



Press Release
For Immediate Release
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The Zoo Unveils Unique First Nation Art Garden

Saturday, June 19, 2010, Toronto, Ontario: Toronto Zoo today unveiled the new "First Nation Art Garden" now in place on the zoo site. First Nation Elder from Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, Garry Sault, and Metis Traditional Knowledge Keeper Joseph Paquette, Toronto Zoo CEO John Tracogna and artists David General and Doreen Stevens officially opened this unique attraction at the Zoo. Red Spirit Singers offered an honour song for the grand opening along with youth traditional dancer, Shane Cameron Jr. This is the first garden of its kind in the City of Toronto.

The Zoo shares the goals of First Nation partners in the commitment for the preservation of wildlife and wild places. The purpose of 1500 square foot garden is to share the distinct origin story and worldview of First Nation people in North America. This project invited Aboriginal artists to submit concepts for this unique garden that would visually narrate the Creation Story as told by the Haudenosaunee (Mohawk) and Anishinaabe (Ojibway) people of North America (known as Turtle Island). The garden design features the selected stonework sculpture created by Aboriginal artist, David General of Six Nations of the Grand River and mosaic created by Doreen Stevens of Anishinaabe from Kitigan Zibi, Quebec. The project was made possible by the generous donations of the Toronto Zoo, Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk and the Museum Assistance Program.

The First Nation Art Garden respectfully acknowledges the wealth of Knowledge accumulated by Aboriginal people. We are pleased that we can share this worldview and of that of our wonderful artists with our Zoo visitors. The garden is located near the Zoo's popular Americas pavilion.

About The Artists:

David General is a member of Six Nations of the Grand River near Brantford, Ontario. His stonework sculpture is titled "Turtle Island". It depicts the geographical landscape of North America using the shape of a turtle with marble, slate and limestone. The artwork also visually highlights the importance of Aboriginal Traditional Turtle Teaching concepts such as the indigenous lunar calendar and clan systems.

Doreen Stevens is Anishinaabe from Kitigan Zibi, Quebec. Her work is titled "The Creation Story Mosaic" and was inspired from a dream. It depicts the Algonkian creation story and its importance to Anishinaabe people incorporating the 4 elements, original spirit being Mishi Pishoo (Great Water Lynx), wampum belts (original treaty agreements) and the importance of water (the lifeblood of Mother Earth).

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Current Zoo Hours to Sept. 6: 9:00am to 7:30pm. Last admission one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21.00 (\$23 as of July 1), Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13.00 and Seniors 65+ are \$15.00 (\$17 as of July 1). Parking is \$10. Prices include applicable taxes and are subject to change without notice. Events are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25th).

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