



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2017

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Get Outside and Play in Toledo

TOLEDO, Ohio — Albert Einstein once said: “Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” Join us in starting our local children on the path to understanding early by attending the Play Naturally Toledo event series, now through mid-November.

Play Naturally Toledo (PNT) is a family-oriented outdoor play program that is funded through two grants from the Toledo Community Foundation; a Community Funds Grant to fund the program and a Community Funds Accelerator Grant to fund the program’s evaluation. PNT is a collaborative program between the Toledo Zoo, Metroparks of the Toledo Area, the 577 Foundation, Mosaic Ministries and Bowling Green State University to promote family nature play in our community. PNT partners help create safe play environments to encourage imaginative, wholesome, child-directed play where children have control over every aspect of their play environment while adult caregivers act as facilitators and encouragers.

According to the Zoo’s curator of education, Mitch Magdich, several studies show that play time in nature promotes physical and emotional well-being and healthy social interaction, stimulates higher level thinking, enhances connectedness to nature and encourages environmentally-friendly attitudes.

Here is the upcoming schedule of 2017 Play Naturally Toledo events with locations and times:

- Sat, July 8, 2-4 p.m. at Side Cut Metropark
- Sun, July 16, 1:30-4 p.m. at the 577 Foundation, Perrysburg
- Sun, Aug. 13, 1:30-4 p.m. at the 577 Foundation, Perrysburg
- Sat, Aug. 26, 1-3 p.m. at Pearson Metropark (Packer-Hammersmith Center)
- Sat, Sept. 16, 1-3 p.m. at Sidecut Metropark (Riverview Shelter area)
- Sat, Oct. 14, 1-3 p.m. at the Toledo Zoo, Nature’s Neighborhood*
- Sat, Nov. 18, 1:30-4 p.m. at the 577 Foundation, Perrysburg

Thanks to a grant from the Toledo Community Foundation, the cost for families to participate is only \$1 per person. To register, please visit toledozoo.org/family-programs. Pre-registration is preferred, however, walk-ins are also welcome. **The program fee does not cover admission costs at the Toledo Zoo. Participants must purchase a ticket or enter on a membership.*

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join us 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. Submitted by: Kim Haddix

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