



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Arizona Center for Nature Conservation/Phoenix Zoo Certified as
Sensory Inclusive by KultureCity**

PHOENIX (October 22, 2018) – The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC)/Phoenix Zoo has partnered with KultureCity to make the grounds and all the programs and events that the ACNC/Zoo hosts to be sensory inclusive. This new initiative will promote an accommodating and positive experience for all guests with a sensory issue who visits the Phoenix Zoo.

The certification process entailed the staff at ACNC/Phoenix Zoo being trained by leading medical professionals on how to recognize those guests with sensory needs and how to handle a sensory overload situation. Sensory bags, equipped with noise canceling headphones, fidget tools, verbal cue cards and weighted lap pads will also be available to all guests who may feel overwhelmed by the environment.

Sensory sensitivities or challenges with sensory regulation are often experienced by individuals with autism, dementia, PTSD and other similar conditions. One of the major barriers for these individuals is sensitivity to over stimulation and noise, which can be a part of the environment in a venue like the Zoo. “We are proud to be recognized as a Sensory Inclusive venue in the Valley, and we were happy to make the necessary steps and accommodations to make this happen” says Bert Castro, President and CEO of the ACNC/Phoenix Zoo. “In keeping with our mission to inspire and motivate people to care for the natural world, we want to be sure that everyone is able to have the best experience possible while the Zoo.”

“To know that you soon will be able to see families attend the Zoo with their loved ones who have a sensory challenge and who were not able to previously attend, is truly a heartwarming moment. Our communities are what shapes our lives and to know that the ACNC/Phoenix Zoo is willing to go the extra mile to ensure that everyone, no matter their ability, is included in their community is amazing.” Traci Johnson, Executive Director, KultureCity.

About the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation operates the Phoenix Zoo and the South Mountain Environmental Education Center. The ACNC advances the stewardship and conservation of animals and their habitats while providing experiences that inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.

The Phoenix Zoo is the only zoo in the Valley accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is a non-profit zoological park, serving 1.4 million guests annually. The Zoo is home to more than 3,000 animals, many of which are endangered and threatened species. For information on upcoming events, exhibits and activities at the Phoenix Zoo, visit phoenixzoo.org.

About KultureCity

KultureCity is a leading non-profit recognized nationwide for using their resources to revolutionize and effect change in the community for those with sensory needs; not just those with Autism. In the past year alone, KultureCity has created several sensory inclusive venues and events including the NFL Pro-Bowl, NFL Super Bowl, 16 NBA arenas, 5 NFL stadiums, 5 NHL arenas and countless zoos, science centers and aquariums across the nation.