

# California Kids!

January 2010



# Free!

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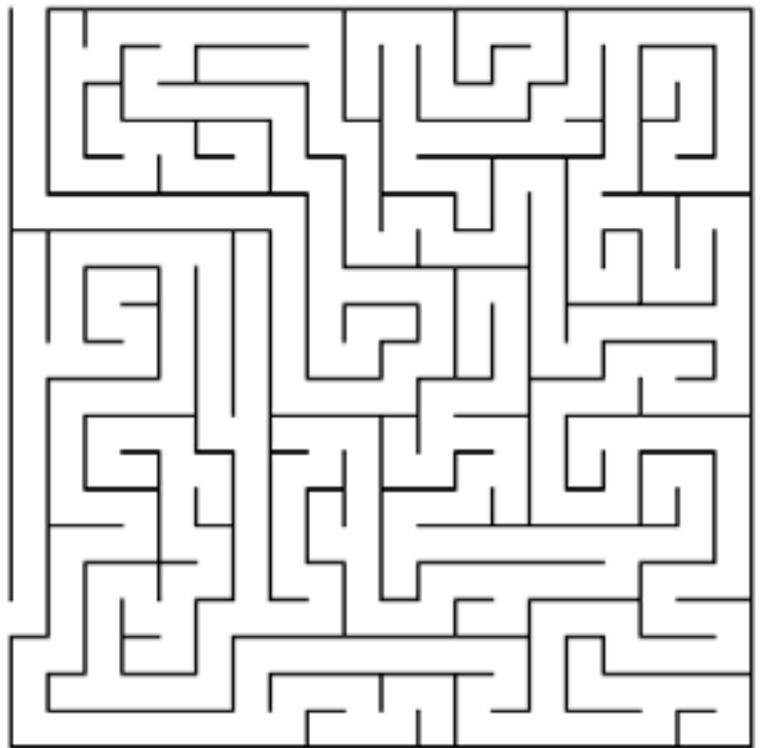
# Happy New Year!

We at *California Kids!* wish to thank our faithful readers, writers, and advertisers for making 2009 a wonderfully fun year. It's a pleasure to publish *California Kids!* We appreciate all the help we have received, the input from our readers and writers, the lovely compliments and encouragement. We are committed to producing a quality family-oriented publication.

We certainly hope our readers are using the services of our advertisers, for without them, this publication would not be possible.

So, Happy 2010! Here we go again!

This little teddy is very sleepy! But while he is sleeping his balloons have drifted away. Can you help him find them?



[www.ActivityVillage.co.uk](http://www.ActivityVillage.co.uk)

# California Kids! Family Fun Guide

**Publisher:** George Macko

**General Manager:** Kathleen Egan

**Contributing Writers:** Connie Goldsmith,  
Carmel L. Mooney, Patricia M. Newman

**Production Manager:** John Ochoa

**Graphic Artist:** Ryan Vuong

**Sales Manager:** Patty Colmer **Advertising:** Marc Harris

**Distribution/Subscriptions:** George Macko

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November 23, 2009

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*Jennifer Sherman and family*



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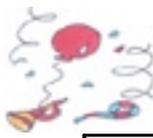
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# AVATAR: An IMAX 3D Experience

**A**VATAR has opened at Esquire IMAX Theatre with crystal clear images, laser-aligned digital sound and maximized field of view. AVATAR takes us to a spectacular world beyond imagination, where a reluctant hero embarks on an epic adventure, ultimately fighting to save the alien world he has learned to call home. This film is rated PG-13.

*About Esquire IMAX Theatre: Since July 1999, more than 2 million people have enjoyed The IMAX Experience at Sacramento's Esquire IMAX Theatre. The Esquire IMAX Theatre is located at 1211 K Street on downtown Sacramento's K Street Mall next door to the Sacramento Convention Center. To order reserved seats and for information on show times, call (916) 443-IMAX or visit the website at [www.imax.com/sacramento](http://www.imax.com/sacramento).*



## New Year Word Search



s	f	r	i	e	n	d	s	a	n	i	h
n	e	o	m	i	d	n	i	g	h	t	w
s	r	c	s	l	q	r	a	x	v	d	i
e	r	e	b	a	l	l	o	o	n	s	r
v	n	l	t	h	h	f	w	b	z	s	e
e	e	e	f	u	n	x	n	o	i	s	e
b	w	b	c	o	u	n	t	d	o	w	n
v	c	r	t	s	p	a	r	t	y	s	z
g	a	a	d	a	d	a	y	i	e	i	h
x	o	t	w	w	c	t	t	i	m	e	o
m	c	e	a	p	m	w	u	y	e	a	r
r	e	s	o	l	u	t	i	o	n	s	x

- party
- year
- countdown
- time
- eve
- midnight
- day
- new
- fun
- celebrate
- resolutions
- friends
- noise
- balloons



**Planetarium Shows** (ages 4 & up)  
 Sept-June  
 Weekends & some holidays 1pm & 3pm  
 July-August (Summer Hours)  
 3pm Daily

**Wildlife Presentations** (all ages)  
 Sept-June  
 Weekends & some holidays  
 Noon & 2pm  
 July-August (Summer Hours)  
 2pm Daily

**Theme Weekends & Science Crafts** (ages 12 & under)  
 Saturday & Sunday 12:30pm to 3pm

**Gee Whiz Geology! Hands-on Exhibit**  
 All about rocks, fossils & dinosaurs!  
 January 2010 - August 2010  
 Tuesday-Friday: Noon - 4:30pm  
 Saturday & Sunday: 10am - 4:30pm  
 July - August (Summer Hours)  
 Daily 10am to 4:30pm

**Voted Best Place to Entertain Your Kids on a Rainy Day in a Sacramento Bee Reader Survey!**

- Planetarium Shows
- Wildlife Presentations
- Gee Whiz Geology! Exhibit
- Challenger Learning Center
- Nature Discovery Room
- Nature Trail & Picnic Area
- Science Discovery Weekends
- Museum Store
- Birthday Parties
- Summer Camps
- Scout Programs

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## ACTORS WANTED: 18 and UNDER!

Auditions for the 2010 season of the Fairytale Town Troupers will be held Saturday and Sunday, January 9 and 10, from noon to 4 p.m. Male and female actors 18 years of age and younger are strongly encouraged to try out. No previous theatrical training is required, but prior experience in Stage Combat, Dance, or Martial Arts will be especially useful. This is an excellent opportunity for young actors to gain valuable, hands-on experience in theatre arts production and join an ever-expanding troupe of talented local players. Already in its third season, the Fairytale Town Troupers program is quickly gaining a reputation for fresh and innovative family entertainment. Three original plays will be presented this season:

“The Little Mermaid and the Yellow Submarine” with performances in the Children’s Theater in April; “The Monkey King: Bollywood Super Star!” outdoors on the Mother Goose Stage in July; and “Sleeping Beauty in Space!” in the Children’s Theater in July and August.

Auditions will be held indoors in the Children’s Theater at Fairytale Town--RAIN OR SHINE. Participants should bring a recent photograph, prepare a one minute monologue, and be ready to read scenes from various plays with other young actors.

Rehearsal times and dates will vary, but will primarily be held Sundays from 4 to 6 p.m. beginning approximately 6 to 8 weeks prior to each production.

If cast, performers will be charged a workshop fee of \$50 for the season. Scholarships will be available for interested performers willing to assume technical duties for other productions. Additional costume fees may apply if necessary.

For more information or to schedule an audition appointment, call (916) 808-8886 or e-mail: [mrlee@fairytaletown.org](mailto:mrlee@fairytaletown.org) or [magic@fairytaletown.org](mailto:magic@fairytaletown.org) Fairytale Town is located in William Land Park, 3901 Land Park Drive, Sacramento.

## First 5 Sacramento offers 5 parenting tips for winter season

Holidays, weather and current economic conditions, are among the seasonal challenges families with children ages zero to five may face.

While the winter months traditionally usher in holiday celebrations, seasonal cheer and fun activities, this time of year can also create stress and concerns for others. To help families with children ages zero to five cope with challenges they may face this winter season, First 5 Sacramento is providing its Top 5 parenting tips along with some valuable resources where people can get support.

The stress of the holidays, the seasonal weather change, and the down economy can add strain for parents, shorten their patience and test their parenting skills. First 5 Sacramento offers the following effective parenting tips to help relieve stress while investing in your child’s growth:

1. Take time out for yourself – go somewhere safe until you feel calmer.
2. Build a support network of family and friends.
3. Be consistent and create routines – kids need structure.
4. Simplify routines during stressful times – for example, set out school clothes the night before.
5. Take care of yourself – exercise, rest and eat well. Model these positive behaviors for your children.

