



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 30, 2010



Zoo Educator to Study Polar Bears in the Arctic

Toledo, Ohio—On October 3, Linda Calcamuggio, Education Manager at The Toledo Zoo, will embark on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure as she travels to Churchill, Manitoba for a week-long Communications Leadership Camp sponsored by the conservation group Polar Bears International (PBI). Linda will join 18 other educators and public relations professionals from the United States and Canada as she learns about the polar bears that live there and the issues that they face due to climate change.

According to PBI president Robert Buchanan, “Zoo communicators have the ability to reach a wide audience with a conservation message. They spend a week on the tundra during the fall polar bear migration on the shores of Hudson Bay. They stay at the Tundra Buggy Lodge®—with polar bears just outside—to learn about polar bears, climate change and how each of us can help.” Linda will stay connected throughout her adventure through a blog found at www.polarbearsinternational.org.

For Linda Calcamuggio, the journey offers a unique opportunity to experience the precious ecosystem that is the Arctic. As she puts it, “I expect to be overwhelmed by the stark beauty of the environment, and I hope that after a week in the company of these passionate and committed people I will be better able to convey the imperative and importance of acting on behalf of the majestic animals I encounter. I would also love to return with ways to make climate change easily understood by children.”

This is the fourth year that The Toledo Zoo, as part of PBI’s network of Arctic Ambassador Center Zoos, has participated in this Leadership Camp, which offers a rare experience to see polar bears in their natural habitat. In the process, participants gain useful knowledge about the plight that many polar bear populations face as their Arctic climate continues to warm. According to PBI, the goal of these camps is to inspire, inform and empower zoo professionals to advocate for environmental stewardship in their home communities. “Outreach by institutions such as The Toledo Zoo can make an enormous difference in motivating the public,” Buchanan says. “If we are serious about conserving polar bears and their ecosystems we need to act quickly—and our Arctic Ambassador Center Zoos and Leadership Camps play an important role in inspiring change.”

The Toledo Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit www.toledozoo.org or call (419) 385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge each Monday from 10 a.m. to noon. ID showing proof of residency is required.

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join in caring for animals and conserving the natural world. As part of that mission, The Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation.

###

AZA member institutions are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things.

###