

## **ZRA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

The following is from the 2007-2011 Strategic Plan:

### **“Vision**

- ZRA will inspire registrars to develop their careers to full potential by providing opportunities for professional enrichment, growth and development
- ZRA will provide training and continuing education opportunities to ensure registrars have the skills to meet changing business needs
- ZRA will provide leadership in the development and use of the highest standards achievable in managing animal transactions and the records and information that support them
- ZRA will take a leadership role in animal transport, legislation and legal compliance
- ZRA will continue to expand its network of professional partnerships within the zoo and aquarium industry and with associations that provide related services

### **Mission**

To enhance the value of zoos and aquariums through leadership, professional development, standardization and service to its members

#### **Strategic Goal 1**

- Membership – ZRA will focus on maintaining and increasing its membership base by enhancing member services and improving communications

ZRA will increase its outward recognition for members that demonstrate their commitment to the goals and objectives of the Association and to those that contribute their time and talent in leadership positions. A mentorship program that supports a diversity of member needs, in a format that extends beyond geographic boundaries, will be developed and implemented.

The 2007-2011 ZRA Strategic Plan Leadership Assignments direct the Training Committee to develop a mentorship program for ZRA members. In addition, mentorship is a key component of the Records Keeping Awareness Program (RKAP).

### **Definition of a ZRA Mentor**

ZRA mentors use their industry, job and Association experience and knowledge to assist new or less-experienced members in finding and using available resources, meeting other professionals, and providing a roadmap to help them learn the

profession, advance their careers, and become active, contributing members of the organization. ZRA has two types of mentors: a Registrar Mentor and a Topic Mentor. A Registrar Mentor has a thorough knowledge of the animal records-keeping and registrar field and can be appropriately paired with another ZRA member to provide mentorship. In addition to transferring their knowledge of the profession, a Registrar Mentor helps another member find an entry point to establish a network that meets their current and changing needs as a professional, meets their social needs within ZRA, and ensures that they don't get lost in the bureaucracy that is inevitable in a growing and changing organization. What distinguishes a mentor from a network contact is the mentor's formalized investment and commitment to the professional advancement of their colleague. A Registrar Mentor may, in addition to guiding through the use of emails and telephone calls, visit the protégé's institution to provide direct assistance, or vice versa, but this is not required.

A Topic Mentor has an in-depth knowledge of one or more of the core competencies in the registrar field. Topic Mentors are contacted as needed for information in these core areas that include, but are not limited to, wildlife permit procurement and related compliance, domestic and international animal shipping, or animal records keeping. A long-term commitment to a specific protégé is not required. Registrar and Topic Mentors may coordinate their efforts to enhance the value provided to ZRA membership through the Mentorship Program.

### **Requirements for being a Mentor**

A ZRA Mentor must:

1. be a Professional, Emeritus or Retired member of ZRA in good standing
2. have a minimum of five years experience in a Registrar (or similar) position
3. have their contact information available on the ZRA Website

ZRA members wishing to serve as mentors will contact the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Training Committee and indicate their areas of expertise from the ZRA Mentorship Core Competencies list. Those members meeting the established criteria will be added to the list of ZRA approved mentors.

### **Requesting a Registrar Mentor**

A member requesting a Registrar Mentor should contact the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Training Committee or their designee. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman (or designee) will provide this request to the members of the Training Committee, who will review the current mentor list, confirm the potential mentors' interest and forward their names to the protégé, who will make the final selection. A Mentor Request form will be developed by the Committee and submitted to the Board of Directors for approval so that there is a written commitment and understanding between the two parties. The agreement may be terminated by either party at any time due to incompatibility, retirement or any other circumstances.

As a follow-up, the Training Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman will contact both the new protégé and the Registrar Mentor 30 days after initiation of the agreement, with a

second follow-up at 90 days and a further follow-up at 180 days. This will allow a poor match to be intercepted, changed or counseled early on to reduce the potential for any negative impact on the program and to ensure ZRA members' needs are being met. It will also allow for a timely and thorough evaluation of how the program is proceeding and provide useful information to the administrators to fine-tune the process along the way.

If at any time a mentor-protégé partnership is not working to the satisfaction of either party, the parties should attempt to resolve the dissatisfaction between them. If this does not work, either one can contact the Training Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman (or designee) with a request to be assigned a new Mentor or to be released as a Mentor. To assist the committee in analyzing the success of the program, the Training Committee Chairman should be apprised of the circumstances of any conflict.

