

The Jarrett Meeker Foundation



Bringing Kids and Animals Together... since 1987

2008 Media Kit

Mission & Vision

The Jarrett Meeker Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was established in July 1987 in memory of 8-year-old Jarrett Meeker after his accidental death on April 27, 1987. JMF is run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors.

The mission of JMF is to support educational programs related to wildlife, conservation and the environment for children and young adults throughout San Diego County. The Jarrett Meeker Foundation functions as both an operating foundation and grantor to deserving organizations.

Since 1987, JMF has provided once-in-a-lifetime educational experiences to more than 100,000 children representing over 50 schools throughout San Diego County. Overall contributions to these programs total more than \$500,000.

Our vision for the next 20 years is to continue to expand our support for wildlife and conservation-related educational programs, carefully choose programs that have a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of those we serve, and consequently improve the condition of the natural world.

History

Jarrett's Story

Nicknamed the Little Zookeeper, Jarrett Meeker was an active, fun-loving third grader who loved nature and all living things. For Jarrett, frequent trips to the Zoo with family and friends were a part of life, a part he really enjoyed.

His affection for nature was not limited to animals; he also had a genuine concern for people and, in particular, for other children who had less than he had. When he lost his life in a backyard accident in April 1987 at age eight, it wasn't long before his parents, Judy and Keith Meeker, found a way to transfer their grief into something positive.

Judy and Keith were grateful that they were able to provide Jarrett with the Zoo experiences he grew to love so much. When they lost him, they were inspired by his love of nature and people to help disadvantaged kids experience and learn about wildlife as he did. They co-founded the Jarrett Meeker Foundation in July 1987, just three months after Jarrett's death.

With the commitment and support of a few family friends, JMF set out with a mission to give deserving students who might not otherwise have an opportunity to attend the Zoo's educational programs or even visit the Zoo, the chance to do so. Through its work, JMF has helped underprivileged and disadvantaged children learn about and experience the wonders of nature, animals, conservation and habitat preservation in Jarrett's memory. The Foundation and the work that it does is Jarrett's gift—his legacy.

Meaning of the Fishing Logo

Our logo originated from a vision that Judy Meeker had the day of her son's accident. She was in the sheriff's car, following the ambulance, when she saw Jarrett, surrounded by animals, doing what he enjoyed—fishing. He told her that he was okay, and not to worry.

Board of Directors

The JMF is fortunate to have a diverse and talented group of people to serve on the Board of Directors. They are friends and community members who care about making a difference.

Founders

Keith and Judy Meeker

Officers

Chairman of the Board: Pegi Harvey (Ecotourism Consultant)

President: Keith L. Meeker (Attorney, Private Practice)

Director of Community Relations: Judy Meeker (Broker, Judy Meeker Realty)

Chief Financial Officer: Walt Weisman (Certified Public Accountant, Private Practice)

Treasurer: William Weisman (SDSU Student, Computer Science)

Secretary: Monica Felder (Registered Dental Hygienist)

Board of Directors

Rene Abarca (SDSU Graduate, Biology)

Connie Bley (Reading Specialist/RSP/Assistant Principal, Dehesa Elementary School)

John Bley (Retired Administrator, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District)

Erika Boyd (USD Law Student)

Carolina Bravo-Karimi (USD Law Student)

Marge Dean (Retired Superintendent, Cajon Valley School District)

Patricia Elliott (Manager, Real Estate Division, USE Credit Union)

Jackie Grobarek (Retired Elementary School Teacher)

Lori Hable (Assistant Vice President, LPL Financial Services, Inc.)