“Our research shows that when parents have the right tools and get the advice they need, children have the best opportunities in life to be fulfilled, healthy citizens,” said Kim Dahl, Acting Executive Director, First 5 Sacramento. “Our goal is to prevent crises from happening and protect children from events that can disrupt their developmental cycle.”

First 5 Sacramento offers resources on a variety of topics including effective parenting, breastfeeding, nutrition, school readiness for children ages zero to

five, crisis intervention and more. The organization also works with community partners to increase support of parenting services available to families in the area. Among those is 2-1-1 Sacramento, a free, confidential phone line with information on community, health and social services.

2-1-1 Sacramento offers a one-stop source of information for community services and resources. By dialing 2-1-1, callers can receive personalized information from a live resource specialist about programs and services to help families in many different ways, ranging from access to healthcare or learning effective ways to discipline your children. 2-1-1 is confidential and available in more than 150 languages.

“Our goal is to connect families with the people who can help, any time, day or night,” said 2-1-1 Sacramento Director, Katrina Middleton. “With one call, parents are connected to a wide variety of very helpful resources designed to assist parents and their families.”

### About First 5 Sacramento

Research shows that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages zero to five. In the last year, First 5 Sacramento distributed approximately \$17 in Prop 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. For more information about First 5 Sacramento’s programs and services, call 916-876-5865 or visit online at [www.First5Sacramento.net](http://www.First5Sacramento.net).

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VALLEY COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS





# Sac County Animal Care seeks donations of pet food to Pet Pantry

In an effort to keep pets in their homes, the Sacramento County Animal Care Department is soliciting donations of unopened canned and dry pet food from the public for the newly-launched Pet Pantry Program. The goal of this program is to provide pet food to families who may need some extra assistance in caring for their animals. The program is open to any family in need in the Sacramento area.



"We are seeing more animals turned into shelters because owners simply do not have the money to care for them," said Pat Claerbout, Animal Care Facility Director. "It would be wonderful if we can keep a pet out of the shelter and in a loving home by simply helping out with some food."

Donations to the pet pantry can be made at any time during shelter hours. Pet food is distributed to those in need on

Thursdays and Sundays from 2-4 p.m. People participating in the program will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire to help track program results.

The new animal care facility, located at 3839 Bradshaw Road, is now open at 11 a.m. Wednesday through Sunday. (Now open BOTH weekend days!) To learn more about the pet pantry or the "Home for the Holidays" events, visit [www.saccountyshelter.net](http://www.saccountyshelter.net).

# Looks what's happening at the Crocker

The Crocker Art Museum is offering the following programs in January:

**Saturday, January 9, 12 to 3 p.m.**

**Second Saturday for Families: Project Hat**

High fashion was important long before Project Runway. Hats in particular were an essential part of an individual's wardrobe. Use your imagination and a variety of fun materials to create a hat that demonstrates your personal style and individual identity. Free with admission.

**Wednesday, January 20, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.**

**Wee Wednesday**

Wee Wednesdays are designed for children ages 3-5 and the special adult in their lives. Encourage your early learner's development through multi-sensory activities inspired by art and storytelling. Reservations are required. To register, call (916) 808-1182 or email [education@crockerartmuseum.org](mailto:education@crockerartmuseum.org). Free with admission.

**Tuesday, January 26, 10:30 a.m.**

**Children's Book Nook: Meet Peter Holwitz**

This installment of the Crocker's Children's Book Nook will feature a special appearance by children's book illustrator and author Peter Holwitz. With books like *The Big Blue Spot* and *Stick Kid*, Mr. Holwitz tells wonderfully creative stories with inspiring life lessons. Children ages 4-6 are invited to hear Mr. Holwitz read his book *Scribbleville* and then create their own books with materials galore. Reservations are required. To register, call (916) 808-1182 or email [education@crockerartmuseum.org](mailto:education@crockerartmuseum.org). Free with admission.

The Crocker Art Museum is located at 216 O Street, Sacramento. For more information, call (916) 808-5157.

# Sacramento Museum Day 2010

Saturday, February 6

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FREE!!

916-808-7777

[www.sacmuseums.org](http://www.sacmuseums.org)

More than 25 museums in the greater Sacramento region are scheduled to participate in this free event in 2010, including the California State Railroad Museum (always a popular destination). For more information and background, please check out <http://www.sacmuseums.org/museumday.html>

# Transportation!

Why not start the New Year out by going on an adventure with your family. It could be just for the day. You don't even have to leave the house, just use your imagination.

Think of all the possible ways you could get to where you're going by land, in the air, over water, slowly or fast, smoothly or bumpily, there are lots of ways to travel. Search for the listed words that are hidden below. They can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backwards and upside-down. Have fun and don't forget to send us a postcard when you get there!

D G Z M O T O R C Y C L E T S E E  
T E V T L W N H O P S I M G C N S  
A S A M T R A K V B E G T X A A R  
O O Y D A C H L E V S H M S N L O  
B I C Y C L E P R D I T N N O P H  
E T R K A Y L A E J U R Y O E R A  
T R A I N O I N D A R A K W N I U  
A U X M S B C L W P C I O M L A T  
K C T J D L O X A Y X L T O R A O  
S K A T E S P D G N K E Y B X B M  
P M F N L K T N O P A J M I O Y O  
B A T K S I E B N K N O O L L A B  
R K Y E S S R J L R Y T V E N K I  
T R A V U L O A N A G G O B O T L  
Y G G U B A W N S U B M A R I N E

Airplane

Amtrak

Automobile

Balloon

Bicycle

Boat

Buggy

Canoe

Covered Wagon

Cruises

Helicopter

Horse

Light rail

Motorcycle

Skates

Skis

Sleds

Snowmobile

Submarine

Taxi

Toboggan

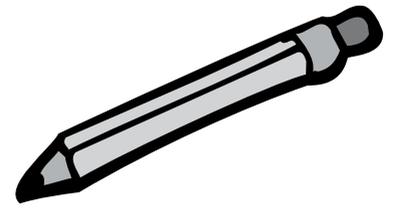
Train

Truck

Walk



# MAKE IT YOURSELF!



## Homemade Instrument

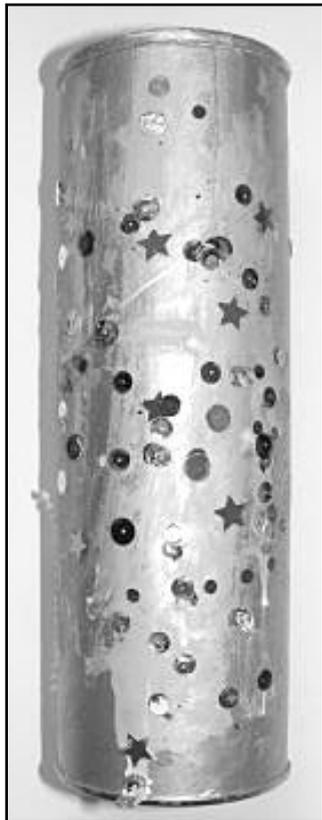
This homemade Rainmaker is a fun way to make lots of noise at a celebration such as New Year's Eve or a birthday - or just for a kitchen band!

### You will need:

- A snack tube (like Pringles potato chips) or a long cardboard tube (such as used for kitchen foil)
- Paint (gold or silver)
- Glitter and sequins
- Glue
- Lentils or rice

### You will need to:

Paint your tube and leave to dry. Decorate the tube with sequins and glitter. Fill the tube about 1/5 full of rice or lentils and glue the lid on securely. If you are using a kitchen foil tube, you will need to cut circles of card or paper and fix them very securely over each end. Tip the tube from side to side to hear the rice fall.



## Winter collage

Here is a quick and simple idea for a winter collage for kids which will give the kids a real sense of achievement.

### You will need:

- Twigs
- Cotton wool balls
- Silver glitter
- Large sheet of blue paper
- White glue

### You will need to:

Make a lovely winter picture by gluing twigs to the paper to make a tree. Glue on some cotton wool as snow. Sprinkle some glitter over the top as a bit of frosty sparkle.



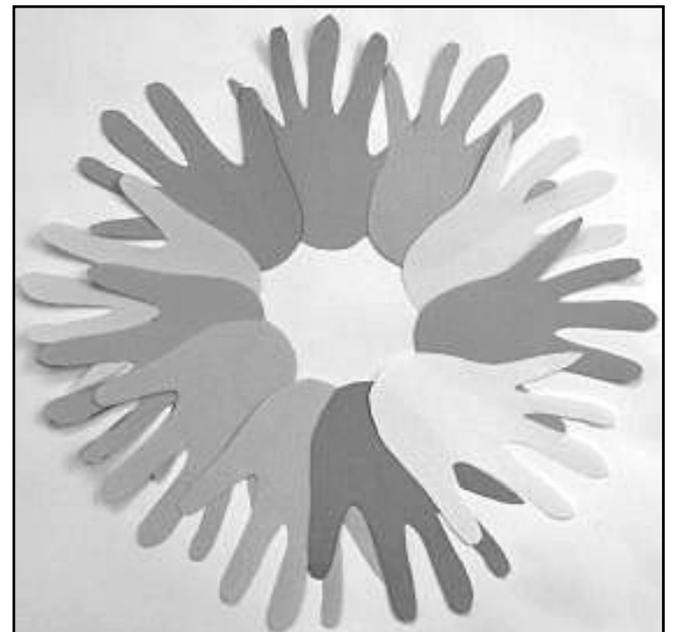
## Multi-colored Handprints wreath

This multi-colored handprint banner is perfect for Martin Luther King Day, international events, or any time you are studying different cultures. It also makes a good classroom project.

