Foellinger Foundation and The James Foundation Join Forces to Make Matching $100,000 Grants to Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo

Foellinger Foundation (Fort Wayne, IN) and The James Foundation (Auburn, IN) announced that they will each make a $100,000 grant to Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo, for a total of $200,000, and are encouraging the community to match their investment.

“Among the challenges brought forth by the pandemic has been the negative impact on learning and educational experiences,” said Cheryl Taylor, President of Foellinger Foundation. “We’re proud to join The James Foundation in demonstrating the nimble and strategic response that private philanthropy offers.”

The pandemic has resulted in a projected five-million-dollar revenue loss for the Zoo. In addition to the forced delay in opening, membership renewals are down, and attendance is currently capped at just 50%, limiting the amount of dollars the Zoo can earn this season. The result of these factors means that the Zoo may have to pull back on some programs, like on grounds and off-site education activities and its Community Ticket program. The Community Ticket program provides complimentary tickets to other area nonprofits that serve children and families who are faced with the least opportunity and greatest need in our community.

“These funds will be used to support the Zoo, including trips for those facing hardship – ensuring that, even in this trying economic season, children will be able to experience the wonder and enlightenment offered by Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo,” said Kendra Klink, Executive Director of The James Foundation. “Moreover, we invite other individuals across our region to join us in this effort and make a gift to the Zoo this summer in hopes that – together – those gifts can generate another $100,000 in support for the Zoo. For 56 years the Zoo has been apart of what makes our community a great place to live and has provided millions of amazing memories for families. I hope everyone who is able joins us in this effort to support the Zoo during this challenging time.”

Jim Anderson, Executive Director of Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo said, “We are incredibly grateful for the investment and support that the James and Foellinger Foundations are making today. Each time
a child comes to the Zoo they not only have a chance to connect with amazing animals but can also experience a world of adventure right here in Fort Wayne. It is during these adventures that children learn about the world around them. We are honored to be a part of each child’s learning adventure.”

To make a gift in support of the $100,000 community fundraising goal visit the Zoo’s website at kidszoo.org/give, call the Donor Development team at 260-427-2040, or you can mail at gift to 3411 Sherman Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46808. Every gift makes a difference in support of daily operations, education programs, conservation efforts, and providing exceptional animal care.

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About Foellinger Foundation: The Foellinger Foundation is a private, charitable foundation that invests in excellence by providing grants, leadership training, conferences, workshops and thought-leading speakers to strengthen nonprofit organizations that serve Allen County. The Foundation was created in 1958 by Helene Foellinger, The News-Sentinel publisher from 1936 to 1980, and Esther Foellinger, her mother. Visit Foellinger.org for more information.

About The James Foundation: The James Foundation, Inc. believes that by serving as civic stewards, quality of life will be enriched acting as a catalyst to undertakings that strengthen both families and community. By enhancing existing social platforms and providing new educational and cultural opportunities, citizens will be empowered and inspired to initiate and cultivate positive change in all life experiences, nourishing vitality across the community.

About the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo: The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo is northeast Indiana’s largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests annually. The zoo was voted Indiana’s #1 “Gotta-Do Summer Attraction” and is consistently named one of the nation’s Top Ten Zoos for Kids by national media outlets.

The Zoo is a conservation leader, contributing annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats. The Zoo cares for more than 1400 animals and participates in 63 cooperative species survival plans.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The Zoo’s operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations. July Zoo hours are daily noon to 7 pm.