



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **LONGTIME KEEPER ELIZABETH BEEM NAMED ELEPHANT MANAGER AT SANTA BARBARA ZOO**

**Former Senior Elephant Keeper Now Leads Team  
That Cares for Elderly Asian Elephants Sujatha and Little Mac**

*(Santa Barbara, CA, June 27, 2018)* – Ten years after she started her career as a keeper at the Santa Barbara Zoo, Elizabeth Beem has been named their Elephant Manager, overseeing the four-person team that cares for two elderly Asian elephants, Sujatha and Little Mac. She was selected after a national search for this specialized position.

Beem started at the Zoo as a volunteer Animal Care Aid in January 2008, eight months before she was hired to join the elephant team. She most recently served as Senior Elephant Keeper, a position she had held since 2014.

“Liz has worked with our elephant program for ten years, so she really knows our geriatric elephants and the specialized care they need, as well all the facets of our elephant program,” said Dr. Julie Barnes, the Zoo’s Director of Animal Health & Care. “She is a natural fit for the position and I am delighted that she will lead the elephant team.”

Beem recently travelled to an international workshop in London, England which focused on herpesvirus in elephants, and has completed both Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Elephant Management trainings held in Wheeling, West Virginia. A member of the Elephant Managers Association since 2009, she helped organize their conference at the Santa Barbara Zoo in 2012, and was a co-presenter in 2016.



Active in the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK), she coordinates the “Pizza for Pachyderms” fundraising campaign, and participates in the “Bowling for Rhinos” campaign. She also co-created and implemented a monthly trivia contest at local pub as an AAZK fundraiser, which ran from 2012 to 2014.

In addition to her Zoo duties, Beem is a part-time Treatment Technician at Santa Barbara's Cat & Bird Clinic. She has also assisted the National Park Service on the Channel Islands with trapping and fieldwork of island foxes.

She began her career in Human Resources with positions at companies in El Segundo, Calabasas, and Goleta. She graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1999.

Asian elephants Sujatha and Little Mac arrived in 1972 from the logging camps of Misore, India, as one-and-a-half-year olds who stood less than four feet in height. The two females have lived at the Santa Barbara Zoo since then, and have never bred. Now aged 47, they are considered geriatric and require special care. The four-person elephant team, including Beem, provides all their care, including specialized diets, daily pedicures, and a variety of enrichment.



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*Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, Channel Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements.*

*The Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$18 for adults, \$13 for seniors aged 65+, \$10 for children 2-12, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$8 weekdays and \$11 on Saturdays and Sundays. Visit [www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org).*