### You will need:

### You will need to:

Cut lots of colored handprints. If you are doing this in a class or group you could have each child making one handprint in a different color. Glue the hands together to form a circle.



Crafts courtesy of: [www.ActivityVillage.co.uk](http://www.ActivityVillage.co.uk) - Keeping Kids Busy



I have a dream...

I can help by...

Name:

www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

**Dr** Martin Luther King is best known for his "I Have A Dream" speech and his struggle for peace and equal rights through non-violent protest. You can use these printables in your home or classroom to help children think about tolerance, as well as how they might make a difference in the world.

## I Have a Dream poster

This "I Have A Dream" poster is a good Martin Luther King Day activity for the home or classroom, encouraging children to think about their own version of a better world.

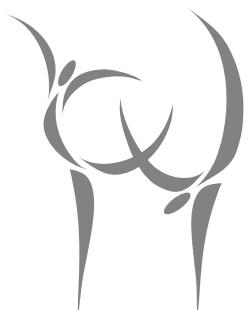
### You will need:

Large sheet of paper, Scraps of colored paper, Pens, Glue

### You will need to:

Cut out a large cloud shape. Cut out lots of small clouds from colored paper. On the large cloud write "I have a dream..."

On the small clouds get the children to write or draw some of the things they dream about.



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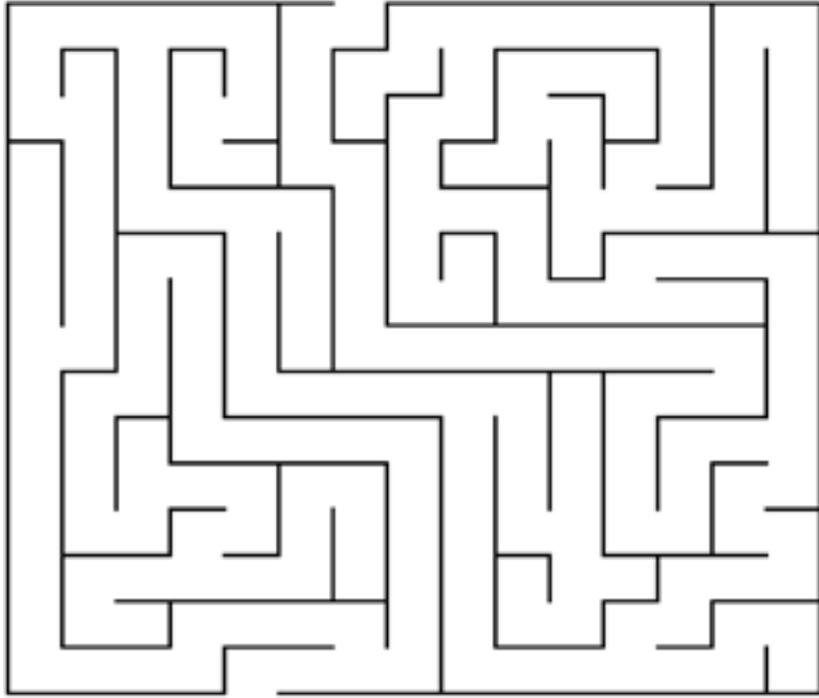
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Help these friends get together to wish each other a Happy New Year!



[www.ActivityVillage.co.uk](http://www.ActivityVillage.co.uk) - Keeping Kids Busy

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"You gave us our son back..." is a typical response from parents of students completing a Learning Works program. Parents who have searched for answers as to why their students aren't performing find hope at Learning Works. After exhaustive efforts at home and trying numerous tutoring centers, parents' concerns elevate about their student's increasing frustration with school and the learning process. Parents report of the extensive hours of homework and other additional help they commit to doing with their student. "It's as though we're going through third grade with him." The Learning Works' thorough assessment gives parent's terminology and answers about their student's experience and style of learning.

"We were most impressed by the fact that the program is tailored to meet the particular needs of each person with measurable goals." With student class sizes continuing to rise and students expected to learn at a faster rate, an increasingly large number of students are now falling behind. With less time available to understand and apply concepts in a classroom, students and parents alike are at a loss as to how to keep up. Parents are saddened to witness their students stop trying and to see them more readily give up. "His general temperament is getting more positive and he is definitely improving in his willingness to put in the extra effort." As Learning Works provides individual opportunities for a student to learn to push past frustration and exhaustion, self esteem increases for that student as does internal motivation to "stick with it." Learning Works is able to address specific areas of need in a learner and then provide an experience that motivates the student to work hard, problem solve independently and feel the benefits of success. "This place is a place I could never, ever forget. I love this place!"

*Advertorial*

Please **RECYCLE** this paper



# Who Wrote That?

The Creators of Your Child's Favorite Books

Featuring **Kadir Nelson**

By **Patricia M. Newman**

Throughout childhood, Kadir Nelson viewed the world through the lens of an artist, drawing by the age of three and painting by the age of ten. He remembers one rainy winter day in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"My family was piling into my grandmother's white Cadillac and I stood and waited for everyone to get inside. It was cold and breezy, and warm streetlights reflected off the shiny bluish sidewalk. I stood there feeling warm, wrapped up in my heavy winter coat, enjoying the breeze and the scenery. I remember thinking to myself, 'This is beautiful.' I was a six-year-old kid savoring the moment. It felt pretty special to me."

Art is in Nelson's blood; his uncle, artist Michael Morris, apprenticed ten-year-old Nelson. "My uncle gave me my foundation in art," Nelson says. A series of breaks boosted his career—an art scholarship to Pratt Institute, an internship at the Society of Illustrators, and various early commissions. His work eventually found its way to Dreamworks/Amblin Studios where *Amistad* was in pre-production. Nelson says, "I was hired as a conceptual artist for the film to illustrate key moments throughout the story to give the director, Steven Spielberg, an idea of

what the film could look and feel like."

Gallery showings and freelance commissions continued to occupy Nelson, but while working on *Amistad* he met Debbie Allen, the film's producer and the author of the first book he would illustrate, *Brothers of the Knight* (1999). The publication of his first book, naturally, led to others. "I was asked by an editor if I'd like to try my hand at illustrating...*Big Jabe* (2000) by Jerdine Nolen," Nelson says. "I hesitated a moment because I was interested in other paths in art, but I liked the story and thought I'd give it a go. I found the work to be interesting, very open, and light on art direction. It was a good fit."

Nelson works in a combination of oils, watercolor and pencil on paper, or strictly oils on canvas or wood, and uses experiences from his life to inform his illustrations and make them more meaningful. "I try to pick moments from my childhood and adult life and find a way to integrate them into my work," Nelson says. "For example, I used light moments like jumping on a bed, or tree climbing for *Hewitt Anderson's Great Big Life* [by Jerdine Nolen]. And observational moments from my childhood for *Ellington Was Not A Street* [by Ntozake Shange] as I remember watching my father and uncles play cards or chess."

Nelson based the setting for *All God's Critters* by Bill Staines on a middle school production of *Oklahoma*. "The cast of performers were not exactly the most gifted singers or actors," Nelson says, "but



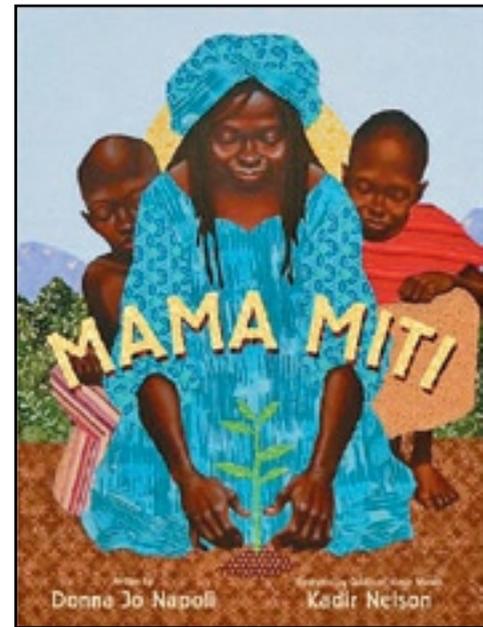
Kadir Nelson

[they] worked perfectly for my needs as they would be transformed into singing animals." When confronted with illustrating *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom* by Carole Boston Weatherford, Nelson searched for visual references of Tubman on the Internet and in books and magazines, but found few pictures. "I turned to my grandmother who resembles Tubman in many ways," Nelson says. "She's short, similar in complexion, and very feisty."

