



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Belhaven University and Jackson Zoo Expand Their Educational Partnership

Jackson, Miss.— Belhaven University and the Jackson Zoological Society, Inc., proudly announced the continuation and expansion of their long-term partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on Friday, December 1st. Members of both organizations came together at the Gertrude C. Ford Education Center at the Jackson Zoo to celebrate their ongoing educational relationship.

Per the memorandum, staff and students of the Jackson Zoo and Belhaven University “will develop and expand a framework of cooperation to develop mutually beneficial programs, projects, and activities.” Their partnership will promote, encourage, explore, and share information and resources at both organizations. The expansion will focus on all aspects of education, blending science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and conservation of wildlife and the environment in formal and informal settings.

“We are so pleased to be a part of such a tremendous opportunity for both our staff and students,” said Dr. Roger Parrott, President of Belhaven University. “The Jackson Zoo is such an important resource. Visiting the zoo is not just about entertainment, it is an educational treasure.”

Belhaven University has agreed to open their campus to zoo staff and students, share research and new technologies and information, and promote the zoo’s educational and conservational messages and programs. The Jackson Zoo Education Department will allow Belhaven staff and students training and research opportunities on zoo grounds, as well as access to information and programs for staff and students to aid their educational gains.

Beth Poff, Executive Director of the zoo, said, “The Jackson Zoological Society is thrilled to formalize the partnership already underway with Belhaven University. Making use of our facilities for formal and informal science and technology is something that we are especially proud of.”

The Jackson Zoo is dedicated to wildlife care and conservation, and Belhaven University provides a Christian liberal arts education focused on life and leadership. The two also share a strong foundation in the life sciences and technological advances that can benefit both human and animal experience. In fact, Belhaven students were integral to a water-quality study over the past two years (lead by educators Dr. Reid Bishop and Dr. Elizabeth Brandon), which was an important source of information for animals and guests during an emergency water situation in 2017, providing important data that helped the zoo’s conservation efforts.

For more information about Belhaven University, contact David Sprayberry, Public Relations, at dsprayberry@belhaven.edu.

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The Jackson Zoo is accredited by the Zoological Association of America, and certified by the Better Business Bureau. The mission of the Jackson Zoo is to provide visitors with a quality recreational and educational environment dedicated to wildlife care and conservation. For more information, visit The Jackson Zoo online at jacksonzoo.org, or on [facebook.com/JacksonZoo](https://www.facebook.com/JacksonZoo).

