ROV, or getting up close to a whale, they immediately discover that being a scientist means much more than wearing a white coat in a lab,” said Dr. Ballard, founder of Immersion Presents. “With everyone talking about ‘going green,’ now more than ever we need kids to get excited about the environmentally focused careers that will help protect the planet. Immersion expeditions show kids that science is not only far from boring or nerdy, it is absolutely essential to preserve one of our most threatened resources, the oceans.”

“Many of our kids only know what a jellyfish is from watching Sponge Bob on television,” said Hector Perez, club director of the Chicago’s Union League Boys & Girls Club, which also participates in the program. “It’s hard for kids to imagine being part of something that they’ve never seen before. Immersion Presents’ virtual science expeditions open their minds, transporting them to a whole new world of ocean discoveries, new technology, and exciting career opportunities.”

“Encouraging kids to pursue careers in science is just as important as researching unique underwater ecosystems like the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary program welcomes the opportunity to work with partners like Immersion Presents to introduce marine sanctuaries to the American public, especially young people,” said Daniel J. Basta, Director of NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. “The marine environment here is unique, drawing people for its rich bounty, economic opportunity, recreation and inspiration. Protection of these special places preserves them for use and enjoyment for generations to come.”

### **Live Broadcasts at California State University**

Immersion Presents broadcasts will allow students, educators and researchers to participate in the ocean expedition live. Dr. Ballard will lead the mission from the Inner Space Center at the University of Rhode Island, where he is a professor of oceanography. Immersion Presents will retransmit those images to a network of partner Immersion Sites and Boys & Girls Clubs across the nation via satellite, the Internet2 high-speed network, and the Internet. The Palm Desert Campus will air the daily live broadcasts, which are part of a larger interdisciplinary science curriculum designed for upper elementary and middle school students, from April 20-25, at 11am, 12 pm, 1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm EST.

### **Curriculum**

Immersion Presents programs also include comprehensive curricula packed with realistic research activities that educate kids about the environment. The Immersion Presents Ocean Exploration curriculum, underscoring the importance of scientific discovery and its impact on everyday life, teaches kids how scientists use cutting edge exploration tools to learn about the ocean. It also prompts kids to think about water quality as they make a homemade hydrometer and estimate the salinity, or saltiness, of several mystery water samples. Other activities in the curriculum introduce kids to shipwrecks, deep ocean exploration, and marine science careers.

### **About Immersion Presents**

With cutting-edge telepresence technology that transports students to the exciting world of ocean research and exploration, Immersion Presents is a science education program that combines engaging multimedia curricula and live interaction with researchers at expedition sites to help students and educators better understand and appreciate one of the world’s most important and threatened resources—our oceans. Immersion Presents is dedicated to teaching students about the important role that the oceans play in their lives, helping them succeed academically, and inspiring them to pursue careers in science and related fields.

Immersion Presents programs are distributed to some 500,000 students each year through its network of 30 Immersion Sites at aquariums, museums, science centers, and educational service centers. Approximately fifty thousand of these are at-risk youth served through 54 Boys & Girls Clubs that participate through a U.S. Department of Justice crime prevention program.

Immersion Presents is collaboration among Mystic Aquarium & the Institute for Exploration, the University of Rhode Island, and the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program. Additional expedition partners and sponsors include the Sea Research Foundation, Inc., NOAA's Office of Education, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, the Dr. Scholl Foundation, the University of Connecticut, and the U.S. Department of Justice.

**On the Web:**

[www.immersionpresents.org](http://www.immersionpresents.org)

[www.oceanslive.org](http://www.oceanslive.org)

[sanctuaries.noaa.gov](http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov)

[montereybay.noaa.gov](http://montereybay.noaa.gov)

[http://pdc.csusb.edu/Immersion\\_Presents/home.htm](http://pdc.csusb.edu/Immersion_Presents/home.htm)

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**Notes to media:**

Broadcast quality b-roll is available at <http://immersionpresents.org/video/upload/>

High-resolution still photos are available at

<http://www.immersionpresents.org/photos/index.php?cat=9>

Interviews with local students or teachers available by calling the Palm Desert Campus