*We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* is Nelson's debut book as both author and illustrator. "Writing is much more difficult as it doesn't come as natural to me as painting," he says, "but I love a challenge, and I love using that part of my brain." As Nelson gathers ideas and facts for his books, he underlines text and dog-ears pages in source materials and jots ideas in the margins and on scraps of paper. Before submitting a manuscript to his editor, he says, "I'll write a few drafts...and read it aloud to myself several times." Together Nelson and his editor discuss the strong and weak points and necessary changes. "I'll make revisions and we repeat the process until we've honed it down to something we both love,"

he says. As he begins to sketch the illustrations, Nelson's research gives him a sense of the visual world his characters inhabit. "The idea is to have a well-rounded understanding of the subject and his/her environment," he says. To supplement his visual reference for *We Are the Ship*, he dressed in a baseball uniform and photographed himself.

The soft-spoken Nelson works from his home in San Diego, concentrating on administrative busy-work in the morning and painting or writing the remainder of the day. As he works, Nelson ignores trends and invests himself in each project. "I seek to tell the truth with my work," he says. After completing each project, he looks ahead to the next. "My next book is always my favorite," he says. "It has to be because I spend several months working on one book, and if I don't



enjoy it, it will show in the artwork."

Next month: Richard Peck

Patricia Newman is the author of *Jingle the Brass* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Her newest book, *Nugget on the Flight Deck* (Walker), is now available. Visit her website at [www.patriciamnewman.com](http://www.patriciamnewman.com) to watch the trailer.

Who Wrote That? is a monthly column that profiles the talented authors and illustrators who bring children's books to life.

## MORE ABOUT KADIR NELSON

HOW TO CONTACT KADIR NELSON  
Website: [www.kadirnelson.com](http://www.kadirnelson.com)

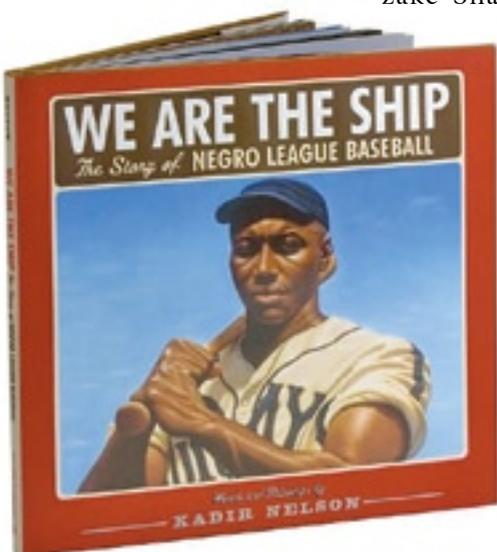
### SELECTIONS FROM Kadir Nelson's Library

#### Author/Illustrator

*We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball*, Hyperion, 2008.

#### Illustrator

- *Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya* by Donna Jo Napoli, Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- *Testing the Ice: A True Story About Jackie Robinson* by Sharon Robinson, Scholastic, 2009.
- *All God's Critters* by Bill Staines, Simon & Schuster, 2009.
- *Coretta Scott* by Ntozake Shange, Hyperion, 2009.
- *Abe's Honest Words: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Doreen Rappaport, Hyperion, 2008.
- *Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story From the Underground Railroad* by Ellen Levine, Scholastic, 2007.
- *Thunder Rose* by Jerdine Nolen, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007.
- *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom* by Carole Boston Weatherford, Hyperion, 2006.
- *Hewitt Anderson's Great Big Life* by Jerdine Nolen, Simon & Schuster, 2005.
- *Ellington Was Not A Street* by Ntozake Shange, Simon & Schuster, 2004.





# Australia Day

Australia Day is celebrated on the January 26 each year. It is a great time to learn about Australia and find some related activities for your kids to try!



## Australian Animals Word Search

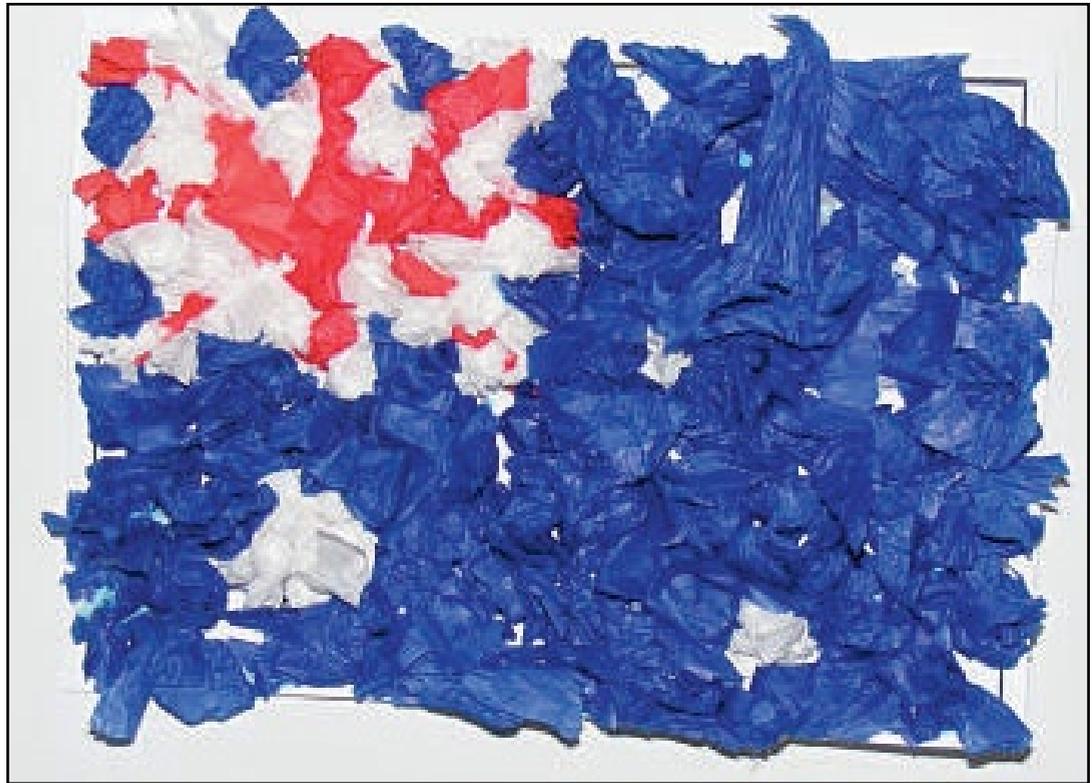


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- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| bandicoot | crocodile  |
| dingo     | echidna    |
| emu       | kangaroo   |
| koala     | kookaburra |
| platypus  | possum     |
| wallaby   | wombat     |



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## Australian Flag Collage

Kids love ripping, scrunching and sticking so this is a fun activity for all ages.

### You will need:

- Cardboard or construction paper
- Tissue paper in blue, red and white
- Glue

### You will need to:

- Rip up your tissue paper into small pieces.
- Paint your card with glue.
- Scrunch the tissue paper into small balls and glue to the card in the design of the flag. It may be easier to start with red, move on to white and then fill in the blue last.

