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For Immediate Release

International School of Monterey Named an Ocean Guardian School

Seaside, California (Saturday, November 21, 2009)—The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has selected the International School of Monterey as one of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's first Ocean Guardian Schools. ISM is one of just 13 schools throughout the watersheds of Santa Barbara, Monterey Bay, and San Francisco Bay to earn this honor based on an application presenting a schoolwide project enabling all students to become environmentally active and committed "Ocean Guardians." The honor comes with a grant award to support science instruction, fieldtrips, and activities focused on learning Ocean Literacy Principles and protecting the ocean.

ISM will open its second trimester on November 30 with an all-school assembly kicking off its Ocean Guardian School activities. This Sea-lebration event, open to the public, will start at 8:30am in the Multiuse Room on the ISM campus at 1720 Yosemite Street in Seaside. ISM has invited students to attend the assembly dressed as their favorite ocean animal or plant. In the school's environmentally friendly spirit of reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink, the ISM administration has suggested costumes created from repurposed materials rather than purchased.

The Ocean Guardian School kickoff launches an important new relationship for ISM with the ocean that makes the Monterey Bay region so special. Given the school's proximity to the Monterey Bay, teachers have naturally looked for meaningful ways to tie instruction to the ocean and coastal environment. The ISM Ocean Guardian School project will provide classroom instruction focused on students learning the Ocean Literacy Principles—collaboratively articulated by a number of marine education and stewardship organizations including NOAA—and about actions they can take to improve the ocean's health. Moreover, it will involve students in hands-on fieldtrips where they take action to make an immediate impact on the Monterey Bay environment, as well as an on-campus campaign to reduce plastic waste that adversely impacts the ocean. This ISM Plastic Pollution Solution will focus on decreasing student and staff use of plastics, increasing recycling of plastics, and looking for opportunities to use supplies and materials made from recycled plastics.

All nine grade levels (K-8) and all 18 classes in the school will participate in the Ocean Guardian School project, including age-appropriate fieldtrip activities. For example, fourth graders will take part in a yearlong study and restoration of the Monterey Dunes in Seaside through the Beach Garden Project. Three field experiences will include studying the dune ecosystem and its connections to ocean life, collection of seeds for growing, and planting of seedlings grown from these collections. Each fieldtrip will include a beach cleanup, and separation and investigation of trash on the beaches. Experts from the Beach Garden Project will provide a classroom presentation of the project, and teach the students the issues the dunes face and why they need help in restoration. Students will study the seeds, plant them in cells, and thin the seedlings in the winter, keeping a journal of their experiences and observations as a means of assessing their learning.

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Ocean Literacy is an understanding of the ocean's influence on humans and human influence on the ocean. An ocean-literate person understands the essential principles and fundamental concepts; can communicate about the oceans in a meaningful way; and can make informed and responsible decisions regarding the ocean and its resources. Ocean Literacy focuses on seven essential principles:

1. Earth has one big ocean with many features.
2. The ocean and life in the ocean shape the features of Earth.
3. The ocean is a major influence on weather and climate.
4. The ocean makes Earth habitable.
5. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.
6. The ocean and humans are inextricably linked.
7. The ocean is largely unexplored.

The Office of Marine Sanctuaries sponsors Ocean Guardian Schools as an action-based program for schools related to the conservation of local watersheds, the world's ocean, and special ocean areas, like national marine sanctuaries. The program provides opportunities for students, teachers, parents, and friends to participate in a range of environmental and sustainable activities, and encourages sustainable practices that enable all students to be "Ocean Guardians." Each Ocean Guardian School implements its own unique project, and, together, all the awarded schools have pledged to protect and conserve our local watersheds and world's oceans.

A mission-driven K-8 school that works *to educate all children toward becoming conscientious, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world*, the International School of Monterey serves 416 students from Monterey County. ISM is both an International School and a public charter school sponsored by the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. In 2008 ISM joined 630 schools accredited by the Council of International Schools, one of just nine such schools in the United States and the first public charter school to earn this recognition. Also fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, ISM teaches toward its vision of *a world of understanding* through its academic commitment to internationalism, broad-based curriculum that includes the arts and Spanish beginning in kindergarten, and inquiry-based instruction model that fosters student initiative and develops lifelong learning skills.

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ISM invites the media to attend the Monday, November 30, assembly from 8:30-9:15. To prearrange interviews with staff or students before or after the event and for further information, please contact Sean Madden, Interim Director, International School of Monterey, at smadden@ismonterey.org or 831-241-2193.