

Seymour

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mans against cancer and viruses.

Exhibits also answered some bizarre scientific questions that most people would never think to pose, such as how do researchers weigh a 5,000-pound elephant seal.

The answer is a bit ribald. Researchers lure the hulking creature with taped mating sounds. The male, racing toward a life-size model of a female elephant seal, inadvertently crosses a platform scale hidden in the sand.

Visitors could also hold a satellite tracking unit that was once attached to an elephant seal for use in field research. A docent points out a patch of elephant seal fur that still clings to the device.

In a wet lab designed especially for the very young, 8-year-old Kalyn Barber watched as a shy

anemone slowly unfurled itself. When her mother put her finger close to the creature, it responded by clinging to her.

"He'll try to grab on to you to see if you're lunch or not," explained docent Robyn Brems.

Heffington said she hopes young people will come away with a desire to learn more about the creatures, research and programs at the center. She said researchers, like those children, can often be motivated by "a sense of wonder, a certain curiosity to explore and investigate the world a little bit differently."

The grand-opening celebration continues today, noon to 5 p.m. The center's normal hours of operation will be Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, and \$3 for seniors (60 and older), students and kids ages 6 to 16. Kids under 5 get in free.