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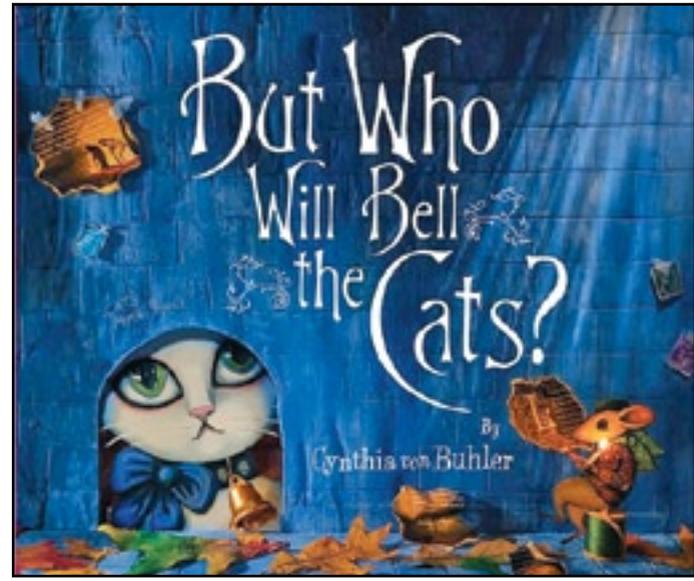
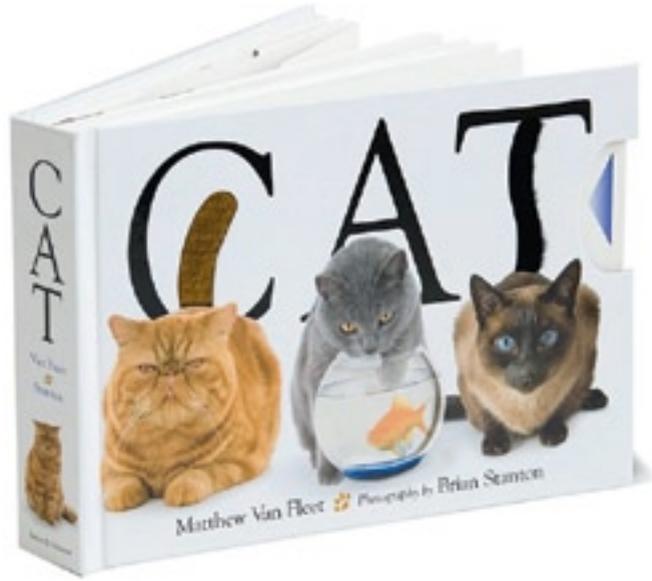
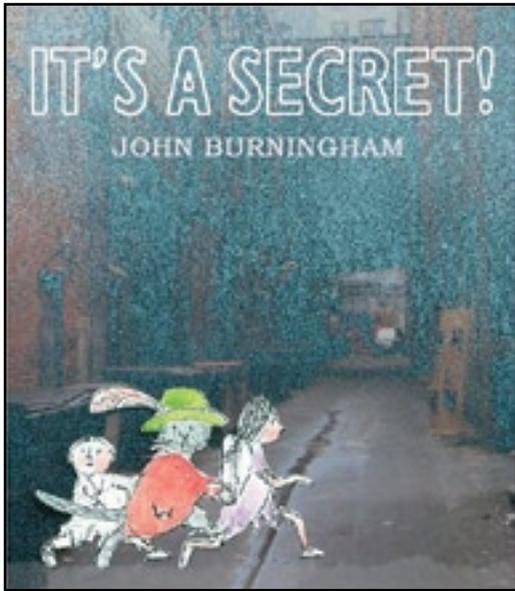


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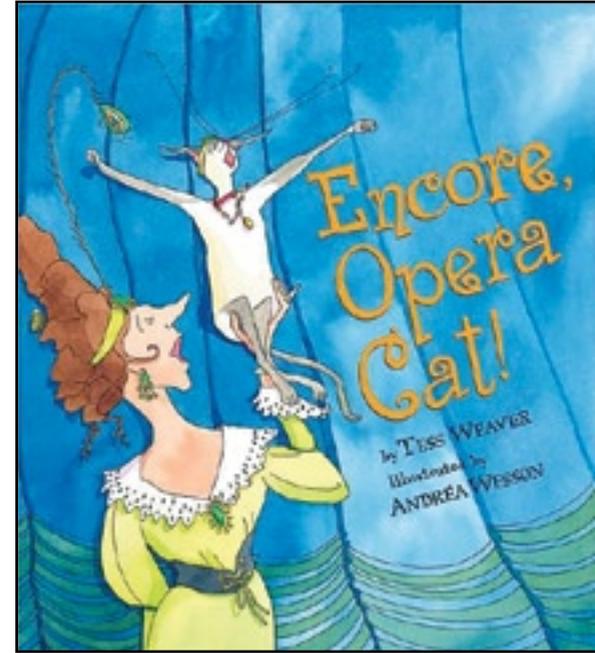
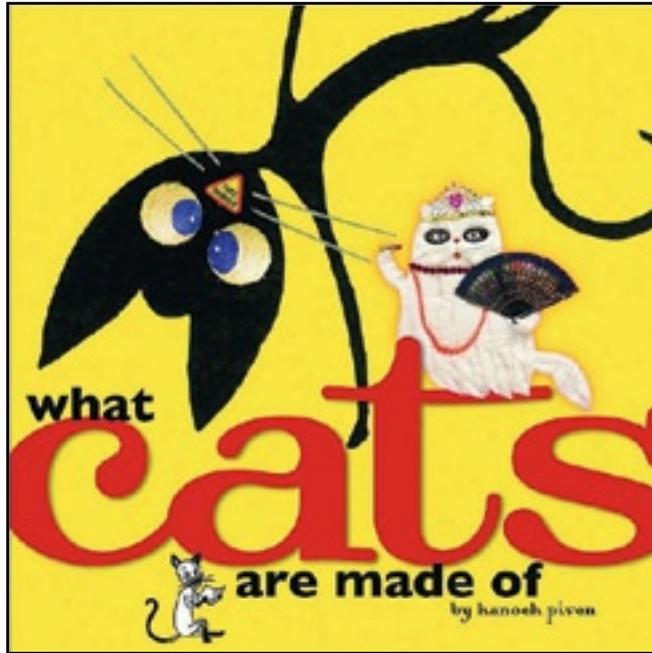
# The Book Report Cats Rule

By Connie Goldsmith

According to the Humane Society, an estimated 90 million cats in our country live with loving families. Maybe you count one or two among your own family members. The soft warmth of an affectionate cat is a treasure to cherish. Does anything calm jittery nerves as well as the purr of a kitty on your lap? ‘Cat people’ know that cats can be as loving and affectionate as dogs – but it’s just got to be on their terms. Cats are a perennial topic in children’s literature. Take a look at some of the newest offerings.

“*It’s a Secret!*,” by John Burningham. (Candlewick). Marie Elaine’s cat Malcolm goes out every night and comes back each morning. “Where do cats go at night?” she asks her mother, but she has no answer. Late one night, Marie Elaine surprises Malcolm dressed in fancy clothes and a feathered hat. He’s ready to head out the cat door for a night of mysterious adventures. She begs to go along and Malcolm agrees, but she must put on her princess party dress. They sneak past hoodlum dogs and slink down dark alleys, arriving at a raucous rooftop party where the previously black-and-white art turns brilliantly festive. This whimsical story helps to fill in the blank spots humans have about the secret lives of cats!

“*Encore, Opera Cat!*,” by Tess Weaver, art by Andrea Wesson. (Clarion). Here’s another cat with a secret. Alma loves to sing opera. She lives in Italy with the famous diva Madame SoSo. All Alma wants is a chance to share the spotlight with Madame at the opera house. Alma is a magnificent singer, but wonders if anyone wants to hear a cat sing about love. At the opera house Madame dresses Alma in a tiny gown, wig, and mask. When Madame SoSo and Alma finish their duet, the audience yells, “Encore!” The opera house scenes are exquisite, drawn from unusual perspectives. Readers must crane their necks to take in all the details.



Be sure to look for Alma in the dollhouse-like drawing of Madame’s Italian apartment opposite the cover page.

“*CAT*,” by Matthew Van Fleet, photographs by Brian Stanton. (Simon & Schuster). This is a perfect interactive book for the youngest animal lover in your family. Little hands will enjoy lifting the flaps, poking the squeaker, pulling the tabs, and fingering the fabric feline tails. Each page features a plethora of photos of various cat breeds with simple rhymes that describe their personalities: “Frisky cat, frumpy cat; fat cat, thin; nice cat, naughty cat; look what the cat dragged in!” (disgruntled puppy.) Double-fold-out end pages identify the breeds and the names of the real cat ‘models.’ The excellent quality of the photographs makes this book suitable for a coffee table as well as a toddler.

“*But Who Will Bell the Cats?*” by Cynthia von Buhler. (Houghton Mifflin). In one of the most beautiful picture books of the year, clever Mouse and friend Brown Bat solve the Aesop riddle that asks, who will bell the cat (to protect the mice)? In this tale, a charming young princess lives with eight beloved and pampered cats in a castle. Upstairs, the cats feast at the fancy table in the elegant dining hall. In the basement, Mouse eats crumbs that fall through the floorboards. The cats read by the fireplace in the wood-paneled library. Downstairs, Mouse reads newspaper scraps in his dark, dingy

den. Mouse is determined to get his share of the good life. The art is a elegant collage of real objects and cut-out paper doll figures pasted into the foreground of carefully crafted rooms to produce a three-dimensional look. The lavish book will stand up to repeated readings and examination of newly-found background details.

