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Caribbean Gardens: The ZOO in Naples

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National Poll Reveals Attitudes about Connection between Kids, Nature, and Accredited Zoos

Bring your child to Caribbean Gardens this Friday through Monday for Free Admission with a **coupon from www.napleszoo.com** and a paid adult.

Naples, FL -- People love to see animals, and according to opinion poll results released by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) today, 95 percent of U.S. adults agree that visiting accredited zoos and seeing animals helps people appreciate them more and encourages people to learn more about them. Another finding shows that 86 percent of respondents agree that visiting zoos and aquariums encourages people to donate money or time to animal conservation efforts.

"These statistics support what we have consistently heard from our guests: People want to see animals in AZA-accredited zoos because it's how they learn about, and come to love and care for the future of these wonderful animals," said David Tetzlaff, Zoo Director. "It's a great encouragement in our efforts to know that accredited zoos like ours play a critical role in helping connect people – and especially children - with animals and nature."

Sydney Butler, AZA's executive director added: "We have learned through this poll that people agree that zoos and aquariums not only help them to learn about animals, but that they are also committed to the welfare of the animals. AZA accredited zoos and aquariums care for 800,000 animals daily and are dedicated to providing the best of care, with new and expanded facilities, and the most up-to-date veterinary practices available."

The survey also shows that 94 percent of the public agrees that children are more likely to be concerned about animals if they learn about them at zoos, marine life parks and aquariums. "It's important in our society today that children have the opportunity to learn about and care about animals from around the world," Butler said, speaking on behalf of AZA's 211 accredited members.

The poll shows that most adults (95%) agree that seeing live animals in zoos and aquariums gives children a greater appreciation for animals. Ninety-three percent of respondents agree that their families enjoy going to zoos and aquariums where they can see living animals up close.

And this Friday through Monday is a great time to bring children to the Zoo. With a coupon from www.napleszoo.com and a paid adult, one child is admitted free! And as for seeing animals up close, Caribbean Gardens provides excellent opportunities for this type of viewing – whether it's going face to face through glass at Panther Glade or being so close to the cats in Tiger Forest that you can hear them breathe. Of course, even more popular than the exhibits are the many fun and educational presentations offered featuring live animals. Statistically, however, the all time favorite activity is the Primate Expedition Cruise. These boats take guests on a guided tour past a variety of monkeys, lemurs, and apes living in natural island habitats.

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Butler added that he is not surprised to see education identified as a key part of a family's zoo and aquarium experience. "It is important for people, particularly children, to learn about animals and then turn their experience into an interest in conserving and protecting animals. Almost any professional working at an AZA-accredited zoo or aquarium will tell you that their passion and dedication to animals goes back to their experiences at zoos and aquariums when they were children. We all share this love of animals, and we are committed to the daily and long-term care of our animals, as well as wild animals and their habitats," he said.

Caribbean Gardens supports a number of projects with animals in their native habitat from the leopards of Namibia to the ocelots of Brazil. The Zoo also provides a variety of ways for the public to get involved as well. When a guest purchases a stuffed plush tiger or monkey in The ZOO Gift Shop, the zoo donates 5% of the purchase price to preservation of these species in the wild. Right now, guests to the zoo can also make donations for a new leak-proof roof for a conservation education center in Madagascar that works with native wildlife.

The zoo also provides free information about personal actions guests can take right here at home in their newly updated "Wild Choices for Our Future" conservation brochure printed on tree-free paper made from the kenaf plant. The zoo is also a full partner with Monterey Bay Aquarium in their Seafood Watch program which helps keep consumers informed about which seafood items are being overfished and provides good alternatives. Both of these are available at no charge in The ZOO Gift Shop (admission is not required to enter the shop).

In addition to wanting a fun, safe family experience when visiting a zoo or aquariumⁱ, adults (94 percent) agree that zoos and aquariums teach children about how people can protect animals and the places they live. Ninety-five percent said it is either somewhat important or essential that zoos and aquariums present educational materials in an "enjoyable and entertaining manner."

Following are some additional findings from the new research:

- 96 percent of respondents agree that it is important that people work to conserve animals such as those found in aquariums and zoos.
- 95 percent of respondents agree that many of the successes to save endangered or declining species are at least in part a result of work done in zoos and aquariums.
- 93 percent of respondents agree that it is important that an aquarium or zoo be accredited by a national association.

Methodology

Harris Interactive[®] conducted the study online on behalf of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums between September 16 and 21, 2004, among a nationally representative sample of 1,102 U.S. adults aged 18 and over. The data were weighted to be representative of the total U.S. adult population on the basis of region, age within gender, education, household income, race/ethnicity and propensity to be online.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one could say with 95 percent certainty that the results for the overall sample have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. This online sample is not a probability sample.

About Caribbean Gardens: The ZOO in Naples

The Zoo is one of the top 10% of American zoos accredited by the prestigious American Zoo and Aquarium Association. The 52-acre zoo is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road in Naples across from the Coastland Center mall. In addition to the historic garden and rare animals, the Zoo features a daily variety of innovative presentations. Guests experience close up views of live animals as well as stunning wildlife clips on video screens during the Zoo's two feature shows, Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Guests board the Primate Expedition Cruise to glide by islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes live in natural habitats. Alligator Bay offers a daily feeding and guests have opportunities to meet the keeper at select exhibits every day. Admission (\$15.95 adult/ \$9.95 children) includes all shows and the boat ride. Visitors can also pick up a healthy lunch and snacks at the SUBWAY® Cafe and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. The Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:30 to 5:30 with the last ticket sold at 4:30. To learn more, click www.napleszoo.com or call (239) 262-5409.

About the American Zoo and Aquarium Association

Founded in 1924, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) envisions a world where all people respect, value and conserve animals and nature. AZA currently has 211 accredited members in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda and Hong Kong. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats.

About Harris Interactive®

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ⁱ Wirthlin Worldwide Research, May 2003

Photos of Caribbean Gardens Available of Request

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