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**STILL THE ONE: TAMPA'S LOWRY PARK ZOO NAMED NATION'S NUMBER ONE ZOO  
FOR KIDS BY PARENTS MAGAZINE**

***Honor is Second Top Ranking for Tampa Zoo in Five Years***

**TAMPA, Fla. (April 2, 2009)** – *Parents* magazine, the nation's leading parenting magazine with a community of 15 million readers, today named Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo the best zoo for kids in its first ever "10 Best Zoos" survey. The full results of the survey will appear in the May 2009 issue of *Parents*, on newsstands nationwide April 14. The *Parents* ranking is the second top honor for the Tampa Zoo in five years; the Zoo was also recognized as the number one family-friendly zoo by *Child* magazine in June 2004.

*Parents* applauded Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo for its many interactive exhibits that allow children and families to connect with animals like giraffes, stingrays and camels. It also recognized Wallaroo Station, the 4.5-acre Australian children's area, where kids can "brush a goat's fur, feed birdseed lollipops to parakeets, walk down a path as kangaroos and wallabies hop in front of them, and ride a llama."

"We are thrilled to be recognized by *Parents* magazine as the number one zoo for kids, and we take this honor to heart," said Craig Pugh, acting director. "We are proud that Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo provides a great variety of up-close experiences and interactive exhibits that put people in the picture. We understand that bringing children eye-to-eye with animals, wherever possible, creates a sense of wonder and awe, and fosters respect for living things."

The Zoo was also praised for being the first and only zoo in the country to offer onsite accredited daycare, preschool and kindergarten programs through its Florida Environmental Education Center or "Zoo School."

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Zoo School programs are designed to be fun, innovative, imaginative and investigative for all ages. The vision of the Zoo's education department is to provide quality experiences and build new programs for new audiences based on the needs of the community while fostering respect for wildlife and wild places through unique zoo interactions.

"Having a school onsite has helped our staff to better understand early childhood development and to ensure the Zoo itself offers age-appropriate experiences for young children," Pugh noted.

"As a trustee and as a parent, it gives me delight and satisfaction to know what a wonderful educational resource the Zoo is for our community," said Catherine Lowry Straz, chair of the Lowry Park Zoological Society that operates Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo. "The Zoo is uniquely positioned to be a fun place to visit while helping children to make sense of the living world. I see this first-hand through the eyes of my own child, those of the students in our one-of-a-kind Zoo School, and those of the thousands of youngsters who visit with their schools and families every year."

In conducting the three-month study which examined 50 zoos nationwide, *Parents* focused on honoring zoos that offer a variety of hands on, family friendly activities while fostering appreciation, knowledge and excitement about the natural world.

"Introducing children to nature at an early age is so important," says Dana Points, editor-in-chief of *Parents*. "It sparks their imagination, inspires appreciation of a world beyond their own backyard and helps teach conservation."

*Parents*, published monthly by Meredith Corporation, has been America's No. 1 family magazine for more than 80 years. Currently, the magazine is a powerful community of 15.6 million readers devoted to supporting the efforts of parents, educators and other citizens who strive to make the world a better place for our children. *Parents* can be found online at [www.parents.com](http://www.parents.com). The "10 Best Zoos for Kids" survey, as featured in the magazine, is posted at [www.parents.com/topzoos](http://www.parents.com/topzoos).

### **About Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo**

Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo is operated by the Lowry Park Zoological Society, an independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to excellence in education, conservation and research. Named the No. 1 zoo in America by both *Parents* magazine and *Child* magazine, the Zoo is located at 1101 W. Sligh Avenue in Tampa, one mile west of I-275 (exit 48). The Zoo is open seven days a week, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Parking is free. Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Visit [LowryParkZoo.com](http://LowryParkZoo.com) or call (813) 935-8552 for more information. Find us on [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com) and [www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com).