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NEWPORT — Kaitlyn Nanartowich of Newport received a scholarship from Seamen's Church Institute to attend the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, from which she graduated in 2014. Now she is a vessel operator for Phoenix Bulk Carriers of Newport, based on Long Wharf.

That is the kind of opportunity that Seamen's Church Institute would like to open up for other young people through its new Discovery Deck, which officially opened Monday night, when the 100th anniversary of the founding of the institute was celebrated.

Located on the second floor of the institute's building downtown on Market Square, the new exhibit space shines a spotlight on all who earn their livelihood through the sea in different ways.

The Discovery Deck features content including boatbuilding, commercial fishing and shipping, aquaculture, the Navy, scientific research, and environmental concerns affecting Narragansett Bay.

Hands-on activities include an energy grinder, block-and-tackle station, maker space and a central audio-visual projector showing vignettes of careers on the bay.

"It's beautiful and so educational," Nanartowich said as she looked at the exhibits during the grand opening attended by more than 100 people.

"So many people don't know what's available in the marine industries," she said. "I only knew sailing as a sport when I was young, not about all the careers offered by the sea."



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Mark Filanowski looks at one of the many displays at the interactive maritime exhibit and educational outreach program at the Seamen's Church Institute's new Discovery Deck. [PETER SILVIA PHOTO]

Phoenix is owned by Pangaea Logistics Ltd., a large Newport company founded in 1996 by Ed Coll, who also was at the Discovery Deck on Monday night and is a board member of Seamen's Church Institute. The companies' bulk carriers move a variety of raw-materials cargoes — including aluminum, cement, iron, steel, scrap metal, coal, limestone and salt — to ports around the world. While the headquarters are on Long Wharf, the company also has offices in Denmark, Singapore and Greece.

People touring the Discovery Deck learn all this from one of the exhibit panels devoted to bulk carriers and other ships, such as cruise ships, of which an average of 90 dock in Newport each year carrying an average of about 3,500 passengers each. Also featured are companies such as DYT and Star Yacht Transport, which transport more than 2,000 yachts globally each year.

Rebecca Northup, executive director of Seamen's Church Institute, said she came up with the idea of creating an exhibit space in January 2017.

The second floor of the institute had been used for other exhibits hosted by organizations such as Save The Bay and Sailors for the Sea over the years.

"We thought, 'Why not create a permanent exhibit space there?'" Northup said. "We wanted the exhibits to be linked to the sea and the marine industries."

"The board members and I started talking about our business model and using the building to its full potential," she said. "The waterfront is more developed than when we were founded, when there were more fishing sea captains and crews to service. We were interested in finding gaps in community services today that we could meet."

They decided upon introducing middle school students to education about the sea and opportunities in maritime industries that can be found in Newport and around Narragansett Bay.

Students in the fifth and sixth grades from Thompson Middle School already have scheduled field trips to the new Discovery Deck in December. Middle school students from East Providence, Wickford, Narragansett and elsewhere are also planning field trips.

The purposes of the field trips and classes include increasing students' interest in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM), engaging youth in the maritime community, and raising awareness of environmental concerns on Narragansett Bay.

Young people were involved in the creation of the Discovery Deck.

Abbey Paradis of Richmond, a senior at the East Bay Paul W. Crowley Met School in Newport, took on the design of the mural on one of the walls that illustrates different aspects of the marine environment.

"My adviser, Justin Mathews, thought it would be a good project for me," Paradis said.

She had already shown talent in other areas. Her design for a national duck stamp was chosen as best in show by the state Department of Environmental Management and now is entered into a national competition, which has not been judged yet.

Her drawings for the Discovery Deck mural illustrate fish, lobsters, seagulls, sailboats, bulk carriers, shipwrecks, deep sea fishing, marine equipment, an offshore wind farm and a lighthouse.

"Because it's Newport, I had to include the Newport Pell Bridge," she said.

"I drew it by hand on a computer using Adobe Illustrator," she said. "It was not photoshopped in any way. It's all done by hand, every line."

She used a pen tool to draw the sea life, waves and all curved lines.

For straight lines, she used a point-to-point method provided by the software.

Paradis, a daughter of Allison and Timothy Paradis of Richmond, hopes to study at the Savannah College of Art & Design in Georgia next year. Professionally, she would like to illustrate graphic novels and comics.

Northeast Collaborative Architects, led by principal-in-charge Glenn Gardiner, created and designed the overall space. Also participating from the firm were architects Andrea Baranyk and Dan Kwasniewski,

the design principal; project manager Tim Rogers; and designer Joanna Grocott.

Debbie Demming, a freelancer, did the graphics for all the exhibit panels. Until recently, she was a graphic designer for The Daily News.