“*What Cats Are Made Of*,” by Hanoch Piven. (Atheneum). Learn about quirky cat breeds such as the Scottish Fold and Maine Coon Cat, the Siamese and Savannah, and the Ragdoll. Each interesting description of the breed is followed by feline facts, such as a cat’s brain is more like a human brain than is a dog’s. Humans and cats have identical regions in their brains responsible for emotions. Siamese are perhaps the most loving, intelligent, and vocal of all cats. The nearly hairless Sphinx is the result of a genetic mutation. The colorful art is a mix of collages placed on digital backgrounds, with cats formed of objects as diverse as circuit boards, computer mice, paper, felt, and fur. This intriguing book ends with cat superstitions. Remember what Leonardo da Vinci said: “The smallest feline is a masterpiece.”

Connie Goldsmith lives and writes in Carmichael. Her latest juvenile nonfiction books, “*Cutting Edge Medicine*,” “*Meningitis*,” and “*Superbugs Strike Back: when antibiotics fail*,” can be found at online booksellers, and in school and public libraries.



# The Tray Game

The Tray Game is a memory game which children really enjoy, especially if you make the objects on the tray interesting. Here are two variations below.

Age: 5+

## Preparation:

Find a selection of interesting small objects and arrange them on a tray, which you should

cover with a towel until you are ready to play the game. Vary the number of objects according to the ages of the children. Give each child a pencil and paper and ask them to write their name at the top.

## Play:

Uncover the tray and place it where all children can see it. Give the children a certain amount of time to memorize the contents of the tray, then cover it up again.

**Variation 1:** Ask the children to write down all of the objects that they can remember.

**Variation 2:** Take the tray away and remove one or two objects. Replace it and ask the children to write down the objects that are missing.

## Hints:

One of the objects on the tray could double up as a prize for the winner.

Vary the objects according to the abilities of the children. Older children might be given some tiny objects such as a pin or a paper clip; younger children will remember better if they are given larger, brighter objects.

Maybe give children hints on how to remember the objects. Such as memorizing their position relative to other objects ("the pin is next to a needle and both are found in a sewing basket"), looking at their initial letters ("there are four objects on the tray beginning with the letter P and two with the letter M") and so on.

Be aware that some children have much more developed memory skills than others, so don't be surprised if you have a clear winner and also be prepared to award some extra prizes, such as a prize for the neatest list.

# Shadow Bluff

This game takes a little effort to set up, but the kids will have a lot of fun with it. It is obviously better on a dark evening!

Age: 8+

## Preparation:

String a white sheet up in a doorway, or otherwise suspend it so that it provides a screen. Place a strong lamp behind it at some distance, so that anyone walking between the lamp and the sheet casts a shadow.

## How to play:

Choose one child to be "it." He sits on the floor in front of the light facing the sheet, but he must be so low down that his shadow will not appear on the sheet. The other children form a line behind him, and march single file between the light and "it," who is not allowed to turn around. Their shadows will be thrown onto the sheet and, as they pass, the child who is "it" must guess who they are. The children should disguise their walk and height as much as possible!

As soon as a correct guess is made, the children swap over and the game begins again.

# Call My Bluff Game

This is a fun word game that can help children learn new words, practice dictionary work and presentation skills! It works best in a large group setting, and you will need time to prepare.

Age: 7+

You will need a large dictionary and at least four players, preferably more.

Three players are chosen to give the first presentation. They must choose a difficult word from the dictionary (which they hope no one will know) and write three definitions for the word. One of the definitions must be true, and the other two false definitions should be good enough to trick the other players yet can be funny.

Now write the word on a card or the chalkboard and ask the three children to read out their words to the group, giving no indication which is right and which are wrong. Make sure the children adopt a good poker face when giving their definitions!

The audience now votes on which is the right definition. If they guess right, the audience gets a point. If they guess wrong, each of the other two presenters gets a point!

**Variations:** Three adults or older children can prepare a number of words in advance, and present them to younger children.

Instead of using word definitions, you can write three or more "truths" about a character you are studying, or perhaps a favorite celebrity. The audience has to guess whether the "facts" are right or wrong.

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Campfire at Manchester Beach KOA.

## Museum Debuts 'Some Assembly Required' Toy Exhibit

The California State Railroad Museum has a nostalgia-inducing new exhibit, titled "Some Assembly Required," showcasing railroad-themed toys from the Museum's collection. The California State Railroad Museum's "Some Assembly Required" toy exhibit is sure to inspire both wonder and delight with a variety of rare, intricate and colorful railroad-themed toys on display. The exhibit, with toys and games from the impressive California State Railroad Museum collection, will be featured through February 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about the "Some Assembly Required" toy exhibit or other museum related events, exhibits and activities, visit [www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org](http://www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org). For more information about all of the activities throughout Old Sacramento, visit [www.oldsacramento.com](http://www.oldsacramento.com).

Museum admission is \$9 for adults, \$4 for youths ages 6 to 17, and children 5 and under are free.

Operated by California State Parks with assistance from the nonprofit CSR Foundation, the California State Railroad Museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Widely regarded as North America's finest and most-visited railroad museum, the complex of facilities includes the 100,000-sq. ft. Railroad History Museum plus the reconstructed Central Pacific Railroad Passenger Station and Freight Depot, 1849 Eagle Theatre, and Big Four and Dingley Spice Mill buildings in Old Sacramento. 24-hour info: (916) 445-6645 or [www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org](http://www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org).

## Looking for something fun to do? Visit [Camp-California.com](http://Camp-California.com)

The website is ideal for weekend travel planning with its roster of upcoming events.

Camp-California.com can help you spot these and other special events throughout California. Camp-California.com includes listings of campgrounds and RV parks that are conveniently located near the venues where special events take place.

Consider these examples:

**Bakersfield RV Resort in Bakersfield:** On New Year's Eve, the park will celebrate the arrival of 2010 with live music, complimentary appetizers, Louisiana-style gumbo and a champagne toast at midnight. This is in addition to a horseshoe tournament, bingo, golf putting and Wii tournaments, which will take place throughout New Year's weekend. [www.bakersfieldrvresort.com](http://www.bakersfieldrvresort.com)

**Campland on the Bay in San Diego:** This park has a full slate of recreational activities every day this month, including beach volleyball, soccer, kickball, capture the flag, dodge ball and adult horseshoes. Its New Year's Eve activities include separate parties for adults and children, both of which are topped off by an 11:45 p.m. fireworks display on the bay. [www.campland.com](http://www.campland.com)

**Manchester Beach KOA in Manchester:** This park is hosting a New Year's Eve potluck gala.

The park supplies the main entrée, champagne, party supplies, music and games while the guests bring their favorite side dish.

### The Springs at Borrego RV Resort in Borrego Springs:

This park is located in the desert near Anza Borrego State Park. It offers many activities; including water aerobics classes at 10:30 a.m. every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday; campfire entertainment with hot dogs and s'mores every Tuesday at 5 p.m. and wine tastings and a social hour every Thursday at 5 p.m. The park is also planning a Karaoke New Year's Eve party. [www.springsatborrego.com](http://www.springsatborrego.com)

Camp-California.com can also help find activities and special events including the Rose Bowl Flea Market in Pasadena. The event will be held January 10 and February 14; the Ventura Flea Market, which will feature more than 500 vendors at the Ventura County Fairgrounds, and the 18th annual Winter Wineland festival, which will take place January 16 and 17 at Kendall-Jackson Winery in Fulton.

• Bakersfield RV Resort in Bakersfield, (661) 833-9998 or [www.bakersfieldrvresort.com](http://www.bakersfieldrvresort.com)

• Campland on the Bay, San Diego, Kimberly McAnally,

(858) 581-4200 or [www.campland.com](http://www.campland.com)

• Manchester Beach KOA, Manchester, (707) 882-2375 or [www.manchesterbeachkoa.com](http://www.manchesterbeachkoa.com)

• The Springs at Borrego RV Resort and Golf Course, Borrego Springs, Daniel Wright, (760) 767-0004 or [www.springsatborrego.com](http://www.springsatborrego.com)

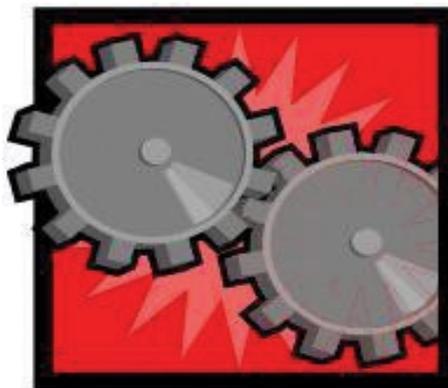


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ing cattle ranch (since 1886) offers the best of a true working ranch experience with ranch work, cattle drives and a-part-of-the-family ambience, on 18,000 acres of pine tree forests, open meadows, and sandstone rimrocks. We enjoyed riding through beautiful mountainous areas and up Bull Mountain rimrock through open meadows.

Ranch chores, and hearty ranch style meals only add to the authentic down home experience.

Probably the best part of visiting the Runamuk is the outstanding hospitality that wraps its arms around you like part of the family.

