



# Zoological Society of San Diego Summer Camp 2010



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### Introduction

The Zoological Society of San Diego (ZSSD) is an organization that fosters awareness for biodiversity, wildlife, and conservation.

#### The ZSSD Vision:

"To become a world leader in connecting people to wildlife and conservation".

#### The ZSSD Mission Statement:

"The ZSSD is a conservation, education and recreation organization dedicated to the reproduction, protection and exhibition of animals, plants and habitats".

Therefore, in collaboration with the education department, the Zoo has put together different programs throughout the year to accomplish this objective.

The San Diego Zoo Camp is one of these mainly programs where children from kindergarten through seventh grade meet and each grade level focuses on a different subject. These subjects include insects, birds, reptiles, habitats, zoo jobs or animal behaviour, respectively. Incorporated into the summer are animal presentations, behind the scenes, crafts, games and activities.

World Wildlife fund (WWF) is an organization that "protects the diversity of life on earth, and supports individuals and institutions that carry out practical and scientifically based conservation projects", such as the Zoo by contributing with educational guides to update information and give some teaching strategies.

### Aim

- To implement creative thinking about how we can best make green choices that will impact wildlife and biodiversity.
- To provide interest to explore new ecofriendly and practical ideas that will benefit our environment, thus, making our world a better place to live.
- To foment environmental awareness; reuse, reduce and recycle.
- To make learning an enjoyable experience for children and the public in general, including program aids, teachers, directors, employees and visitors.

### Method

Zoo Camp has a different topic for each grade level, each of which will contain a session A and B; each child can attend camp for as long as two weeks; the first week being session A and the following week being session B.

**Animal Presentations-** learn facts about the animal, they are allowed to touch depending on the animal.

**Crafts-** The Zoo reuses toilet paper tubes, newspaper, egg cartons, plastic bottles, etc. to make fun crafts for the children.

**Animal Keepers-** children learn the how, when, who and what of the animals from keepers.

**Behind the Scenes-** understand the design and appearance of animal enclosures.



Sarah Pierce, year-round educator, with coral snake.

Third grade students behind the scenes at reptile house with a reptile keeper learning about snake physiology.



left to right., Third grade team, Sarah Pierce, educator; Ana Patricia Lopez, program aide; Ryan Kay, program aide and Lorri Merritt, educator.

The San Diego Zoo provides two little guides with information on how to be greener at home and at the workplace.



### Results

The education department makes sure that we, the educators and program aides are putting all efforts in the program by giving out evaluations to the parents which we get each week.

Personally, I believe that teaching is a great profession, specially with children. Learning can actually be fun and very engaging. It may be challenging but it is very rewarding.

Third grade's theme is *reptiles* and we expect the children to perceive the message of how important amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates are in the cycle of life.

The program aides had an opportunity to teach one lesson a week focusing on our theme, which was "Reptiles".

*Elephant Odyssey is now finished and has been of great benefit for the elephants and the education department.*



#### Professional skills:

- Project management.
- Team effort.
- Leadership experience.
- Efficient time use.
- Effective oral and written communication.

### Conclusion

Environmental education is crucial because we have to know how to use our own resources and what to do to protect our environment, and thanks to the support of the public and organizations, programs such as Zoo Camp are possible. Encouraging children to realize the actual situation of our world and also teaching them ways to protect it, is one way to contribute.

Throughout the summer, I learned how to approach our society to convey greener habits and apply them to our daily life. Also, wildlife is a very significant component and their survival depends on us.

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