



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONNECTICUT'S BEARDSLEY ZOO TO HOLD 5TH ANNUAL GALA

(BRIDGEPORT, CT) – Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo invites members of the public to the fifth annual Zoo Gala on Saturday, October 19 at the Inn at Longshore in Westport, Connecticut. The Gala promises an extraordinary evening of elegance, entertainment, and excitement in support of Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo. This year's gala is set to soar to new heights with the breathtaking SkyHunters in Flight as the keynote entertainment, the return of the highly anticipated VIP Hour, and special guest emcee, Ashley Baylor of WTNH.

Ashley Baylor, a beloved meteorologist with nearly 18 years of experience and a passionate advocate for animal welfare, will be guiding the evening's festivities. Baylor shared her excitement, saying, "I'm a frequent visitor of the Beardsley Zoo. It's one of my favorite places in Connecticut. Walking around, seeing the exhibits with my daughter brings me a sense of serenity. I can't think of anything better than enjoying the outdoors while learning about exotic and native animals. I'm honored to emcee this upcoming gala, which will benefit this Connecticut landmark."



The highlight of the evening, SkyHunters in Flight, will feature a stunning presentation of raptors from around the world, brought to life by Brian Bradley, one of the nation's top wildlife presenters. Guests will marvel at the beauty and power of owls, hawks, and falcons, learning about their vital role in our environment.

For those seeking an even more exclusive experience, the VIP Hour kicks off at 5:00 PM, an hour before the main event. With only fifty tickets available, VIP guests will enjoy early entrance, exclusive animal encounters, unique photo opportunities, and an up-close and personal viewing of SkyHunters in Flight with Master Falconer Brian Bradley. VIP tickets are still available at (link) beardsleyzoo.org/gala!

In addition to VIP hour and the signature entertainment, guests can expect a unique signature cocktail, the "Beardsley Bee"—a refreshing twist on the classic Bee's Knees, featuring gin, lemon juice, club soda, and fresh honey—as well as a seated dinner, silent and live auctions, and unique animal encounters. Guests will also hear from the Zoo's Horticulture Manager, Jonathan Dancho, about the exciting milestone of the Zoo achieving Level One Arboretum Status and the work being done to reach Level 2 Arboretum Status. This event will truly showcase the pillars of the Zoo: conservation, education, research, and guest experience.

This event is not just a celebration of the Zoo's wildlife conservation achievements—it's a testament to the dedication of passionate supporters. This year, proudly being recognized and announced, are esteemed



Gala Committee members, who have worked tirelessly to make this event possible: Bernadette Baldino, Patty Cartwright, Lisa Croce Jackson, Dean DeBiase, Jennifer DiBlanda, Judi Cardello, Meghan Glynn, Nadine Green, Lisa DeGoursey, Jennifer Jump, Claudette Kunkes, James Mase, Teresa Nakouzi, and Ashley Olson. Their commitment to our mission is truly inspiring.

The Zoo would like to thank its very generous sponsors: VIP Sponsor: The Natt Family; Amur Tiger Sponsors: Cardello Architects, Claudette and Steven Kunkes, Day Pitney, The Dodds Family Foundation, M&T Bank; Red Wolf Sponsor: Procyon Partners; Spider Monkey Sponsors: Bradley and Son Locksmith, Cross Insurance; Otter Pup Sponsors: CINTAS, Pullman & Comley, LLC.

Don't miss out on this incredible evening! For tickets, tables, and sponsorship opportunities, visit beardsleyzoo.org/gala. Sponsorships are still available, offering unique opportunities for corporations and individuals to make a lasting impact. Interested supporters can contact Ashley Volkens at 203-394-5522 or avolkens@beardsleyzoo.org for more information.

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More About the Gala featured Emcee, Ashley Baylor of WTNH:

Ashley Baylor has been a meteorologist for almost 18 years. She joined WTNH News 8 in January 2019 after previously working in Virginia, western Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and New York City. Ashley is no stranger to all of the different types of weather we experience in New England! She has covered tornadoes, hurricanes, severe flooding, and blizzards to name a few. Keeping viewers informed for potential impacts is the most important part of the job. In addition to being a meteorologist, she is also a children's book author. Her book, 'Storms and Snow, Skis and Sox: New England's Weather Truly Rocks' was published by Globe Pequot Press in August of 2022. Ashley is also a partner of MAE Designs; a small business that offers event planning, design, and marketing. In her spare time, she enjoys watching the Patriots, playing golf, and advocating for animal welfare. She lives with her husband, her daughter, and four rescue pets.