

For Immediate Release

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**Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium® Partners with
United Way of the Midlands and 2-1-1 Hotline for Second Year**

Omaha, Neb. (Oct. 13, 2017) – Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is partnering with United Way of the Midlands and the 2-1-1 helpline to provide free household memberships to eligible families for the "Bring Your Family to the Zoo" program. This is the second year of the program.

The "Bring Your Family to the Zoo" program is focused on creating family and community engagement in hopes of improving academic achievement. This year, third grade students in 44 area Omaha-Council Bluffs metro schools with an 80% or higher free or reduced lunch rate are eligible for the program. By receiving a free household membership, families are able to participate in a variety of educational programs and activities offered by Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium.

The secondary purpose of the program is to educate schools and families about the 2-1-1 helpline's capacity to help families in crisis find local support. 2-1-1 is a free, community resource helpline, which provides information and offers referrals to food pantries, counseling, utility assistance, and other human service programs. Families at participating schools may call 2-1-1 Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. to request their membership through October 31.

In 2016, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium provided 913 families from Omaha Public Schools, Council Bluffs Community Schools and Sacred Heart School free household memberships through the "Bring Your Family to the Zoo" program. A total of 31 schools participated in the pilot program last year. This year's goal is to provide over 1,500 memberships to eligible families.

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About Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Consistently ranked as one of the world's top five zoos, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is an independent not-for-profit organization accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). As a leader in conservation, the Center for Conservation and Research focuses on areas to benefit animal husbandry and species conservation. Focus areas include conservation genetics, conservation medicine, rare plant conservation, reproductive sciences and comparative nutrition. The Zoo is recognized nationally for its conservation, animal care and exhibit design. Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is located at Nebraska's I-80, 13th Street exit.

About United Way of the Midlands

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands is not only focused on addressing our community's human needs today; it is focused on what can be, and what should be. It is building on today's strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. United Way is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, United Way is COMMUNITY STRONG. We invite you to visit www.UnitedWayMidlands.org for more information.