The Dahl family are very special and talented people who have a knack at making each and every guest feel welcomed and at ease. They host many families, honeymooners, and single guests from all over the world each year and many guests return each and every year. This says a lot.

Unique to this guest ranch are the several lodging options offered, such as private ranch homes on property or private residences located just down the country road for even more privacy.

The Runamuk offers the best of both worlds, where guests can strike their own balance between long, hard-working cattle drives and ranch work, or leisurely days relaxing or floating down the Musselshell River.

Tubing down the river, hiking, fishing, or exploring on foot or on quads, the choice of activity is up to the guests. Horseback riding is a highlight, of course, and there are horses of all types for riders of all abilities.

If taking yoga or getting a massage from atop a mountain vista sounds good after a day of riding, they've got you covered.

Dinners are taken with the family and most guests enjoy partaking in picnic dinners on a high mountaintop and granite outcropping overlooking a half dozen mountain ranges and several bordering states—Big Sky Country at it's finest!

We truly hated to see the Runamuk in our rear view mirror. Can you tell we love Montana?

After Roundup we spent three days enjoying the Lodge at Whitefish Lake and nearby Glacier National Park. The



*Runamuk Guest Ranch offers the best of a true working ranch experience.*

Lodge at Whitefish Lake offers magnificent views of the water and mountains, a gorgeous spa, dining, and beautifully appointed rooms. The hospitality is excellent and its proximity to Kalispell and Glacier National Park make it a perfect option for families.

From Montana we made our way into Idaho and through the Craters of the Moon National Monument where lava beds as far as the eye can see make for an amazing geological spectacle.

In Boise, we visited the Wahooz Family Fun Zone and Roaring Springs Water Park as well as a fun dinner at Donnie Mac's Trailer Park Cuisine – where trailer trash food is served at its finest! It's a fun, themed restaurant that one must experience to appreciate. My daughter ordered and ate Spaghetti-O's in a can. Don't ask. Just visit Donnie Mac's.

Boise, another City of Trees, is a walker's paradise and has a wealth of excellent museums,

historical tours, theater and fine dining, yet manages to strike a harmonic balance with keeping a small town feeling. No wonder so many people are moving there.

We stayed at the SpringHill Suites Boise Park Center, the perfect location from which to enjoy all that Boise has to offer. With an excellent complimentary breakfast, clean and spacious pool and work out area, this property had it all. The Boise River Greenbelt is a quick walk from the property and the zoo, museums, and dining, along with other attractions, are all close by.

Boise's Discovery Center of Idaho and the World Center for Birds of Prey are two must sees when visiting this wonderful destination.

After spending a couple of days enjoying the highlights of Boise, we continued homeward bound for Northern California.

With 11,600 miles of adventure behind us and 80 days of exploration logged across our wonderful nation, we were glad to be home finally.

Thanks for coming along on this trip of a lifetime. We hope you enjoyed the ride as much we did.

**Relevant Web sites:**

- [www.redlodgemountain.com](http://www.redlodgemountain.com)
- (406) 446-4744
- [www.aaaredlodgerentals.com](http://www.aaaredlodgerentals.com)
- [www.lodgeatwhitefishlake.com](http://www.lodgeatwhitefishlake.com)
- [www.spaatwhitefishlake.com](http://www.spaatwhitefishlake.com)
- [www.runamukgustranch.com](http://www.runamukgustranch.com)
- [www.boise.org](http://www.boise.org)
- [www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/boidt-springhill-suites-boise-parkcenter/](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/boidt-springhill-suites-boise-parkcenter/)

If you'd like to see more photos, a much more detailed account of this trip, along with specific routes and travel tips, please visit my blog at: <http://www.travelblog.org/Bloggers/moonwriter/>

You can listen to Carmel L. Mooney talk about these and other exciting travel destinations each Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. on KJAY 1430 AM in Sacramento

Her website is: [www.money-thewriteway.com](http://www.money-thewriteway.com)

## California Kids!

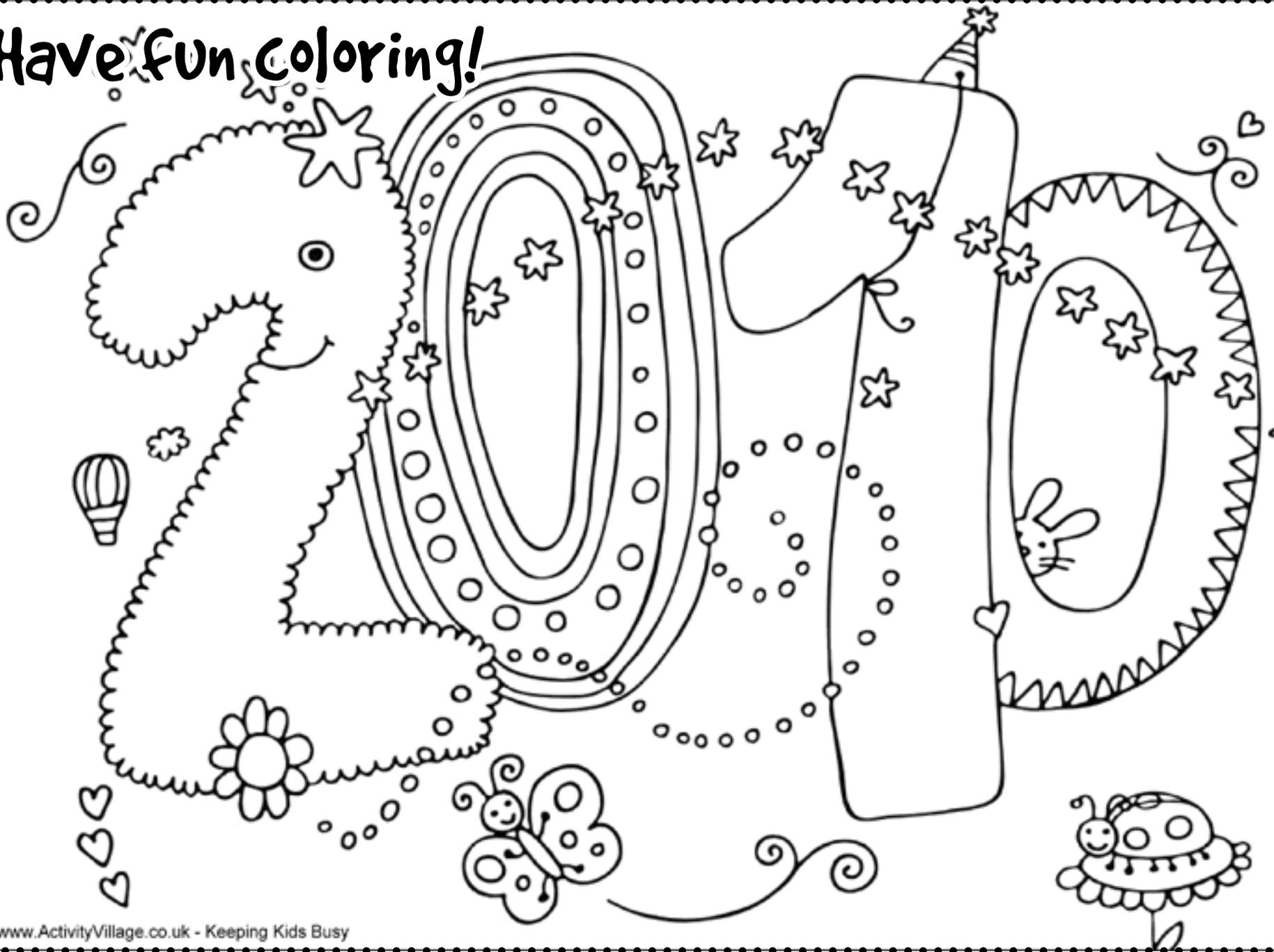
### Family Fun Guide

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- Programs for learning developed by early childhood education experts
- Enroll now in our infant, toddler, and preschool programs



## Zoo Volunteer Educators are Important Part of Zoo Experience

The Sacramento Zoo is taking applications for the 2010 Docent Training class until January 9. Zoo docents are volunteer educators who have a love for wildlife and enjoy people. Docents conduct tours and station talks at the Zoo and with additional training, docents can also participate in live animal presentations, both on and off-site.

An orientation meeting will be held on January 9, and the training class will begin on January 16. The mini-course in Zoology runs every Saturday through mid-March. For more information on becoming a docent and to receive an application, contact the Education Department at (916) 808-5889 or [spez@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:spez@cityofsacramento.org).







Established in 1949, Tiny Tots is the longest running parent participation preschool in the Sacramento area. For 60 years, we have welcomed both children and parents to be a part of our wonderful play-based program. We accept children from age 2 years 9 months to age 6, and students are not required to be fully potty-trained to attend our school.