Steve Hable (Vice President, USE Credit Union)

Linda Homuth (Retired Administrative Assistant)

Ron Homuth (Retired Transportation, Naval Hospital)

Samuel D. Lee (Mortgage Advisor, West Coast First Financial)

Kerry Mayer (Special Education teacher)

Jenny Meeker (USD Law Student)

Jon Meeker (College Student)

Linda Rice (Realtor)

Mark Rivaldi (Director of Dealer Sales, Graphic Business Solutions)

Carole Schuster (Controller, CRI 2000 LP)

Jim Schwertman (Owner/Broker, Lighthouse Funding)

Samira Seidu (USD Law Student)

Diana Steele (Library Tech Substitute, San Diego County)

Kristina Velarde (Communications Coordinator, San Diego State University)

Liaisons

Janice Cook (Superintendent, Cajon Valley Union School District)

Ronda Royal (Coordinator, Extended School Services, La Mesa-Spring Valley School District)

Educational Programs

JMF supports educational programs that benefit the children and young adults in our communities who desire to understand, appreciate and improve the condition of our natural world. Each year the Foundation strives to create and support innovative, fun and inspiring programs that get children excited and motivated about conserving wildlife and making a difference for the environment.

Our current programs include:

• Outreach Assembly Programs

JMF sponsors outreach assembly programs where the Zoo and Wild Animal Park bring animals directly to schools for children with special needs and disabilities, and children who are homeless or abused. The interactive wildlife assemblies feature up-close animal encounters and kid-friendly tips to help protect the animals' natural habitats.

• Central Elementary School's Night Owls

JMF partnered with San Diego Unified School District's Central Elementary School to sponsor the third grade's overnight field trip to the Night Owls program at the Wild Animal Park. The Night Owls experience gave the kids the chance to meet animals up-close, participate in games and campfire stories and jumpstarted their plans to help save the environment.

• Military Programs

JMF partnered with the San Diego Scottish Rite Community Foundation, the San Diego Al Bahr Shrine, and the Mary Fay Pendleton Elementary School's PTA to sponsor a unique BBQ-style dinner and educational program benefiting the school children and families on the Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base. The memorable evening featured many family-friendly activities and an interactive animal presentation by the Wild Animal Park's Miss Discovery.

• Watershed Stewards Program

JMF, in conjunction with the San Diego Zoo, Escondido YMCA and ECOLIFE Foundation, sponsors two after-school programs and a field experience at the San Elijo Lagoon for children at five Escondido school sites.

• Upper Division University Scholarship

This scholarship gives financial support to upper-division undergraduate students majoring in the College of Sciences at a university in San Diego County. Students must plan to pursue a career that reflects dedication to wildlife and environmental conservation. An annual award of \$5000 is given to a student or students chosen by JMF. Initial funding of the scholarship was provided through the generosity of William T. and Norma M. Verbeck.

Program Beneficiaries

Our educational programs specifically benefit the following schools and groups:

- Polinsky Children Center, temporary shelter for abused, neglected children
- Sevick School in El Cajon for preschool children with disabilities
- Escondido schools
- Mary Fay Elementary School at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base
- San Diego City School, Central Elementary
- Upper division college students majoring in the sciences

Testimonials

• Sarah Mathy, Teacher, Central Elementary School:

With JMF's contribution, all of our third graders were able to build upon the classroom curriculum through the Night Owls overnight experience. One group of girls in particular was so eager to start a conservation plan after the first day that they stayed up past lights-out to list all the things they could do to help the environment. The experience gave the students a new way of thinking; they realized little kids can make a big change and that makes it more special for the teachers and parents who are now watching their projects come alive.

• Charles Roach, Principal, Cajon Valley School District:

I am writing you this letter to express my personal, and my school's, appreciation for the opportunities provided us through the Jarrett Meeker Foundation....The students and staff wish to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this unique educational program. Your foundation, and the work it does in your son's name, will impact the lives of our students more than you know.

• Rachel Brown, an Animal Lover:

I attended your fundraiser dinner on the 17th of October (I was one of the ones from Nebraska!) and just wanted to tell you how wonderful it was. I am a senior zoology and wildlife conservation biology major at the University of Nebraska. I have had a love and deep passion for animals my entire life and would do anything to help support programs like yours...it is so awesome to know that people like you and Ms. Embery are doing such good things...Good luck with your program and please let me know when you will have this dinner again...I wouldn't miss it!

• Paula Fabor, an Event Attendee:

I wanted to say Thank You for a wonderful event at Joan Embery's ranch. The food, the people, the auction, the animals were all great. This was the first year for my husband and I...we will be back next year for sure. Thanks again for a very special Sunday!