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## **Celebrating Our ZOOTEen Program**

TOLEDO, Ohio – Teenagers these days! This phrase is often uttered with a huff of derision, however, at the Toledo Zoo we roar with pride for our teenage volunteers!

Toledo Zoo's ZOOTEen program launched in 1999 with just 16 volunteers. Today, the program boasts more than 440 members, ages 13-17 from throughout northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. This unique program is one of the largest teen volunteer programs in the region, as well as one of the most in-demand community assets. ZOOTEens assist on Zoo grounds in support of our education programs, creating enrichment for our animals, aiding office and event staff and facilitating hands-on activities, animal encounters and biofacts with Zoo guests. Off grounds the volunteer corps assists in the conservation efforts of many groups including, Toledo Area Metroparks, Wood County Parks District and Partners for Clean Streams. The corps also lend their hands to the Toledo Area Humane Society, Sunshine Communities, Northwest Ohio Food Bank and many other community organizations. While participating in community service, ZOOTEens are building a network of service-minded peers and mentors, honing their interpersonal skills and promoting the Zoo's mission of inspiring others to join us in caring for animals and conserving the natural world.

To learn more about The Conda Family ZOOTEen program, mark your calendar to attend the ZOOTEeNation Celebration on Thursday, September 28 from 6:30- 9:30 p.m. The evening event will take place in the Zoo's newly renovated Malawi Event Center and include the opportunity to meet current and alumni program members and Zoo education animals while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Individual tickets for this Celebration are \$50 per person with a portion being tax deductible. For more information or to make a reservation, please visit [toledozoo.org/zooteenation](http://toledozoo.org/zooteenation), call 419-385-5721 ext. 2091 or email [robin.guidera@toledozoo.org](mailto:robin.guidera@toledozoo.org). This Celebration is presented by Toby and Sue Cordone along with major sponsors First Energy Foundation, Whitacre Logistics and supporting sponsor Harmon Family Foundation.

The Zoo is open daily at 10 a.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit [toledozoo.org](http://toledozoo.org) or call 419-385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge on non-holiday Mondays from 10 a.m. - noon. Valid ID showing proof of residency is required.

*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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