"I had done work for the Naval War College Museum and they referred me to Seamen's Church," she said. "The exhibits showcase all the opportunities around Narragansett Bay. To get everyone involved in what we have to offer is awesome."

Interex Exhibits of Amesbury, Massachusetts, fabricated the exhibit panels, she said.

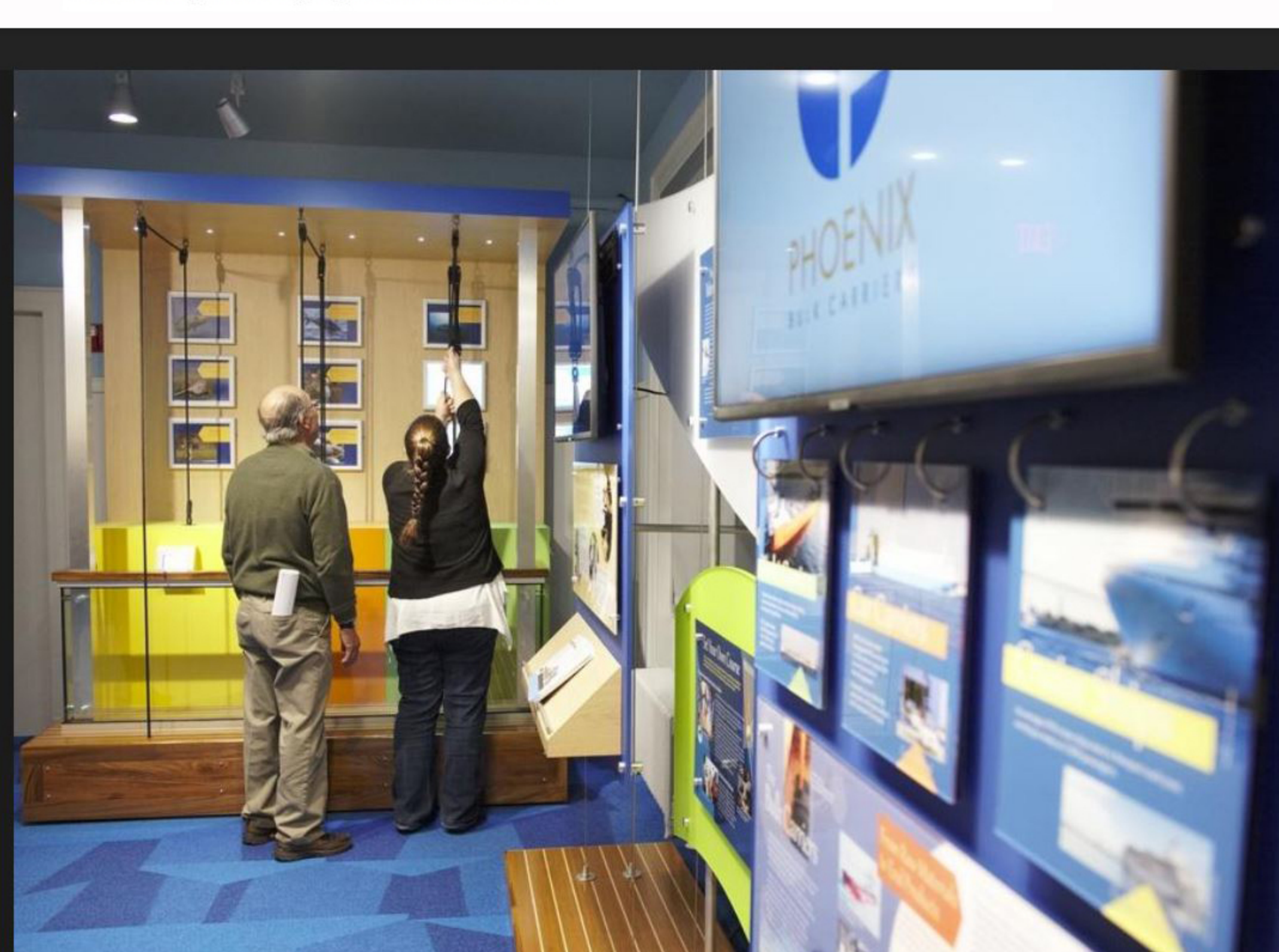
There were many other contributors. Hugh Thomas, a Seamen's Church board member, designed a block-and-tackle interactive exhibit, which allows kids and adults to pull on the pulleys and learn how they work.

Northup is planning additional exhibits and programs: for example, running underwater robotic programs off the dock at Market Square. The robots would be tethered to the dock and have underwater cameras.

The Discovery Deck is open to the public on Thursdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., but will be open for school field trips and other group visits outside those times.

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Guests try their hand at the interactive block-and-tackle station at the Seamen's Church Institute's new Discovery Deck on Monday. [PETER SILVIA PHOTO]