



# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## SANTA BARBARA ZOO NAMES JJ MCLEOD DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

(January 18, 2021) Santa Barbara, CA -The [Santa Barbara Zoo](#) is pleased to announce that JJ McLeod has been named the new Director of Education for the organization.

McLeod has played an essential role in developing the Zoo's Education department since joining the organization five years ago, from helping develop curriculum, to training and mentoring educators, to managing Outdoor Education. In her most recent role as Education Manager, she led the Zoo's inclusion initiatives to support local families navigating special needs, and oversaw the Zoo's Autism Center Certification process. In her new role as Director of Education, McLeod will oversee all education programming and lead the department in continuing to develop innovative education initiatives for the community at large.

Prior to her work at the Zoo, McLeod worked as a special education teacher at Santa Barbara High School and San Marcos High School. In 2011, she left education to grow her family and honed her skills in autism therapy and advocating for the special needs community. She worked closely with Tri-Counties Regional Center, STAR Applied Behavior Analysis, and UCSB Koegel Autism Center mentoring newly diagnosed families, advising special service plans, and writing articles to propose change.

McLeod received her bachelor's degree from University of Colorado, Boulder and a master's in education, in addition to an education specialist & multiple subject teaching credentials from Antioch University. She and her husband Joe spend their free time with their three lovely children.

For more information about all of the Zoo's Education programs, [please click here](#).

### About The Santa Barbara Zoo

The Santa Barbara Zoo is currently closed due to coronavirus concerns. Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the Santa Barbara Zoo is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to more than 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Masai giraffe, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. As a private

501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements. Visit [sbzoo.org](http://sbzoo.org).