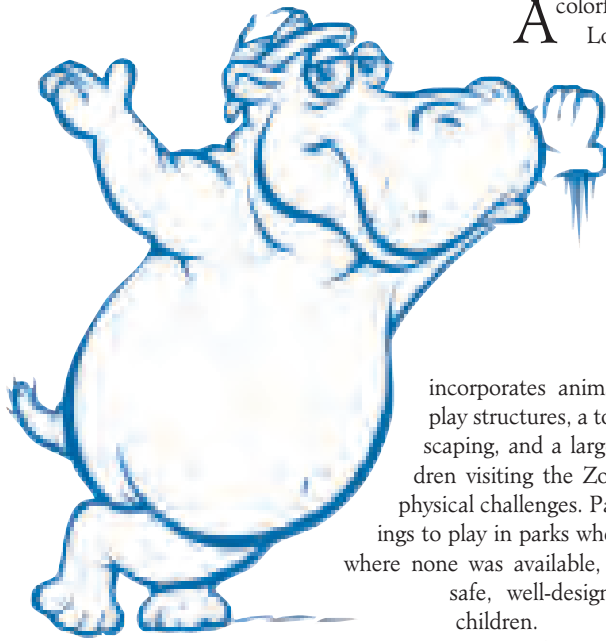


Playtime at the Zoo

■ Zoo opens a playground for families.



A colorful new children's park opened at the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens March 3 thanks to a generous \$250,000 donation to the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA) by prominent attorney Neil L. Papiano. Joining the exuberant children at the opening ceremonies were Councilmember Tom LaBonge, Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA) and Zoo officials.

The Neil Papiano Play Park, which incorporates animal-themed climbing sculptures, large play structures, a toddler area, water misters, grassy landscaping, and a large picnic area, is accessible to all children visiting the Zoo, including those with medical and physical challenges. Papiano, prompted by childhood yearnings to play in parks when he lived in an urban neighborhood where none was available, has committed himself to providing safe, well-designed, top-quality play areas for city children.

Councilman LaBonge presented Papiano, a powerful force in the legal arena for many years, with a City proclamation recognizing his considerable contribution to the Zoo.

"Thanks to a very generous Neil Papiano, children of all ages and capabilities can experience this very special animal-themed playground while playing amidst a whole Los Angeles Zoo of animals," said Councilmember Tom LaBonge. "The people of Los Angeles are very grateful to Neil for making this happen. He is an angel in the City of Angels."

Neil Papiano Play Park's design was a collaboration by Valley Crest of San Fernando and Zoo staff for the construction of the park.

"We are exceedingly grateful to Mr. Papiano," said Connie Morgan, president of GLAZA. "Because of his generosity, Los Angeles has a new play park that is available to every child who visits the Zoo."

According to Zoo Director John Lewis, "It is important to us that the Zoo is not just a source for education to the public but serves as a memorable place to visit. The park is a captivating, vibrant setting that reflects the Zoo commitment to the public. We extend our deepest gratitude to Mr. Papiano."

The Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association, with more than 60,000 members, is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1963 that raises money for exhibits, research, capital projects, education programs, conservation, community outreach and other programs of the city-owned Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

The Los Angeles Zoo is home to more than 1,200 mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles representing more than 370 different species. The Zoo participates in cooperative worldwide Species Survival Plan projects and is dedicated to the conservation of rare and endangered wildlife.

Zoo admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 2 - 12. For information about the Los Angeles Zoo, call (323) 644-4200.



Neil Papiano, the man who made the park a reality and for whom this new park was named.



From left: Councilman Tom LaBonge; Sharon Coggin, LA Zoo Public Relations & Marketing; and Darryl Pon, LA Zoo Planning and Development.



From left: Gina Dartt, LA Zoo Public Relations and Marketing; Gail Dwyer, LA Zoo Public Relations and Marketing; and Sharon Coggin, LA Zoo Public Relations and Marketing.



DWP General Manager Ron Deaton expresses his gratitude for the new park.



Even the grownups were having fun!



Former Executive Directors of LAX Lydia Kennard and Jack Driscoll show their support for Neil Papiano.



Apolinar Castro, Gardener Caretaker.



Richard Lewis, LA Zoo Volunteer Docent.



One of the specially commissioned animal sculptures that have been designed to appear as though they are emerging from the water (there's also a hippopotamus).



Tad Motoyama, Zoo Photographer II.



Frank Ramirez, LA Zoo Senior Security Officer (and Club Member who frequently contributes entertaining movie reviews for Alive!).



Ross Hendricks, Gardener Caretaker, and Carlos Carrillo, Gardener Caretaker, make sure everything looks great for the guests.



Tom Anderson, Zoo Security Officer, making sure the kids and adults have a safe time.



Zoo Director John Lewis extends his gratitude to Neil Papiano.



Kayla, one of the children on hand, took advantage of the wheelchair accessibility of the park.