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WILD AT HEART: ANIMAL ATTRACTION AT TAMPA'S LOWRY PARK ZOO *Valentines Tours Highlight Animals' Amorous Instincts*

TAMPA, Fla. (February 3, 2009) – Love is in the air at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo on Valentine's Day weekend with the return of the wildly popular fundraiser "Wild At Heart" February 12-14. The unique three-hour experience (for adults ages 21 and up) reveals some of the animal kingdom's most fascinating facts with entertaining stories of animal "romance," courtship and breeding behaviors. A champagne toast, progressive four-course dinner and up-close animal encounters are included in the eventful night.

"Wild At Heart is an evening full of wild surprises, answering the questions about animal behavior that many are too timid to ask," said Melinda Mendolusky, ZooVentures manager and tour guide for the event. "Love in the animal world can be sweet and endearing, while also shocking and fascinating. The fundraiser offers guests an enjoyably unique way to share this romantic day while supporting education and conservation programs at the zoo," she added.

The romantic evening begins just after sunset with music and cocktails, proceeding to a tour of various animal habitat areas. (The animals are not expected to display courtship behaviors or mate during the event. As with any event at the zoo, animal appearances are weather permitting.) Guests travel to different locations throughout the park to dine on an eclectic selection of fine foods planned by the zoo's executive chef Chad Lusk.

The fun, light-hearted experience highlights just how "wild" things can get with wildlife including discussions of mating behaviors, elaborate courtship displays, breeding practices, animal monogamy and polygamy, and the zoo's role in the conservation of endangered species.

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Limited space is available February 12, 13 and 14 for tours starting at 5:30 p.m. or 6 p.m. The event is limited to two groups of 50 people per night to preserve the intimacy of the occasion. *Advance reservations are required.* Tickets are \$55 per person or \$50 per person for Zoo Pass holders. Due to the open bars included with this event and the mature subject matter, the event is limited to guests who are 21 and over. To register, call 813-935-8552 ext. 235.

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 #1 zoo in America by *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. The zoo is a nonsmoking facility with smoking allowed only in limited designated areas as marked by visitor information signs. Visit LowryParkZoo.com or call (813) 935-8552 for more information.

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