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Butterfly Pavilion honors “Royal Family of Volunteers”

Denver, CO – They bring smiles to children’s faces, they care for endangered species, they create habitat and maintain open space, but most of all volunteers enhance the Butterfly Pavilion experience with their expertise, enthusiasm, and passion for science education and conservation. They are members of a noble profession and at the Butterfly Pavilion they are considered royalty.

On the evening of February 24, 2010, the Butterfly Pavilion celebrated and recognized its volunteer corps with a royal dinner fit for queens and kings in the Butterfly Pavilion’s *Palace Ballroom*. Volunteers both young and old were crowned for their contributions to the non-profit invertebrate zoo.

The Butterfly Pavilion combines science education with interactive fun to teach visitors about invertebrates and conservation. The Butterfly Pavilion’s five immersive exhibits, including their rainforest conservatory filled with 1,200 free-flying tropical butterflies, provide a year-round, unforgettable experience where visitors can interact with live animals, enjoy daily educational programs and explore the wonder of the outdoors.

In 2009, the Butterfly Pavilion’s “Royal Family of Volunteers” contributed over 8,500 hours of service, the equivalent of four full-time staff people worth over \$170,000. Seven volunteers were honored for giving 500 or more hours to the Butterfly Pavilion during their tenure. Volunteers Mary Broughall, Ross Ectermeyer, Cheryl Patrick, Sherry Ruby, Diane Saucier, Pat Spetz, and Shirley McConnell have greatly contributed to the success of the Butterfly Pavilion by serving as classroom instructors, horticulture assistants, exhibit specialists, and administrative support. They helped serve over 250,000 visitors in 2009.

Seven volunteers were also given the *Sea Star* award. The *Sea Star* award is given to volunteers who make a difference at the Butterfly Pavilion by giving twice the expected 100 hours of service in one year. Volunteers Gary Gagnon, Cheryl Patrick, Virginia Hokenson, Bunny Kleinhenz; Paul Bay, Jeremy Sunder Raj, and Dave Sherman were recognized for their outstanding contributions.

Volunteers at the Butterfly Pavilion perform a variety of responsibilities, from serving as an ambassador in the community to interacting with visitors in exhibits. At the reception, “Royal Rosie Wranglers” were honored for their work in the Crawl-a-see-em, where they can often be found sharing information about a Chilean Rose haired tarantula with a frightened child. “Horseshoe Crab Protectors” were given tribute for their ability to elicit curiosity from visitors with tantalizing facts in the Water’s Edge exhibit, while “Butterfly Knights” were praised for sharing knowledge of butterflies with visitors. “Landscape Queens” were thanked for creating beautiful habitats and “Royal Heralds” were honored for helping visitors understand sustainable butterfly farming and how they too can help protect tropical rainforests. Finally, “Office Aficionados” were praised for helping with Butterfly Pavilion business.

To become a volunteer at the Butterfly Pavilion one must start by attending a New Volunteer Orientation offered once a month. At the orientation, potential volunteers learn the mission and vision of the Butterfly Pavilion and also about the different volunteering opportunities. An application, interview and background check follow the orientation. All training is provided. Volunteers must be 16 years or older.

Volunteers are needed to serve as exhibit specialists in the Butterfly Pavilion’s newest traveling exhibit, Dr. Entomo’s Palace of Exotic Wonders, opening April 10, 2010. Anyone interested in this opportunity or any volunteer opportunity at the Butterfly Pavilion should contact Kris Pohl, Butterfly Pavilion Volunteer Coordinator at (720) 974-1868 or by emailing volunteering@butterflies.org. More information and an electronic application are available at www.butterflies.org.