



Media Advisory - Invitation to Cover

FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO CELEBRATES GEORGE'S PASS PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VALLEY CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE, FRESNO STATE

- What:** George's Pass Accessibility and Inclusion Celebration at Fresno Chaffee Zoo
- Who:** Todd Suntrapak, President and CEO, Valley Children's Healthcare
Shelly Reyes, RN, George's Pass Founder, Valley Children's Healthcare
Scott Barton, CEO, Fresno Chaffee Zoo
Dean Watanabe, Chief Conservation Education Officer, Fresno Chaffee Zoo
Dr. Marianne Jackson, Associate Professor of Psychology and Clinical Director of Focused Behavioral Services, Fresno State
- Where:** Fresno Chaffee Zoo
Check in at Admissions Booth
894 W. Belmont Avenue
Fresno, CA 93728
- When:** Monday, April 29, 2019; 10 a.m.

Fresno, CA – Fresno Chaffee Zoo and Valley Children's Healthcare are observing Autism Awareness Month with a celebration of their partnership to make the Zoo a more accessible and inclusive place for Valley families with children who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), have sensory issues or other special needs.

The George's Pass program at the Zoo includes a special sticker to identify guests to Zoo staff who will provide individualized tips and accommodations for their zoo experience. Sensory bags with tools such as noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys, and information about the George's Pass program will be available at the Zoo for guests to checkout.

This launch is the first expansion of George's Pass beyond Valley Children's Healthcare. The Program began at the Hospital in 2014. It is the latest joint program as part of a continuing partnership for these two Valley organizations. This is one of many accessibility programs at the Zoo launching during Autism Awareness Month. The Zoo recently implemented signage and maps identifying sensory zones as well as digital resources to help families have successful Zoo visits. Educators and graduate students at Fresno State worked with the Zoo to help develop these programs and train Zoo staff.

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