



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Tina Malott  
Director of Marketing and Public Relations  
New Bedford Whaling Museum  
[tmalott@whalingmuseum.org](mailto:tmalott@whalingmuseum.org)  
508-717-6839 (office)  
619-244-0392 (cell)

**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM BRINGS TOGETHER TWO WORLD-RENOWNED MARITIME  
INSTITUTIONS**

*The New Bedford Whaling Museum Partners with the Húsavík Whale Museum in Iceland*

**New Bedford, MA** – The New Bedford Whaling Museum has established an international youth exchange program with the [Húsavík Whale Museum](#) in Iceland. The “Connecting Coastal Communities” program will expand ocean literacy among youth in Massachusetts and in Húsavík and amplify the global attitudinal shift toward whale conservation and protection. The program is a result of a grant from [Museums Connect](#), which is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).

New Bedford and Húsavík are distinct communities with unique cultures, but they are linked by maritime-based economies. Both communities developed deep ties to whales as economic generators and cultural symbols. Through this project, museum apprentices from New Bedford and Húsavík will explore and exchange information about their economic and cultural heritage in the context of their ocean environments. The knowledge gained through this process will then empower the students to organize local events in schools and community centers to celebrate the whales in their local waters.

The project's ultimate objective is to motivate the high school students to serve as ambassadors of ocean health, working on two sides of the Atlantic to protect the ocean and the creatures living in it.

"The New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Húsavík Whale Museum share a common mission to interpret the legacy of whaling and whale conservation in their respective communities in New England and Iceland. The United States and Iceland are separated by almost a century in the transition from whaling to whale conservation. I have seen first-hand in my travels around Iceland what the vibrant whale watching and whale conservation sector means for the cities and towns in which it takes place. I hope this will be the start of lasting ties between the institutions and respective communities, and will help shape a brighter future for both man and whale," said Robert C. Barber, U.S. Ambassador to Iceland.

"Getting students interested in biology and ocean conservation through the study of whales – as the 'Connecting Coastal Communities' project does through its Museums Connect grant – is the essence of what museums do," said Laura L. Lott, President and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums.

"The New Bedford Whaling Museum is an active participant in the global conversation surrounding whales and ocean literacy. By fostering this partnership with Húsavík, we are cultivating future stewards of environmental sustainability and fostering ambassadors of ocean health," said James Russell, President of the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

#### About the New Bedford Whaling Museum

The New Bedford Whaling Museum is the world's most comprehensive museum devoted to the global story of whales and the history and culture of the South Coast. For more information visit [www.whalingmuseum.org](http://www.whalingmuseum.org).

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