Award-winning Philippine Wild Reef Exhibit at Chicago’s Shedd Aquarium continues to be a top draw for visitors

Led by Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin, the contingent was composed of Consul Ryan Gener, Tourism Attaché Francisco Lardizabal, Senior Tourism Operations Officer Luz Navarro, and Trade and Tourism Assistant Joey Erandio.

They were provided a special tour of the Philippine Wild Reef Exhibit by Shedd Aquarium Senior Vice President for Guest Experiences and Communications Rob Stein, Vice President for Public Relations and External Affairs Andrea Rogers, Vice President for Design and Exhibits Sarah Hezel, and Senior Director of Animal Operations and Habitats Mark Schick.

The John J. Shedd Aquarium is the world’s oldest and largest indoor marine mammal exhibit in the world, with two million annual visitors. The Philippine Wild Reef exhibit, which formally opened on 15 April 2003, is an award-winning permanent exhibit that continues to be a top draw with excellent reviews from visitors.

The 400,000-gallon Wild Reef exhibit is one of the largest and most diverse shark exhibits in North America. Guests begin their journey at the surging shores of a recreated Apo Island, a volcanic rock, in Negros Oriental at the south end of the Philippines, and then surface to the mangroves and beaches of this Visayan coast. To create an environment where the fish will feel comfortable with their surroundings, Shedd Aquarium imported from the Philippines, among others, 17.5 tons of sand and a fisherman’s house. Shedd brought to Chicago the coral reefs of the Philippines, an epicenter of marine diversity with 450 species of coral and 2,500 species of fish and home to more than 40 species of sharks.

After the tour, the delegation met with Shedd Aquarium executives led by Senior Vice President for Conservation Partnerships and Programs Cheryl Mell and the above-mentioned officers. They recalled the history and background of the Wild Reef Exhibit, including the strong partnership of Shedd with the Consulate, the Department of Tourism and the Filipino community in Chicago. They also explored avenues to further strengthen collaboration to modernize and promote the exhibit. The Department of Tourism and the Consulate committed to support the exhibit’s modernization and efforts to enhance engagement with the community. END
Tourism Attaché Francisco Lardizabal (4th from left) hands over a tourism token to Shedd Aquarium Senior Vice President Rob Stein (5th from left) as Consul General Jamoralin (3rd from left) looks on. Also joining them are (L-R) Consul Gener, Tourism Officer Navarro, Shedd Senior Director Mark Schick, VP Rogers, SVP Cheryl Mell, and VP Sarah Hezel. (Chicago PCG/Joey Erandio)

Consul General Jamoralin (3rd from left) poses in front of the Wild Reef Exhibit aquarium with (L-R) VP Hezel, Ms Navarro, Attaché Lardizabal, VP Rogers, SVP Stein, Director Schick and Consul Gener. (Chicago PCG/Joey Erandio)
Consul General Jamoralin (right) and Attaché Lardizabal pose in front of one of the sharks in the Wild Reef Exhibit (Chicago PCG photo)

One of the tanks showcasing the stunning corals and fish in the Philippines (Chicago PCG)
The vibrancy and beauty of underwater life in the Philippines displayed at Shedd (Chicago PCG)

The Philippines is one of the most sought-after diving destinations in the world, and this is in full display at the Wild Reef Exhibit (Chicago PCG)