



BILL TIERNAN PHOTOS/FOR THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Cheapeake's David Goochee holds his daughter, Olivia, as she high fives Scuba Santa at the Virginia Aquarium.

Ho Ho Ho from the H₂O

At Va. Aquarium,
Santa does his
work underwater

BY STACY PARKER
Staff writer

VIRGINIA BEACH — Liam Joyner, 4, and Sebastian Hagerman, 5, spotted him first.

"Santa!" they crooned in unison.

The red-suited Christmas legend slowly descended from the top of the Red Sea Tunnel as a shark and rays swam around him Saturday at the Virginia Aquarium.

Scuba Santa is held at 10:30 a.m. every Saturday and Sunday through Dec. 23.

He greets visitors from inside the tank for about 30 minutes.

Santa wears a custom-made wet suit with white trim and black fins.



Virginia Beach's Miles Chuckney, 2, reaches out to Scuba Santa at the Virginia Aquarium in Virginia Beach.

The Red Sea Tunnel features a zebra shark, spotted eagle rays, unicorn tangs, orbicular batfish and butterflyfish.

Santa has been making his underwater appearance for 15 years. He poses for pictures through the glass

and likes to interact with children.

On Saturday, Rhea Iyer, 7, gave him a fist-bump.

Santa surprised 2-year-old Evelyn Kraus.

She and her mother were visiting the aquarium and happened to walk through

If you go

What: Scuba Santa

When: 10:30 to 11 a.m. Saturday and Sunday through Dec. 23

Where: Virginia Aquarium; Marine Science Center, 717 General Booth Blvd.

Cost: Aquarium admission

Info: virginiaaquarium.com

the tunnel a few minutes into the dive.

"I had no idea," said Kourtney Kraus.

"All she ever sees him in is a chair in the mall."

If you go, be sure to look up.

Santa's playful elf likes to swim near the top of the tunnel and will blow bubbles.

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A new toy is such a special thing, unless you've never had one. More than 10 million children would not have Christmas if it weren't for your contributions to Joy Fund. Every penny you donate buys toys for thousands of children. In the spirit of giving, please make a generous donation to Joy Fund.

HOW TO DONATE

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All donations received Dec. 31 are acknowledged in January for tax-deduction purposes.

Listing runs through Dec.

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Nannette Ferrara

Larkspur Garden Club

Judy S. Smith

Mary Hayes

Gregory S. Hedley —
LANTDIV Retirees

Diana Barnett —
LANTDIV Retirees

Paul Buckwalter and
Jonathan Walker