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From **Caribbean Gardens: The ZOO in Naples**

Senator Bill Bradley Announces Results of *Aza's Poll For The Planet*

Accredited Zoos and Aquariums Have What Children Want

New Survey Finds Kids Want to Know How to Help Save the Environment

Naples, FL: April 22, 2003 -- Children worldwide want to get involved in conservation efforts, and most think young people are doing a good job of caring for wildlife, according to a new survey released today by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA).

The global opinion poll asked children to share their thoughts about the environment. 60,000 children and adults worldwide responded to "*Aza's Poll for the Planet*" at www.AzasWeb.com or on-site at AZA accredited zoos and aquariums across the country including locally through the Caribbean Gardens website. "Aza" (pronounced "A-zuh") is a new character for children representing the AZA designed by the creator of Big Bird and other Sesame Street favorites.

"Children around the world have made their feelings clear," says former Senator Bill Bradley, who is announcing the full poll findings on Earth Day. "Kids want to get involved and they believe they can make a difference and help save the planet. This is an exciting message of hope for all of us, and an opportunity for AZA to further engage the resource of children as partners and other energetic volunteers to make conservation work."

Key findings from "*Aza's Poll for the Planet*" include:

- 82% of poll respondents age 6-8 believe **Volunteers** are taking care of wildlife, and, as respondents age, their confidence in volunteerism grows (ages 9-12 = 83%; 13-17 = 87%);
- 95% of poll respondents age 6-8 want to know "**How I can help.**"

(A complete analysis of the poll findings are being released on Earth Day, April 22, and can be requested from Caribbean Gardens at info@caribbeangardens.com)

"Over 134 million people visit AZA accredited zoos and aquariums every year," said David Tetzlaff, director of Caribbean Gardens, "but few of those guests understand the urgent conservation work our organizations are doing every day locally, nationally and internationally." For example, in 2000 and 2001, AZA members participated in over 2,230 conservation projects including nearly 1,400 taking

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place in the wild in 94 countries. Members also published over 1,450 books, book chapters, journal articles, conference proceedings papers, posters and theses or dissertations on wildlife management and biology. Locally, Caribbean Gardens supports a diversity of conservation projects from local work with the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and the Native Orchid Restoration Project to ocelots in Brazil and clouded leopards in Thailand and many more. Tetzlaff continues, "That's why we're getting information from this survey out to adults. Their kids want to know what to do to help and we want them to know that accredited zoos like ours are the places that can help bridge that information gap all year long. Of course, zoos are a great place to have fun. More importantly, they can also meet the need kids have to find out what they can do to help."

Every day Caribbean Gardens educates the public, especially those with children, about how to get involved in conservation -- from a special section of their website at www.napleszoo.com/conserves to the many options available at the zoo. For example, families can make a real impact for conservation by adopting a wild tiger in Asia, buying stuffed animals that help lemurs in Madagascar, finding out which seafood is being sustainably caught when they're picking out a family meal, and even discovering how to help migratory birds by the coffee they drink or what their backyard looks like.

Senator Bradley continues, "This is first time an organization has polled children on such a large scale regarding their feelings on this critical subject. (Kids) want very much to work with a leader in conservation so they can help make a difference. AZA, by virtue of its unmatched collective body of scientific and educational work, is qualified to be that leader, and in partnering with young people, can help ensure that we will all be able to enjoy the rich diversity of species in our environment for generations to come."

The 52-acre Caribbean Gardens: The ZOO in Naples offers a full day of entertaining presentations and activities sharing how both kids and adults can get involved in conserving our wildlife and wild lands. Small troops of lemurs, apes, and monkeys live in natural habitats on the islands visited by guided catamarans on the Primate Expedition Cruise. In addition to the historical plantings dating back to 1919, the garden features a variety of animals from apes to zebras including the rarest tigers in America. Located in the heart of Naples at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from Coastland Center, the zoo is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more info, call the Caribbean Gardens ZooLine at (239) 262-5409 or click www.NaplesZoo.com. And be sure to look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things.

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