

September 22, 2021

Matthew Turner
Principal
West Orange High School

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Turner:

I'm writing on behalf of TeachKind, the humane education division of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), regarding West Orange High School's scheduled homecoming event at SeaWorld Orlando. We wanted to share some information with you regarding the park's long and sordid history of animal abuse and premature animal deaths as well as the growing public condemnation of exploiting animals for entertainment. We hope this information will lead you to reconsider the homecoming location and move it elsewhere—especially considering that [Florida law](#) requires schools to provide character education, including lessons in “[k]indness to animals.” To demonstrate to the school community that it's never too late to choose compassion, we would be happy to cover the cost of relocating the event to an animal-friendly venue and provide all homecoming attendees with free vegan soft serve ice cream.

More than 40 orcas have died at SeaWorld—many far short of their natural life expectancy—from causes such as bacterial infections and fractured skulls. More than 300 other dolphins and whales, approximately 400 pinnipeds, and countless other animals have also died there.

It's hard to believe, but some of the orcas who have managed to survive have been imprisoned at SeaWorld Orlando longer than some homecoming attendees have even been alive. For example, after being captured and torn away from her family off the coast of Iceland when she was just 3 years old, an orca named Katina was shipped around the country to various parks *12 times* and has been held at SeaWorld Orlando since 1984. Katina is confined to a small concrete tank with incompatible tankmates and is coerced into performing meaningless tricks for food. She has nothing to do but float listlessly and swim in endless circles as the interminable years pass.

In their ocean homes, the natural range of orcas and other dolphin species covers hundreds of miles. These highly intelligent sentient beings lead rich, full lives in large, intricate social groups, and female orcas typically spend their entire lives with their mothers within the family pod. But at SeaWorld, these animals have regularly been drugged to manage stress-induced aggressive behavior and to relieve the endless monotony of life in a barren concrete tank. Frustrated orcas break their teeth chewing on the metal bars and concrete sides of their tanks, and other dolphins are used as breeding machines to create generations of suffering animals.

SeaWorld is a business built on the suffering of smart, social animals who are denied everything that gives their lives meaning. After giving some thought to the harmful message that students will absorb from spending time at the theme park and our offer to cover the cost of relocating the event to an animal-friendly site and provide homecoming attendees with free vegan soft serve ice cream, we hope you will set a positive example for students and agree to change the homecoming venue.

May I hear from you right away? Thank you for your time.

Very truly yours,

Megan Snyder
Manager, TeachKind
PETA's Humane Education Division

[PETA's Humane-Education Division]

