



## SEQUOIA PARK ZOO FOUNDATION

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **LOCAL TEEN CHARTS JOURNEY FROM SEQUOIA PARK ZOO EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SPEAKER**

Sequoia Park Zoo Launches Guest Speaker Program with ZKAT Graduate Kai Neander's Story

EUREKA, CA, April 13, 2010 – Sequoia Park Zoo is delighted to announce that its new Guest Speaker Program, designed to illustrate different aspects of today's zoos, will kick off on Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup> with an inspirational story for today's youth.

Kai Neander, now 16 years old and a junior at the Academy of the Redwoods, has a long history with Sequoia Park Zoo. He participated for many years with the Zookeeper Assistant Training program (ZKAT), spent six years in the Barn Brigade (subsequently renamed YAK – Youth Assistant Keepers), and worked independently with keepers on a regular basis, logging over 1000 hours of volunteer time. In 2007, Kai started the Sequoia Park Zoo chapter of Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots, a youth led environmental and humanitarian program of the Jane Goodall Institute, founded by Dr Jane Goodall in 1991 to make positive change happen for communities, animals, and the environment. "Thanks to Kai's leadership, the Sequoia Park Zoo chapter has grown to become the most active of the over 200 Roots & Shoots youth groups in the state of California," says Karen Oxrider, Roots & Shoots Regional Director, California.

As part of his work to inspire youth in the community, Kai has spoken at multiple conferences, including the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Bioneers Conference in San Rafael, the 2009 Four Corners Youth Leadership Summit, the 2008 and 2009 California Youth Leadership Summit, and on Dr Jane Goodall's "A Reason for Hope" lecture tour. His public speaking career reached new heights last month when he was selected by the Jane Goodall Institute's national staff to travel to Doha, Qatar, to give the closing keynote address at the EduCare Global Issues Conference at the American School of Doha in front of an audience of 300 conference attendees from over 26 countries and local residents. While in Qatar, Kai also spoke at a number of schools and community groups about his work with the Sequoia Park Zoo Roots & Shoots chapter and with Roots & Shoots California in total giving 13 presentations to groups from elementary school students through to educators and community members.

"Sequoia Park Zoo is the reason I've been able to gain all this valuable experience," says Kai, who plans to study International Relations when he graduates high school next year. "If it weren't for the Zoo's educational programs, I wouldn't have met Dr. Jane Goodall when she visited the Zoo to meet with Bill the Chimp. That's what led to the founding the Zoo's Roots & Shoots chapter, and it's simply spiraled from there."

Kai will be presenting a talk and slideshow about his experience, *Eureka to Quatar: Sequoia Park Zoo Sparks Life-Changing Opportunity for Area Youth*, with particular emphasis on his

visit to Qatar, in the Sequoia Park Zoo classroom on Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. The presentation should last about an hour, with plenty of time for questions at the end. Admission to the presentation is free to anyone wishing to attend; signs will direct attendees to a separate Zoo entrance. For more information, please contact the Sequoia Park Zoo Foundation at 707 442 5649.

Kai is also available for media interviews, and can be contacted directly at (707) 839-0458, cell (707) 496-6849, email [kneander1@gmail.com](mailto:kneander1@gmail.com).

### **About Kai Neander**

Kai Neander is one of Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots International Youth Ambassadors and has been active in environmental and community issues in Northern California for the past ten years. Kai, 16, knows firsthand the desire of young people to make the world a better place. He started the Sequoia Park Zoo Roots & Shoots chapter in 2007. Through his actions as a member of the Roots & Shoots California Youth Leadership Council and the National Leadership Council he works to inspire the youth in his community – and around the world – to make a difference and gain the tools necessary for building a better future.

### **About Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots**

Founded in 1991 by Dr. Jane Goodall and a group of Tanzanian students, the Roots & Shoots program is about making positive change happen—for our communities, for animals and for the environment. With over 150,000 young people in 120 countries, the Roots & Shoots network connects youth of all ages who share a desire to create a better world. Young people identify problems in their communities and take action. Through service projects, youth-led campaigns and an interactive website, Roots & Shoots members are making a difference across the globe. For more information, please visit [www.rootsandshoots.org](http://www.rootsandshoots.org).

### **About Sequoia Park Zoo**

Founded in 1907, Sequoia Park is the smallest zoological facility in the country accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the only such facility on the West Coast between San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. The Zoo is home to a variety of species, from apes to insects, and offers a broad program of educational activities for children from pre-school to high school and beyond. Jointly funded by the City of Eureka and the non-profit Sequoia Park Zoo Foundation, the zoo welcomes over 50,000 visitors to its facility every year. Further details of the Sequoia Park Zoo's education programs may be found by visiting [www.sequoiaparkzoo.net](http://www.sequoiaparkzoo.net) and clicking on the Education tab.