Santa Barbara Zoo’s Education Programs Expand to Meet Growing Needs While Classrooms Remain Closed

(August 24, 2020) Santa Barbara, CA -- As parents struggle to navigate the new challenges surrounding remote learning due to coronavirus concerns, many are searching for additional resources and support for their students that will not be returning to classrooms. In an effort to meet the growing education needs for families who are navigating a remote learning environment, the Santa Barbara Zoo is expanding its existing Outdoor Ed program to the public and has launched Early Explorers, a play-based early education program for children age 3 to 5.

The Early Explorer program is a play-based early education program that focuses on teaching through rich experiences. Early Explorers will learn a deep appreciation for the natural world through gardening, outdoor play, exploration, and discovery in the Zoo’s 28-acre outdoor “classroom.” Students are placed in mixed-age groups (student to teacher ratio of 9 to 1) to enhance the development of both academic and social skills. Train rides, animal encounters, and art are incorporated into this outdoor childcare program. T-shirt included with registration. This program is for children ages 3–5. Schedule options vary from full-time to part-time, and more. For full details and to register, click here.

The Zoo’s popular Outdoor Ed program was established in 2014 and typically offered as a homeschool program. This year the Zoo is expanding Outdoor Ed by opening enrollment to traditional public school students who are interested in a one day a week alternative to independent, at-home learning. Outdoor Ed is an outdoor, hands-on, experiential program open to all students age 3 - 15. The program’s interactive approach fulfills California standards by introducing age-specific content and developing research skills. Over each 8-week session, students explore scientific topics via recording observations, evaluating problems, and developing solutions. Students who participate in the Outdoor Ed program will learn in small groups and will be placed by age. Outdoor Ed will be held exclusively outside in designated zones away from the public and will be following all health and safety guidelines in order to ensure the safety of students and teachers. While the Zoo’s first session is already full, registration is now open for the second session, which begins November 9 - January 22. For full details and to register click here.

About the Santa Barbara Zoo

The Santa Barbara Zoo is now open with limited capacity. During the initial reopening phase, online reservations for tickets are required for all guests, including SB Zoo Members, available at www.sbzoo.org. 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 more than 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic
habitats. The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Masai giraffe, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. As a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements. Visit www.sbzoo.org.

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