Our gated campus is situated on a comfortable half-acre of private land in a residential area near the Arden Fair Mall. Our outdoor play area is expansive with lots of grass, climbing structures, swings, tricycle paths, and a hands-on garden.

Inside, Tiny Tots provides a colorful safe haven for our students and families. We provide individual rooms for a variety of activities that help nurture imaginations and creativity in young minds. We also have a fully equipped kitchen and laundry room on the premises.

Our school encourages children's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. We welcome those who are interested to contact us and set up a tour.



**Tiny Tots Preschool  
celebrates 61 years!**  
1949 ~ 2010

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[tinytotspreschool.org](http://tinytotspreschool.org)





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# Tiny Tots Pre-School Free Electronic-Waste collection Fundraiser

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Tiny Tots parking lot  
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You won't even need to get out of your car, we will unload for you.

We will accept: monitors, televisions, desktop and notebook PCs, VCRs, stereo equipment, speakers, keyboards, mice, PDAs, digital cameras, zip drives, telephones, cell phones, printers, copiers, laser and multifunction scanners and fax machines.

We cannot accept: Household Appliances (i.e. refrigerators, washers/dryers etc.) Furniture, Hazardous Household Waste, including: fluorescent light bulbs, paint, pesticides, used oil, cleaning supplies, tires etc.

For optimal security, CEAR INC shreds all accepted computer hard drives. [www.cearinc.com](http://www.cearinc.com)

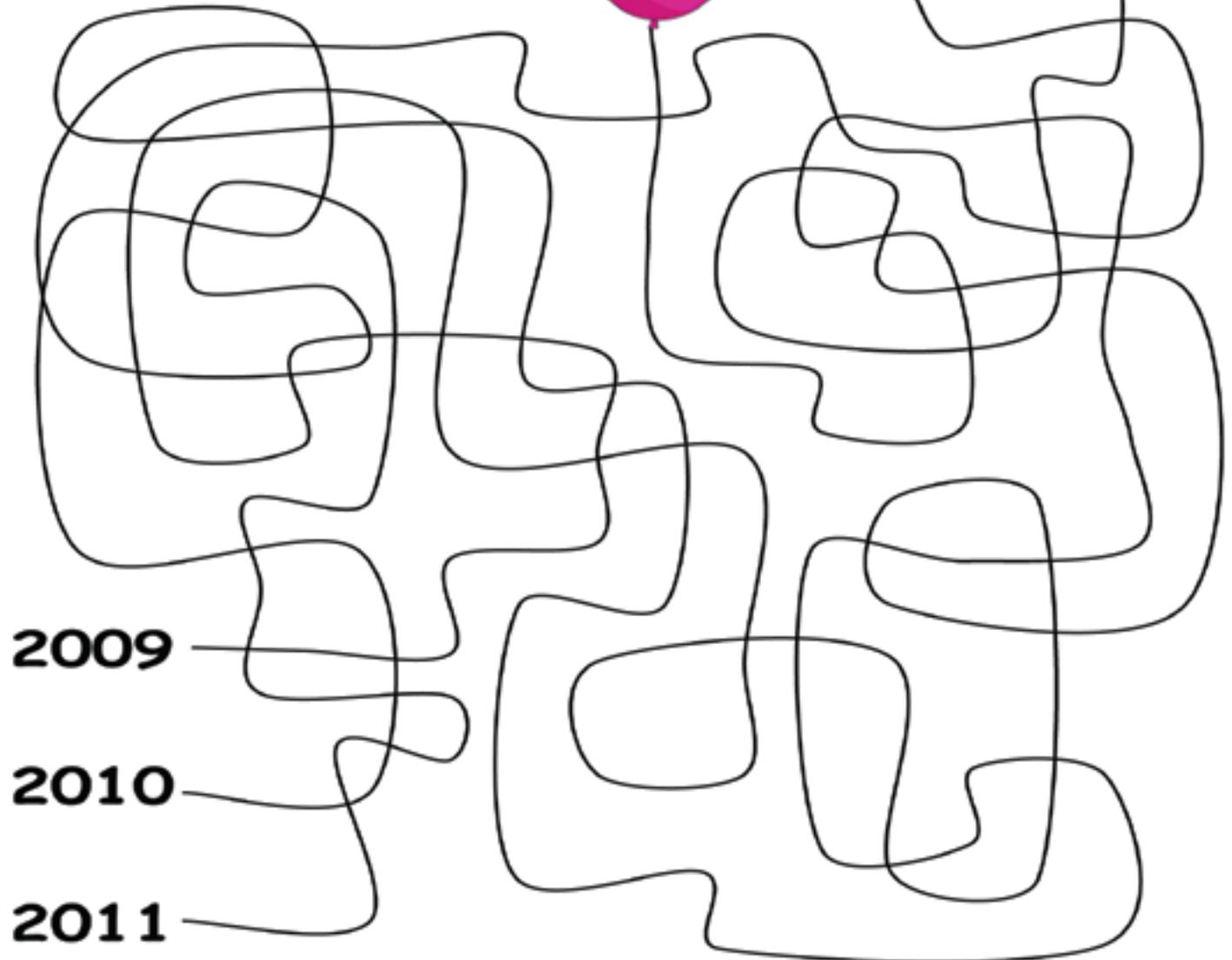
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2010

2011

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# The Sacramento Zoo Welcomes 6-year-old orangutan and Two Red River Hogs

The Sacramento Zoo recently welcomed Makan to the Sumatran orangutan group. Makan is 6 years old and was born at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (CMZ) in Colorado Springs. Makan arrived in Sacramento in September and following his quarantine in the veterinary hospital, he was introduced to the two female orangutans. The Sacramento Zoo, the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and the Orangutan Survival Species Plan committee have been planning Makan's move for about a year.

In September, CMZ staff began the drive from Colorado to California with Makan safely tucked away in a large crate. When he arrived, he was moved into our Zoo's hospital quarantine area where he was monitored for any illnesses that could potentially be transmitted to resident animals. After he received a clean bill of health from the veterinarian, the young orang moved up to the Ape House to begin introductions to the exhibit and the resident orangutans.

Makan joined the Zoo's two older females: Cheli is 37 years old and Ginger, at 54 years old, is the oldest

Sumatran orangutan in a U.S. zoo. Right now, Makan looks like the females and weighs only 65 lbs. In a few years, he will go through a massive growth spurt, developing large amounts of muscle, gaining close to 200 pounds, getting large round cheek flanges, and growing long hair with a mustache and beard. It will be interesting to see Makan on exhibit interacting with the girls, but more interesting to the keepers is how the girls will interact with him! It has been a few decades for both of the females since they have lived with such a young male. He was introduced to the girls in the quiet night quarters away from distracting crowds. When he is on exhibit with Ginger and Cheli, he experiences new surroundings; Makan had never seen zebra or bongos which are viewable from his new home.

Also new at the Zoo are Red river hogs. The two new Red river hogs joining the Zoo family are the first of the species to come to Sacramento. Daisy is from the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, and the male, J.D., is from the Bronx Zoo. Swine have an excel-

lent sense of smell and a squared-off snout for digging. They also have great hearing and communicate with one another using a variety of grunts, squeaks, and chirrups. Red river hogs are best known for their long curly ears and reddish-brown fur. Red river hogs are native to the dense tropical jungles of Central to West Africa.

## Sacramento Zoo — wildly Inspiring!

Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to over 140 native, rare and endangered species and is one of over 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Located near the corner of Land Park Drive and Sutterville Road in William Land Park, the Zoo is wholly managed by the non-profit Sacramento Zoological Society. This Sacramento treasure inspires conservation awareness through education and recreation. Open daily from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, general admission is \$9.50; children ages 3-12 are \$7.00 and two and under are admitted free. Parking is free



throughout the park or ride Regional Transit bus No. 6.

## Zoo Calendar:

The zoo will be open Friday, January 1 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.

February 1, regular zoo hours begin, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Don't forget Museum Day is Saturday, February 6, with free admission to Sacramento Area Museum organizations.

The Wildlife Stage Show will be Saturday and Sunday, February 13 to March 28, at 11 a.m. For more information, call (916) 808-5888 or visit saczoo.com.

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First 5 Sacramento offers **community grants** up to \$5,000 for small groups of parents or caregivers in Sacramento County who have ideas that bring people together and support on-going connections. The activities need to benefit children age five and under. Examples of grant-funded activities include:

- parenting networks
- playgroups
- art & reading activities
- neighborhood meet-ups

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- **Email:** [First5grants@sacounty.net](mailto:First5grants@sacounty.net)

*The community grants are provided through the Community Building Initiative (CBI) of the First 5 Sacramento Commission. The Commission uses Proposition 10 (tobacco tax) funds to support the healthy development of children age five and under.*

