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Lincoln Park
Zoo

ZooLights 2011 Biggest – and Most Romantic – Ever
Love was in the air at Lincoln Park Zoo holiday festival

Chicago, IL (Jan. 3, 2012) – Holiday spirit wasn't the only thing in the air at **ZooLights Presented by ComEd and Charter One** this year. While a record-breaking 365,593 attendees strolled through Lincoln Park Zoo's winter wonderland, at least six lucky ladies ended up with the ultimate stocking stuffer ... an engagement ring.



The 17th annual ZooLights was bigger, better, and brighter than ever with 2 million sparkling lights and a host of new attractions from a shimmering wall of "water" to a couple of new luminous friends on the main mall.

But perhaps the most exciting twinkle came from rocks, not bulbs.

"Six proposals is a lot for us in one ZooLights season," said Lincoln Park Zoo Director of Sales

and Events Dana Jussaume. "We usually have one or two, but something about this year definitely brought out the romantic side of these guys."

It could have been the warmer weather, which Jussaume cites as one reason for the 33% increase in attendance over last year. 2011's guest count even trumped the previous record from 2009, when 324,495 visitors streamed through the zoo's gates between Thanksgiving weekend and New Year's Day.

More likely, it was the heightened thrill - rather than the decreased chill - in the air that came with the biggest ever session of this beloved event. Five of the proposals took place during ice sculpting demonstrations that always attract large crowds.

Creative would-be-fiancés worked with zoo events coordinators and ice carvers to pop the polar question, in some cases requesting elaborate ice signs emblazoned with their intentions.



Photo courtesy of Sheri Berliner, www.petraits.com

“It was a good year for brides-to-be,” said Jim Nadeau, owner of Nadeau’s Ice Sculptures, whose talented carvers have delighted ZooLights crowds every year since the event began. “We brought the couples up on stage, so luckily all the ladies said yes. The audience just went crazy for it.”

The conclusion of ZooLights doesn’t signal the end of romantic opportunities at Lincoln Park Zoo. Join zoo staff on Valentine’s Day for one of two special sessions of *Wine & Wildlife: Animal Attractions*, a saucy, just-for-adults event that takes a look at the wild side of wildlife. Learn more at www.lpzoo.org or call 312-742-2000.

Of course, Lincoln Park Zoo remains FREE to the public and open 365 days a year and is the perfect place to pop the question, whatever the season.

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ABOUT LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic Chicago landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation’s only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call 312 -742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org.