



## NEWS RELEASE --

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### **Fennec Foxes and “Momma” find permanent homes**

#### *Two foxes become permanent residents of Wildlife Sanctuary*

West Hartford, CT, November 29, 2011—Of the hundreds of families who visited The Children’s Museum during November weekends to see Momma the foxhound and the fox pups she nursed, one saw their meeting as fate. “Her eyes drew us in and I knew she was going to be a member of our family,” said Dorothy Potter, of her family’s decision to adopt Momma. “We fell in love with her as soon as we saw her.” That first weekend, the Southington family filled out paperwork with Adopt A Dog, and last weekend Momma went home with her new family. The Potters are members of The Children’s Museum/Roaring Brook Nature Center and one of their children attended The Children’s Museum Preschool. “We’ve had ties with the Museum for so long, perhaps that’s why I saw it as fate,” Mrs. Potter continued.

Momma, a rescued Foxhound, was brought to Connecticut from a North Carolina shelter last summer through a partnership of the LEO Wildlife Conservation Center and Adopt-A-Dog, both of Greenwich, to nurse a litter of Fennec fox pups born to a mother who could not do so. She remained in the care of Adopt-A-Dog, which put the word out that she was available for adoption. “I couldn’t be happier about the way this all worked out for Momma,” said Allyson Halm, president of Adopt-A-Dog.

On Monday, The Children’s Museum received word that Calvin and Hobbes, two of the three foxes who’ve been visiting on weekends, will become permanent residents of the UTC Wildlife Sanctuary. “They were such a hit with our visitors, we were thrilled to find out we could adopt two of the foxes,” said Bob Griesmer, President & CEO. “Now everyone will have the chance to see these unusual and adorable animals.” The third fox will be placed at a zoo in Santa Rosa, CA.

Animal lovers have an additional opportunity to sponsor the care and feeding of Calvin and Hobbes. For a \$50 donation to the Wildlife Sanctuary, sponsors will receive an 8x10 photo of the fox they sponsor, its biography, a Fennec fox magnet, Fennec fox plush toy, quarterly Wildlife Sanctuary newsletter and will be named on the Sanctuary's sponsorship wall. Sponsorships are used to cover the costs of canned food, dry food, fresh veggies, sand, hay, toys, vaccinations, vet care, treats, etc. Each sponsorship is for one year. Those interested should contact Cindy King, Director of The Wildlife Sanctuary, at 860.231.2830 x50.

### Fun Facts about Fennec Foxes

- The fennec is a Small nocturnal fox found in North Africa.
- The name "fennec" comes from the Arabic word for fox.
- The fennec is the smallest species of canid in the world.
- The fennec fox weighs about 1.5–3.5 lb
- Its hearing is sensitive enough to hear prey moving underground.
- The fennec has a life span of up to 12 years in the wild.
- Its main predators include the caracal and the African varieties of eagle owl.
- When content, they make a sound much like purring in cats.
- Families of fennecs dig out dens in sand for habitation and protection.
- Precise population figures are not known.
- The fennec is currently not threatened by extinction.
- They have enormous ears (up to 6 inches long) which are used to dissipate body heat to allow the fox to cool off in their natural environment.
- They also pant very rapidly when hot. Conversely, they will often shiver (as a means to warm up) if it drops below 68 F (20 C).
- The soles of its feet are protected from the hot desert sand by thick fur.
- Much remains unknown of their basic ecology and behavior in the wild
- An individual can jump up to 2 ft (61 cm) high and 4 ft (120 cm) forward, which helps it catch prey and escape predators
- Fennec foxes are commonly trapped for sale to the pet trade and for fur by the human population of Northern Africa.

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 is 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](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).

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