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## **NEW SURVEY FINDS KIDS WANT TO HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **The Baltimore Zoo and National Aquarium in Baltimore Are Local Members of National Association that Conducted “Poll for the Planet”**

May 13, 2003—Children want to get involved in conservation efforts, according to a survey recently released by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA). The “Poll for the Planet” survey of more than 60,000 respondents showed that 95 percent of children ages six to eight want to know how they can help protect the environment.

“This survey shows that kids care and want to help, and it underscores that zoos and aquariums are great resources for them to develop a sense of environmental stewardship,” said David M. Pittenger, executive director of the National Aquarium in Baltimore. “We can spark their interest when they visit, but it’s incumbent upon us to keep the fire burning throughout their developmental years.”

“Kids want to get involved and believe they can make a difference and help save the planet,” said Billie Grieb, president and chief executive officer of The Baltimore Zoo. “The survey results have an exciting message of hope for all of us, and inspire us to share our conservation knowledge with those who can act now and in the future to protect our city, our Bay and our planet.”

Nearly two-thirds of the adults and children surveyed said that children are taking care of wildlife. About 60 percent said that not enough was being done to prevent pollution, while 49 percent felt that not enough was being done to clean up the environment.

Combined, the Zoo and the Aquarium provide dozens of conservation education programs to help nurture interest in the environment, including school visits, summer

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camp, after-school programs, special tours, sleepovers, high school and college internships, work-study programs and free admission for Maryland school groups. All of these programs include interaction with staff and conservation education materials.

“Our commitment to conservation education is at the heart of what we do,” said Pittenger. “We respond to every email from students who want to know more about what we do and about what they can do.”

“Our promise is to inspire and instill a healthy sense of respect for the natural world in every young visitor,” said Grieb. “Whether it’s a one-on-one encounter or leading groups of thousands, we take seriously our responsibility to guide young people on their life-long journey to being good stewards of the Earth.”

The Zoo and the Aquarium are involved in conservation endeavors internally, locally and internationally, from animal breeding and rescue programs to Chesapeake Bay restoration conservations efforts in the field.

Chartered in 1876, The Baltimore Zoo’s 161-acre park offers a unique combination of the nation’s finest naturalistic animal exhibits, conservation education opportunities for the public, and a home to over 2,200 exotic animals and wildlife, including many endangered species.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, a non-profit organization and world-class aquatic institute, is Maryland’s leading attraction, hosting more than 1.5 million visitors per year. Dedicated to education and conservation, it serves the environment, students, visitors and communities through a wide variety of programs.