

# DISCOVERIES BY THE SHORE



## Seaside program offers hands-on learning as well as local history

BY M.J. CODY

“It’s moving,” said a young boy, excitedly peering through a microscope. Several children were hunched over microscopes next to him, while others surrounded a tub of water, sometimes squealing with delight as they gingerly handled live marine specimens.

All were on the beach in front of the Seaside Aquarium participating in the Seaside Beach Discovery Program, presented on Saturdays throughout July and August.

Curious beachgoers of all ages are invited to participate in the free program, sponsored by the Seaside Aquarium and now in its 26th year. Displays, historic photos, cool beach finds, microscopes and a “touch tank” are ready to be shared. Staff members will also be on hand at each event to impart information about local marine life as well as beach and dune ecology.

“We try to answer any questions visitors may have,” Seaside Aquarium general manager Keith Chandler said. Tiffany Boothe, who has worked with the aquarium for over 20 years, manages the program. Boothe “works with staff who collect fresh specimens from the surf, dunes and tidal basin every morning to display or put in the ‘touch tank’ for anyone to interact with,” Chandler said.

Besides shells and marine plants, found creatures that staff gather may include live sand dollars, mole crabs, live razor clams, amphipods and bloodworms.

“You can touch the specimens,” Chandler

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**LEFT: A young girl looks through a microscope during the Seaside Beach Discovery Program. BACKGROUND: A delicate, live sand dollar is held up during the event.**

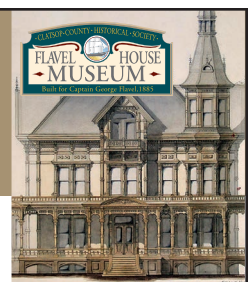
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