



Where Science and Nature Are Fun



NEWS RELEASE --

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Foxhound and the Baby Fennec Foxes she nursed are coming to The Children's Museum for three weekends in November

Dog provided nurturing care, despite breed's natural instincts to hunt and kill foxes

West Hartford, CT, October 26, 2011--When is a foxhound not hunting foxes? When she's raising them as her own. That's the compelling story of Momma, a rescued foxhound that nursed a litter of four baby fennec foxes born to a mother who was unable to do so. Momma was located with help from Greenwich-based Adopt-a-Dog by Marcella Leone, owner of the LEO (Lionshare Educational Organization) Zoological Conservation Center, who had bred the baby foxes.

Momma and some of the fennec fox pups she nurtured will be at The Children's Museum for three weekends in November starting Saturday, November 12. Visitors will have the opportunity to meet Momma and view the fennec fox pups in the Critter Corner area of the Museum, from 10:00 am-4:00 pm on Saturdays, November 12, 19 and 26 plus Friday, November 25, and 11:00 am-4:00 pm on Sundays, November 13, 20 and 27. There will be no additional charge to view Momma and the fennec fox pups. Various animal rescue organizations will be here each day of Momma and the foxes' visit to talk to visitors of the importance of responsible pet ownership and acquiring pets from shelters and rescues.

"This is such an extraordinary story, we want to share it with our visitors," said Robert Griesmer, President and CEO of The Children's Museum. "It fits in perfectly with the mission of the museum's Wildlife Sanctuary, which provides a home for animals in need."

Shortly before the fox pups were born at LEO Zoological Conservation Center in Greenwich, Ms. Leone began looking for a lactating dog to act as a surrogate, as the foxes' own mother

lacked the mothering instinct. Volunteers from the two organizations networked and located Momma at a kill-shelter in North Carolina, and she was brought back to Connecticut by Adopt-A-Dog. Shortly after her arrival with her own just weaned puppies, Momma was nursing the baby fox pups, despite the breed's natural inclination to hunt and kill foxes. Allyson Halm, president of Adopt-a-Dog, was happily surprised at the success of the pairing. "The irony that it ended up being a foxhound was pure coincidence," said Ms. Halm, who will be at The Children's Museum with Momma. "I was amazed—it was very sweet." The dog bonded with the fox pups, who are now weaned. One of the pups has gone to the Metro Richmond Zoo in VA and another will go to Safari West in Santa Rosa, CA.

The Children's Museum offers over 100 live animals, hands-on science exhibits, out-of-this-world digital planetarium shows, and programs for younger children and families. It is one of Connecticut's most visited attractions. The Children's Museum and The Children's Museum Preschool are located at 950 Trout Brook Drive in West Hartford and at Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton. More information is available at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Adopt-A-Dog is a dog and cat rescue sanctuary organization serving New York and Connecticut and beyond for three decades. The shelter is open seven days a week. Their dedicated staff and volunteers strive to provide the best care possible while the animals are awaiting safe and permanent homes. Learn more at www.adoptadog.org.

LEO (Lionshare Educational Organization) is the non-profit organization supporting the Zoological Conservation Center and is dedicated to Species at Risk breeding programs and to expanding education to students, interns, visitors, and the world. Their education model is unprecedented: They offer interns and students the most hands-on, practical learning experience possible by allowing daily interaction and observation with some of the world's most exotic and exciting creatures. As a result, they walk away with an abundance of knowledge and something far greater than what can be learned from a textbook. Through LEO education efforts, we hope to inspire each individual to make a future impact in animal conservation. More information is available at www.LEOzoo.org.

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