

Society Launches Innovative Education Program

At a news conference on February 8, the Zoological Society announced the "Ambassador Program." This unique education program creates a partnership among school children and their families, local corporations or individuals, and the Milwaukee County Zoo. Program sponsors will act as ambassadors responsible for introducing students to the educational resources of the zoo.

The program is designed to enrich the educational experiences of low-income students. "It was developed in response to the Zoological Society's commitment to educating our children about the importance of preserving our wildlife and our environment," said Dr. Gil Boese, president of the Society. "We see the program as an important contribution to a nationwide effort to help secure the environmental and educational future of the United States."

The Ambassador Program involves five MPS schools involved in Project Rise (Rising to Individual Scholastic Excellence), a school-improvement program that provides academic opportunities for low-income and minority students; one archdiocesan school; and two Waukesha public schools. Because none of these schools receives government funds for extra-curricular activities, many students have limited exposure to the world outside their immediate neighbors according to studies.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Herbert J. Groover; MPS Superintendent, Robert S. Peterkin, and Archdiocesan Director/Superintendent, John T. Nomis have all endorsed the Ambassador Program. Peterkin wrote, "I am very pleased that the Society is undertaking this effort. The track record of educational benefits offered by the Society is an impressive one, and our students will receive great benefits from this program."

Two classes in the fourth through seventh grade levels from each school will participate in the program. During classes at the zoo, students will learn about animal preservation and adaptation, ecology, environmental issues and geography. Curricula and activities for all classes were developed by the Zoological Society's award-winning education department.

Students will make two visits to the Zoo, and work on in-class projects between visits. Each participating school will create a special "thank you" for their sponsors. it



might be a papier mache globe, a play or choral reading, or a unique piece of art. At their second visits, each child will receive four admission passes and bus tokens so that they can be zoo ambassadors to their families while visiting the zoo this summer. The children and their families will then become zoo "ambassadors" in their communities. Sponsors are already becoming even more involved by planning to visit their schools — or bringing the children to their places of business.

"The program will be evaluated by students, teachers, families and sponsors. Next year, we hope to expand it to include at

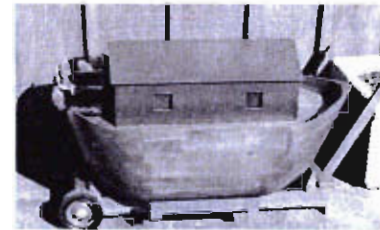


Photos by Peter Feldner

least six more schools and ambassadors," Boese said. "Already, we've received overwhelming interest among schools to participate."

The first Ambassador Program sponsors and their schools are: Beatrice Cheese · Whittier, Waukesha; Cleaver Family Foundation · 27th Street; The Dairy Council of Wisconsin · Garfield; Marquette Electronics Foundation · Clarke Street; Miller Brewing Company · Neeskara School; Warner Cable Communications of Milwaukee · Catholic East; USA Today · White Rock, Waukesha; Zoological Society of Milwaukee County · Hawley Environmental Education.

Zoo Priders Re-Create "Noah's Ark"



In keeping with the Ambassador Program's theme of ecology, Zoo Pride volunteers, Cliff Baierlipp and Bob Jackson created "Noah's Ark" from a recycled telephone pole and its trailer from a discarded fence post.

Cliff volunteered 120 hours to construct the hull of the ark and its trailer. Bob spent additional time to make the cabin. The trailer's axle and drive shaft came from an old slush machine. The ark is a self-supporting structure to allow maximum space inside without a support structure. Each strip of wood was fit, glued and blended for a perfect match. The outside was belt sanded and the inside was smoothed with a hand grinder and disk sander.

Because the Ambassador Program deals with ecology, Cliff chose to use recycled materials. "I just felt it was important to use materials which would normally end up in a landfill to reinforce the program's focus on ecology and our environment," said Cliff.

Dressed as Noah, program coordinator, Peter Feldner, of the Zoological Society's education department, took the ark to the participating eight schools where he introduced the concept of zoos as modern arks. "Like the ark which has four essential sides, modern zoos have four important components: education, research, recreation and conservation. Just as the ark would sink if one of its sides were missing, zoos would also have trouble surviving without one of its four parts," Feldner told the children.