

NEWS FOR KIDS

animals: Baby zebra heals at Noah's Ark

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A tough baby zebra named Evidence is settling in at Noah's Ark Animal Rehabilitation Center in Locust Grove, where it is healing from some serious injuries.

It's at the same animal haven that Hershey the bear now calls home. News for Kids reported earlier this year on the naming contest for Hershey, the black bear that was brought to Noah's Ark from Detroit. Police discovered that someone was illegally raising the cub as a pet.

Hershey now shares a habitat with a young cougar named Little Nick and a year-old female lion named Dandelion. He and Dandelion like to tumble and play together. But the cougar still hisses and will need more time to get comfortable around the growing, gangly bear, said Noah's Ark spokeswoman Diane Smith.

"Hershey is now looking like a teenager — much taller and with longer legs," Smith said. But he still has his baby qualities. He still likes to suck on the hand of his favorite humans and makes a purring sound to show he's happy. The plan is for Hershey and his feline friends to be moved to a public habitat so that visitors can watch them grow up together, she said.

In a nearby habitat, baby Evidence is guzzling a diet of special foods that will help him grow strong. The zebra suffered many deep wounds last month when he fell out of a truck onto the highway. His wounds were so serious that he had to have surgery at the veterinary hospital at Auburn University in Alabama. It's all been hard on the little zebra and he still needs lots of medicine. But recently, a little cat named Mary started visiting him in his pen and has helped cheer him up.

Veterinarians say he was probably hit by a vehicle after falling from the truck. Police are still investigating who was transporting him. It's not legal to have exotic animals in Georgia unless you have special training and a license like the staff at Noah's Ark.

Not many animals could survive the types of injuries that Evidence had, Smith said. But zebras are super tough because their species is used to living around lots of predators in the wild. Noah's Ark hopes to build him a habitat near the ostriches so that visitors can see him, too. But that will have to wait until he has completely recovered.

Feeding exotic animals can be challenging and expensive. Your local pet stores don't carry big bags of Zebra Chow! So Noah's Ark stays busy feeding the little guy a special formula that costs \$75 a bucket, plus daily rations of coastal Bermuda hay and a tasty mix called sweet feed.

Zzzs with the zebra — and the lions, tigers and bears, oh my!

In the next few months, Noah's Ark will have sleepovers that are open to the public. The cost for this special fund-raiser is \$100 per person and will include a "Flashlight Safari" tour of the sanctuary's more than 1,000 animals. There also will be hayrides, a bonfire and marshmallow roast, camping, and early morning animal feedings. The overnight events are from 6 p.m. on Friday to 11 a.m. on Saturday. The two remaining dates are June 20-21 and July 18-19. For more information and reservations, call Noah's Ark at 770-957-0888. You can also check out the Web site (under News and Events) at www.noahs-ark.org.