

A photograph showing the silhouettes of six children standing in front of a large aquarium tank. They are looking at a large manatee swimming in the water. The children's hands are pressed against the glass of the tank. The background is a vibrant blue-green color, representing the water in the tank. The text "For the Love of Manatees" is overlaid in white on the bottom left of the image.

# For the Love of Manatees

The Manatee and Aquatic Center is the only one of its kind in the world. It expands the traditional boundaries of a zoo by linking *ex-situ* conservation (conservation work accomplished away from an animal's natural habitat) with *in-situ* efforts (where an animal population naturally occurs). In partnership with state and federal organizations, Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo works to rescue, rehabilitate, research, and return Florida's endangered manatees to the wild.

LOWRY PARK ZOO  
**NEW HORIZONS**



The Manatee and Aquatic Center at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo, which includes a manatee hospital, was the first to be designed and built specifically for critical care and treatment of sick, injured, or orphaned wild manatees. It is the only non-profit hospital in the world specifically dedicated to manatee rehabilitation.

### Critical Care Is Critically Needed

The need for these facilities grows more critical every year. Colder winter weather and increased boater traffic mean that our maximum patient load is reached more often. Current facilities also need updating to ensure success of this important program in the future. Since the hospital opening in 1991, about 10 percent of Florida's manatees have received care at the Zoo (almost 300 manatees to date).

Currently the Zoo spends as much on manatee programs as it does on all other animals combined— approximately \$1 million each year. The investment benefits not only

the individual manatees brought in for care, but also Zoo guests by providing unique observation opportunities of daily activities in the hospital area. By witnessing firsthand how some manatees arrive at the Zoo, guests realize the importance of manatee conservation and its statewide relevance. This program also draws media attention from across the country and around the world. The United Kingdom, Germany, France and Japan are among the nations whose broadcasting companies have visited to feature the work accomplished at Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo.

