



News Release

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PLANNED ZOO FUNDRAISER VICTIM OF HOAX

Celebrity event in planning for more than a year believed to be an "elaborate scheme"

GULF BREEZE, Fla. (July 1, 2008) – Officials of The ZOO today announced the discovery that a planned large-scale celebrity event that was in the works for more than a year was being coordinated based on fraudulent information provided by someone posing as a representative of the family of Zac Efron, a member of the cast of Disney's *High School Musical*, Drew Seeley, a performer associated with various Disney Channel albums and programs and Disney Corporation. The event, a musical presentation and autograph signing, was planned for Aug. 9 but has now been cancelled.

A news conference had been scheduled for Wednesday to announce details of the event, which officials say was to be a major fundraiser for The ZOO, planned to help offset the impact of a poor economy and keep The ZOO operating through the end of the year. Now The ZOO says it plans to pursue legal action against the representative.

The ZOO confirms it had what they believed was a firm agreement. "I'm shocked and heartsick to learn that our contact for this event deliberately misled The ZOO and the community by presenting credible documentation and on-going verbal communication," said Danyelle Lantz, executive director for The ZOO." Lantz said that details she was made aware of today indicated the event and representation were a hoax, and made arrangements to cancel the news conference and refund early ticket buyers immediately. ZOO management has confirmed that the purported commitments of cast members were not valid and the cast members were not even aware that their names had been fraudulently linked to the event.

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For more information, visit www.thezoonorthwestflorida.org or call executive director Danyelle Lantz at (850) 932-2229.