

News

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THE SAIGH FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES \$1.725 MILLION ENDOWMENT TO SAINT LOUIS ZOO

Endowment fosters hands-on educational opportunities for millions of children in the future

ST. LOUIS— The Saigh (pronounced “sigh”) Foundation has announced a gift of \$1.725 million to the Saint Louis Zoo, to endow the position of the Fred Saigh Curator of the Children’s Zoo. The endowment will provide for hands-on educational opportunities for thousands of children each year, made possible by a dedicated Children’s Zoo staff.

“In honor of Fred Saigh and his dedication to the youth of St. Louis, The Saigh Foundation is pleased to make this gift so that future generations may continue to have a one-of-a-kind learning experience at the Emerson Children’s Zoo,” said JoAnn Hejna (pronounced HAY-nah), executive director of The Saigh Foundation.

The Children’s Zoo currently is headed by Curator Alice Seyfried (pronounced SAY-freed), with a staff of 12 full-time employees, eight part-time employees and four seasonal employees. In addition, there are 33 volunteers, five interns and a pool of over 100 active docents which work together to bring memorable experiences to youngsters. There are 332 mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians which interact with visitors.

Children have a wide variety of animal encounters at the Children’s Zoo, from animal shows in the amphitheater to petting guinea pigs and goats. Visitors can get up close to naked mole rats, a colony of meerkats or a family of fennec foxes. Zoo docents frequently bring out a variety of birds of prey, slithery snakes and fuzzy mammals for a child’s gentle touch. At the “Just Like Me” play area, children can imitate their animal friends - hopping through spurting water geysers, climbing on a giant spider web, digging in a sandbox like an aardvark or zooming down a slide through the otter pool.

“Children today have little opportunity to experience nature and interact with animals,” Seyfried says. “Recent research shows this lack of interaction is negatively impacting children and their love of the natural world. At the Children’s Zoo, we work at making memories for our young visitors by giving them an opportunity to play and learn in a safe environment with gentle animals.”

Admission to the Saint Louis Zoo is free. Admission to the Emerson Children’s Zoo is free from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and \$4.00 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Children under two are free. For more information about the Zoo, visit www.stlzoo.org. ###