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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cleveland Zoological Society Donates Memberships to 600 Northeast Ohio Foster Families

Cleveland – October 24, 2007 – The Cleveland Zoological Society, the nonprofit fundraising partner of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, has donated 600 Family Memberships to four area social service agencies as part of its commitment to reaching under-served audiences.

Started in 1999, the Cleveland Zoological Society's Foster Family Program is designed to bring eligible families – identified by our region's social service agencies – to the Zoo at no cost to them, thanks to grant underwriting from organizations such as the Charter One Foundation and the generosity of many *ZooKeepers' Circle* VIP Zoo members who donate back their free passes. Although the Zoo is open free on Mondays year-round to all residents of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township, the Foster Family Program extends an extra hand to disadvantaged families in our area.

Over the past eight years, the Zoo Society has distributed almost 5,000 Family Memberships around Northeast Ohio, including Cuyahoga, Lake and Lorain counties. Working with social service agencies, the memberships (valued at \$68 apiece) are distributed to families in need, ensuring them access to the Zoo's award winning conservation education experience and some family fun. In 2008 the Zoo Society will work with the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services, Lorain County Children Services, EL CENTRO of Lorain and the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services.

“The Zoo and Zoo Society are committed to making Cleveland Metroparks Zoo ‘Everyone’s Zoo,’” said Tara Turner, Zoo Society Director of External Relations, “The Foster Family Program is a wonderful way to bring wildlife education to any family.”

“Our caseworkers are thrilled to be able to provide their families with this opportunity,” said Patti-Jo Burtnett, Public Relations Manager of Lorain County Children Services, one of the agencies distributing the memberships this year, “It is very much appreciated that the Cleveland Zoological Society has an interest in our children's success and well-being.”

The Cleveland Zoological Society Foster Family Program is generously supported by the Charter One Foundation and by other tax-deductible donations to the Zoo Society.

In 2007, the Cleveland Zoological Society celebrates its 50th anniversary and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, its 125th anniversary. The Zoo Society holds the largest membership program in Northeast Ohio (41,000 households), maintains an endowment for conservation and special projects, continues its mission of improving the future for wildlife and establishing Cleveland Metroparks Zoo as a major civic asset and regional philanthropic priority.

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