

PALM BEACH ZOO NEWS

Alvin Brown Distance Learning Center Named at Palm Beach Zoo

July 20, 2010, West Palm Beach, FL – The Palm Beach Zoo has announced the naming of a new Distance Learning Center in honor of Alvin I. Brown, a long-time supporter and former member of the zoo board of directors. The Center is part of the recently opened Melvin J. and Claire Levine Animal Care Complex, which also houses the Salvatore M. Zeitlin Animal Hospital.

A major contribution from Peggy and Alvin Brown of Palm Beach makes it possible for the zoo to initiate a comprehensive distance learning program powered by advanced video and computer technology which will enable the zoo to beam live programs from the zoo into schools in Palm Beach County and beyond. The Alvin I. Brown Distance Education Center is projected to be fully operational when schools open in the fall of 2010. Kristen Cytacki, Director of Education at the Palm Beach Zoo said, “Over the years, we have seen the tremendous impact that conservation education programs using live animals can have on schoolchildren. The new Alvin Brown Distance Learning Center at the Palm Beach Zoo will make it possible for us to reach thousands of children who have been beyond our reach, and also to partner with educators and scientists around the world to share knowledge. We are very excited about the possibilities that will be opened up by this generous gift.”

The Alvin Brown Distance Learning Center will bring interactive multi-media science education into the classroom using sophisticated, state-of-the-art videoconferencing, telemedicine, and internet technology. These innovative tools will assist zoo professionals in their mission to improve the future for wildlife and wild places. Few zoos have access to a vision of this magnitude, made possible by this significant commitment by the Brown family.

The new center will enable students in remote locations to have access to quality zoo educational programs and to witness unique medical and husbandry procedures that are rarely witnessed or studied in schools. By the application of this technology, the zoo will enter the formal classroom with this unique curriculum. In addition, the Center will provide much needed after-school opportunities, teacher workshops, adult education, and higher education classes for undergraduate and graduate students at universities locally and throughout the country. By teaching online, under-served students who cannot afford a field trip to the zoo will gain greater access to our inspiring collection of wild animals.

The zoo will also benefit from this educational technology by increasing contact and communication with other veterinarians, scientists, educators and curators who will be able to conveniently collaborate over long distances. Medical procedures, for example, can be observed by veterinarians at the University of Florida who can offer expert advice to zoo staff while teaching students and post-graduate interns and externs observing from distant sites.