

Decked out for the holidays: New Bedford's Buttonwood Zoo offers opportunity for fun, while giving back this season

The Buttonwood Park Zoo is getting dressed up for the holidays, thanks to a grant from Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau to the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society.

Zoo-goers can expect festive decorations at the entrance, leading the way into the campus and culminating with a themed photo-op area.

"Typically at this time of year, the Zoo hosts a variety of holiday events," said BPZ00 Director, Keith Lovett. "While we knew we would not be able to invite the community to have breakfast with Santa, or celebrate 'Noon' Year's Eve this year, we wanted to make the grounds festive for our winter guests. We appreciate the opportunity presented by the Southeastern Massachusetts Visitors Bureau and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to help the Zoological Society make the Zoo warm and inviting during these colder winter months."



BPZ00 Asian elephant, Emily, participating in an enrichment activity with Zoo Keepers. Buttownwood Zoo photo.

Events are not the only way BPZ00 typically marks the holiday season. “Art Gone Wild”, an annual online auction, is a holiday tradition that showcases original artwork created by resident animals. The auction is running now through December 15, 2020 and includes 54 one-of-a-kind animal paintings – including the painting debut of Kodo, a red panda cub born at BPZ00 this past June; Sandy, a Hoffman’s two-toed sloth; and BPZ00’s family of bearded emperor tamarins. Bidding is happening now at 32auctions.com/bpzoo. “Art Gone Wild”, now in its 7th year, is proudly presented by Chase Farm Veterinary Hospital.

Another exciting offering this holiday season is the introduction of the “Buttonwood Break Box”, a fun, safe way to bring the BPZ00’s education programs home. Each box includes fun activities with step by step instructions and a complete set of supplies – the perfect way to entertain children ages 5-10 during the holiday break. “Buttonwood Break Boxes” are sponsored by Hawthorn Medical Associates and are available for

purchase at bpzoo.org.

Proceeds from “Art Gone Wild” and “Buttonwood Break Boxes” support the education and conservation work of the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society, which has suffered serious financial loss during the ongoing global pandemic. Visit bpzoo.org/holiday-gift-guide/ for other ways to support BPZS during this holiday season – including making purchases in the gift shop, symbolically adopting an animal or making a donation to the year-end appeal.

“Winter is a great time to visit the Zoo,” said Lovett. “Many of our cold weather loving species, such as red pandas, become more active this time of year.”

The Buttonwood Park Zoo is located at 425 Hawthorn Street in New Bedford and is open from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm daily throughout the winter. Ticket prices for non-New Bedford Residents are \$10 for adults/\$6 for children 3-12; Ticket prices for New Bedford Residents are \$7.50 for adults/\$4.50 for children 3-12. All tickets must be reserved online, in advance of your visit, at bpzoo.org.