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Press Release

Lincoln Park Zoo: An Oasis in the Shadow of Skyscrapers

Lincoln Park Zoo, America's most historic zoo, is a conservation haven nestled in the heart of Chicago. The zoo operates one of the most significant zoo-based conservation and science programs in the country and attracts an estimated 3 million visitors per year. This not-for-profit institution is also one of the country's last remaining free admission zoos.

The zoo's newest feature, Nature Boardwalk, opened June 2010. The landscape of this newly naturalized oasis has been completely transformed to provide a haven for native trees, plants and animals and offers unique opportunities for visitors to engage and connect with the natural world like never before. Educational programming is a key feature of this pond ecosystem experience between Lincoln Park Zoo and the Farm-in-the-Zoo Presented by John Deere.

Rare migratory birds, such as the black-crowned night heron, can be spotted nesting, while dragonflies skim the water. The newly restored habitat is expected to attract many more spectacular wildlife sightings than ever before in the pond's 140-year history. Open to the community every day, the boardwalk hosts naturalist interpreters during regular zoo hours.

Another habitat which is not to be missed is the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo featuring North American wildlife. Four large outdoor exhibits feature black bears, red wolves, beaver and river otters. By bringing together animal habitats, interactive elements and educational activities, kids learn by touching, smelling, listening, building and playing. Developed in consultation with child-development specialists and teachers, the Children's Zoo encourages curiosity and excitement and helps children connect with nature so they can develop a deeper understanding about wildlife.

At the state-of-the-art Regenstein Center for African Apes, huge glass windows give guests an opportunity to literally go nose-to-nose with curious and complex apes. The most expensive animal habitat created at the zoo to date, this \$26 million facility features 29,000-square-feet of naturalistic living space for endangered gorillas and chimpanzees. The facility encompasses the Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes which connects guests to science and conservation initiatives through an integrated program of research, science education and the conservation of wild populations. Lincoln Park Zoo researchers engage in ape conservation research not only at the zoo, but also in the wilds of Tanzania and Congo.

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A trip through the Regenstein African Journey will fully immerse visitors in the sights and sounds of Africa. This 75,000-square-foot-facility replicates the natural homelands of two dozen African species from the rain forests to the savannas to the lakes of Great Rift Valley. It is home to some of the world's rarest creatures like black rhinos, wild dogs, pygmy hippos and dwarf crocodiles. Glimpse the giant webs of orb spiders, peak inside the den of an aardvark, or simply enjoy the beauty of regal giraffes and doting lovebirds. An excursion through Regenstein African Journey is an educational adventure.

Stroll through the McCormick Bird House and catch a glimpse of the Guam Micronesian kingfisher and Bali Mynah – two critically endangered bird species Lincoln Park Zoo is helping bring back from the brink of extinction. Step into the verdant tropical free-flight area to become fully immersed into the wonderful winged world of birds.

Other popular attractions at Lincoln Park Zoo include the Farm-in-the-Zoo Presented by John Deere, which features daily cow milking demonstrations; Kovler Lion House and Sea Lion Pool as well as the Helen Brach Primate House are among guest favorite attractions.

Throughout the year, Lincoln Park Zoo offers unique entertainment from Wine & Wildlife conservation events to the summer concert series “Jammin’ at the Zoo” to the holiday dazzle of “ZooLights.” The education department offers age-appropriate educational programs and camps for kids, students and teachers year-round. A full calendar listing of educational programs is available on the zoo's web site: www.lpzoo.org.

Each spring and summer the Women's Board and Auxiliary Board create elaborate and spectacular fundraising events called “Spring Benefit” in June and “Zoo Ball” in July. These evenings include cocktails, live music, dancing and entertainment and help support the zoo's wildlife conservation mission.

History

Lincoln Park Zoo began in the summer of 1868 with the donation of a pair of swans from New York's Central Park. By 1872 the collection had grown to include a wide assortment of animals from buffalo, wolves, eagles and a bear, to peacocks and prairie dogs. By 1900, Lincoln Park Zoo had one of the largest collections of animals in the nation. Since that time many of the architecturally and historically

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splendid buildings still stand proud on zoo grounds, but their interiors have been gutted, renovated and recreated to provide modern, naturalistic and state-of-the-art animal habitats.

Conservation

Lincoln Park Zoo has one of the largest zoo-based conservation and science programs in the nation. The Conservation & Science department conducts innovative research to improve animal management and wildlife conservation. Zoo scientists combine expertise in a range of disciplines to identify threats to zoo and wild populations and develop strategies to ensure their continued existence. Conservation efforts focus on programs in small population biology, applied animal behavior, urban wildlife, conservation of wild populations, epidemiology, endocrinology, cognition and learning and veterinary medicine.

General Zoo Information

Lincoln Park Zoo is open every day of the year. Admission is free! The not-for-profit Lincoln Park Zoo is operated by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society. The zoo is a membership supported organization which helps keep admission free year-round. Membership prices vary from \$50 – 120 annually and include numerous benefits including free and reduced price parking, invitations to exclusive events, discounts for food and gifts, and free or discount admission to more than 100 zoos and aquariums nationwide. For more information, call 312-742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org

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