



Press Release
For Immediate Release
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TORONTO ZOO KEEPER ONE OF 15 SELECTED FOR POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL'S (PBI) LEADERSHIP CAMP

Thursday, September 29, 2010, Toronto, Ontario – Dianne Morrison, a polar bear keeper with the Toronto Zoo, will travel to the tundra near Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, in late September for a week-long Zoo Keeper Leadership Camp sponsored by Polar Bears International (PBI), a conservation group and the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK). The Toronto Zoo selected Dianne based on her past outreach and community involvement. She will join 15 other keepers from the U.S. and Canada.

"The zoo keepers who take part in our Leadership Camp are extraordinary individuals," said Robert Buchanan, PBI president. "They spend a week on the tundra during the fall polar bear migration on the shores of Hudson Bay. They stay at the Tundra Buggy® Lodge—with polar bears just outside— to learn about polar bears, climate change, and how each of us can help. From this remote location, they stay connected to the rest of the world through their blog at polarbearsinternational.org. Before returning home, each Ambassador creates an individual action plan to help reduce CO2 in their community."

Churchill's polar bears, part of the Western Hudson Bay population, draw visitors from around the world during their fall migration. Every summer, these bears are driven ashore when the ice on the bay melts, taking away their seal-hunting grounds. They spend the next few months resting and fasting. As cold weather returns, they begin to gather on the shore near Churchill to wait for the ice to form. Having the chance to see polar bears in their natural habitat –and to learn first-hand about arctic climate-warming – is a transformative experience for camp participants. The goal of the camp, now in its second year, is to inspire, inform, and empower zoo professionals to advocate for environmental stewardship in their home communities.

By attending this camp, I can take away valuable information about polar bear conservation, improve my knowledge on global warming, and share this with our visitors in the future," said Dianne Morrison.

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The Toronto Zoo was invited to send a representative to the camp because of its role as a PBI Arctic Ambassador Centre zoo. These zoos focus on animal well-being and enrichment, take a leadership role in stewardship and carbon reduction efforts in their communities, and participate in PBI polar bear research efforts. Many also help support polar bear conservation through the PBI Polar Bear Sustainability Alliance.

“Outreach by institutions such as the Toronto Zoo can make an enormous difference in motivating the public,” Buchanan said. “If we are serious about conserving polar bears and their ecosystem we need to act quickly—and our Arctic Ambassador Center Zoos and Zoo Keeper Leadership Camps play an important role in inspiring change.”

Polar Bears International is a non profit organization dedicated to the worldwide conservation of the polar bear and its habitat through research, stewardship, and education. Visit their website at www.polarbearsinternational.org.

Frontiers North Tundra Buggy® Adventure (FNA) is a PBI Platinum-level corporate partner that has sponsored PBI Leadership Camps since their inception. FNA provides authentic adventures in Canada’s north and boasts the best access in the world to wild polar bears. Visit their web site at www.frontiersnorth.org.

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The Toronto Zoo is located on Meadowvale Road north of Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east or west bound. Hours of operation are 9am – 6pm with last admissions at 5pm. General Admission (ages 13-64) is \$23, Children (ages 4-12) are \$13, Seniors (aged 65+) are \$17, Children ages 3 and under are free. Parking is \$10. Events and admission prices are subject to change without notice. For general information, call (416) 392-5929 or visit

torontozoo.com