### **Finding a Topic Mentor**

Anyone can contact a Topic Mentor directly at any time for guidance on a specific topic. Topic Mentors can be located using the Mentor Checklist on the ZRA Website.

### **Maintaining the Mentor Checklist**

The Mentor Checklist will be posted on the ZRA Website. Only members qualified to be mentors will be listed. (See "Requirements for being a Mentor", above.) As members pass their five-year mark with the Association and wish to be added, they should contact the Training Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman who, after approval by the Training Committee, will request addition to the list. The mentor list will be updated on the Website as necessary and members will be asked to confirm their information on a yearly basis to assure that it is updated at least once a year.

### **Assessing the Impact of the Mentoring Program**

The first quantitative assessment will be the number of ZRA members requesting to be mentored and the number offering to be mentors. As time passes, we should see a decrease in the number of errors in ARKS records, an overall improvement in the link rates and the number of discrepancies on the ISIS website. A less tangible return will be the increased confidence of the protégés.

The Training Committee will develop a standardized survey that can be maintained and distributed according to the established timeline for program evaluation (i.e. 30 days, 90 days and 180 days post-initiation). Using the Association's established method for surveys, the Training Committee will determine if the protégé is obtaining what is needed from the Registrar and Topic Mentors and whether the mentor sees growth in the protégé (i.e. increased subject knowledge, an expanded network, compatibility).

### **Timeline**

An email notification will be submitted to our liaison within 2 weeks of Plan approval by the ZRA Board. This notice, to be 'blasted' to the membership, will briefly describe the mentorship program and alert the membership that they will be receiving a mentor checklist. The mentor checklist (on which each qualified member will indicate topics for

which he/she is willing to mentor) will be distributed within two weeks of the notice, with a deadline for response of two weeks later. Two weeks after the deadline, the mentor list will be posted on the ZRA Website. A Mentor Request form will be developed as soon as the Mentoring Proposal is approved by the Board and will be ready for submission to the Board for approval by the time the topic responses are due from the membership.

### **Financial Aspects**

There is no financial component of this plan as all mentors will be volunteers from within ZRA and the mentor checklist will be maintained by Training Committee members. The Board recommends that both Registrar and Topic Mentors keep track of the hours they spend supporting this program and provide this information to the Training Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman, who in turn shall maintain a database of volunteer hours. A real in-kind cost can then be allocated to the program for future reference by the Board of Directors and the Training Committee.

### **ZRA Leadership Roles in Mentorship Program**

ZRA Board of Directors and Training Committee – The ZRA Board of Directors shall provide governance and oversight for the overall Mentorship program and shall have final approval of all publications, presentations, brochures and all external (outside) communications. The Training Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall administer the ZRA Mentorship Program according to the program plan and related policies and procedures approved by the ZRA Board of Directors and shall oversee all required internal (within) communications. All letters communicating to external collaborators shall be jointly developed and signed by the ZRA President and Chairman of the ZRA Training Committee. The ZRA President shall be the primary contact for external collaborators (this includes scheduling program development or budgetary meetings).

ZRA Training Committee Members – members of the Training Committee shall follow the direction of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and shall assume responsibilities as delegated to ensure the goals and objectives of the Mentorship Program and other relevant training initiatives are carried out according to the approved 2007-2011 Strategic Plan.

## ZRA Training Committee

Chair: Jean Miller, Registrar ~ Buffalo Zoo

Vice-Chair: Anne Rockmore, Animal Records Specialist ~ Wildlife Conservation Society

## Members

Adrienne Miller, Curator of Collections Management ~ Audubon Zoo

Deborah Halin, Animal Registrar ~ Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo

Diane Tetreault, Assistant Registrar ~ Zoo New England/Franklin Park

Emily Polkinghorne, Assistant Registrar ~ Disney's Animal Kingdom

Glenous Favata, Registrar ~ Toledo Zoo\*

Julie Ensor, Assistant Curator of Birds ~ SeaWorld Orlando \*

Lynn McDuffie, Assistant Curator of Records ~ Disney's Animal Kingdom

Michelle Federspiel, Registrar ~ Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Nyan McFadden, Registrar ~ Scovill Zoo

Tricia Webster, Registrar ~ Houston Zoo, Inc.

\* members through end of August 2008

## Ex-officio

Rae Lynn Haliday, ZRA President, Registrar ~ St. Louis Zoo

Alan Rost, ZRA Vice-President, Biological Programs Registrar ~ Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens

## Board Liaison

Barbara Outerbridge, ZRA Director, Animal Registrar ~ Bermuda Aquarium, Museum & Zoo