



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 3, 2011

AMERICAN HEART MONTH BEGINS WITH HISTORIC MEETING AT ZOO ATLANTA *Experts gather to battle cardiovascular disease in apes*

WHO: Just in time for American Heart Month, an assembly of experts from across the U.S. will soon converge at Zoo Atlanta to discuss strategies for combating one of the leading causes of mortality among great apes living in zoological institutions. Set for February 6-8, 2011, the national meeting of the Great Ape Heart Project will gather more than 50 cardiologists, veterinarians, pathologists, nutritionists, geneticists and ape specialists.

WHAT: Funded by a prestigious Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant awarded in August 2010, the Great Ape Heart Project is led by Hayley Murphy, DVM, Director of Veterinary Services at Zoo Atlanta. Key project partners include the Emerging Diseases Research Group of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine; the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine; and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

The study of cardiovascular disease in great apes requires advanced understanding of diagnosing, treating, and monitoring affected individuals, as well as adapting techniques already in use for treatment of heart disease in humans and domestic animals. Murphy and her colleagues in the Great Ape Heart Project will use the one-year IMLS grant to design an innovative national program for investigating the disease and establishing state-of-the-art diagnostics, treatment and prevention.

The Great Ape Heart Project meeting comes on the heels of the 11th anniversary of an iconic Zoo Atlanta resident who was also affected by heart problems. Willie B. passed away on February 2, 2000, from complications of cardiovascular disease.

For more information, visit www.greatapeheartproject.org.

WHEN: February 6-8, 2011

WHERE: Zoo Atlanta
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Atlanta, GA 30315

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ABOUT:

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. Opening in March 2011 is Complex Carnivores, a new series of exhibits featuring bush dogs, fossa and binturong. Zoo Atlanta is also proud to be one of only four zoos in the U.S. that giant pandas call home: Lun Lun's newest cub, born November 3, 2010, makes his public debut in spring 2011. Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans and a global center of excellence for the care and study of vanishing reptiles and amphibians. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

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