



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Nov. 25, 2016

THANKS TO OUR VISITORS: GUESTS AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO AND NORTHWEST TREK WILDLIFE PARK TEAM UP TO DONATE 3,691 POUNDS OF FOOD TO PEOPLE IN NEED

TACOMA, Wash. – Visitors to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium and Northwest Trek Wildlife Park donated a combined 3,691 pounds of food to the Emergency Food Network during the just-concluded Help Out for Half-Off drive.

The special event was conducted Nov. 4-20 at the sister zoos – Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in Tacoma and Northwest Trek Wildlife Park near Eatonville. Both are facilities of Metro Parks Tacoma.

Visitors who brought in two or more shelf-stable items of food were offered half off general admission prices at each zoo.

The 3,691 pounds of food – a figure approaching two tons – is impressive, said Merrit Reed, coordinator of volunteer activities for Emergency Food Network.

“Together, this is equivalent to 2,950 meals that are now ready for distribution to our neighbors in need this holiday season!” she wrote in a thank you note to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff.

But, of course, the real credit goes to visitors at the wildlife park and zoo, who brought in food by the armload in many cases, children carrying cans of vegetables and soups, jars of baby food and boxes of stuffing, pasta and other items.

Emergency Food Network, based in Pierce County, says food drives play a crucial role in helping the agency meet the needs of residents. More than 117,000 visits are made each year to emergency meals sites by children, seniors and adults seeking help, Reed said.

Emergency Food Network distributes more than 16 million pounds of food annually to 70 food banks, hot meal sites, and shelters in Pierce County.

Northwest Trek is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Thanksgiving Weekend.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily for regular daytime visits to see animals. The zoo also is now open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. nightly for Zoolights.

For more information, go to www.nwtrek.org and www.pdza.org.

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