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Media contact:
PRI Marketing Dept.
Email: marketing@priweb.org
Phone: 607-273-6623

Cayuga Nature Center Receives Generous Donation to Preserve Native Animal Program and Sustain Animal Education Programs

(ITHACA, NY – *February 23, 2024*) The Cayuga Nature Center is thrilled to announce a transformative donation that will secure the future of its small native animal program and ensure the continuation of vital animal education programs. A generous contribution has been made by the Lilac Foundation to support the animal program, underscoring their commitment to environmental education and our community.

This substantial donation comes at a crucial time for the Cayuga Nature Center, which had been facing financial challenges that made it impossible to maintain its live animal program. With this financial support, the Nature Center will be able to keep a small collection of native reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates and continue to provide them with a safe and enriching environment.

While this gift may not allow for the continuation of the entire animal program, which previously contained over 70 individual animals, to remain at the Nature Center, it will preserve a portion of the native animal ambassadors who are instrumental in education programs. This donation will allow the Nature Center to continue to provide the community with animal educational programs, through public programs, birthday parties and paid group programs. These programs play a crucial role in promoting awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the local ecosystem and the importance of respect for wildlife and their habitats.

The Cayuga Nature Center extends its sincere gratitude to the Lilac Foundation for their visionary generosity. This donation not only safeguards the immediate future of the native animal collection but also strengthens the Nature Center's ability to educate and inspire the community to become stewards of the environment.

"We are deeply grateful for the Lilac Foundation's commitment to our animal program and the impact this donation will have on the Cayuga Nature Center," said Amanda Schmitt Piha, Associate Director for Philanthropy and Communications at PRI "This support is an important step towards continuing our efforts in animal and environmental education, making a lasting difference in the lives of both the animals and the community we serve. We will need the support of our community to help maintain the resources needed to keep this program going strong for future generations."

Donations to support the Cayuga Nature Center and the animal program can be made at www.cayuganaturecenter.org/donate.

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About the Paleontological Research Institution

The Paleontological Research Institution (PRI) pursues and integrates education and research, and interprets the history and systems of the Earth and its life, to increase knowledge, educate society, and encourage wise stewardship of the Earth. PRI and its two public venues for education, the Museum of the Earth and the Cayuga Nature Center, are separate from, but formally affiliated with Cornell University, and interact closely with numerous University departments in research, teaching, and public outreach.

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