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For Immediate Release

Pachyderm painting raises \$7,000 for Asian tsunami relief efforts

The 24-by-48 inch painting created by the Fort Worth Zoo's Asian elephant Rasha to support the victims of the Asian tsunamis raised \$7,000! The original painting generated more than 50 bids on E-Bay, and the winning bid of \$7,000 came from North Hills Lincoln Mercury in Hurst. The Fort Worth Zoo will donate the \$7,000 to the American Red Cross International Response Fund.

The Rasha painting generated so much interest and monetary support that the Fort Worth Zoo is encouraging other zoos with painting elephants to also support the disaster relief cause.

"Just imagine how many dollars could potentially be raised if every zoo with a painting pachyderm auctioned off an original piece of art and donated the proceeds to the Asian disaster relief," said spokesperson Lyndsay Nantz.

This piece of modern art is characterized by its sweeping motions and few straight lines, and of course, is made unique by its artist—a 7,000-pound Asian elephant at the Fort Worth Zoo.

Born in Thailand in 1973, Rasha, the Fort Worth Zoo's "Painting Pachyderm," began her painting career in the summer of 1996. To encourage the development of her talent, animal keepers have incorporated 15- to 30-minute painting sessions into her management. During the painting sessions, which often follow her morning bath, keepers hand her a paintbrush and offer her aesthetically pleasing color schemes. "Pachyderm painting" and other forms of enrichment are conducted at the Fort Worth Zoo to provide a healthy and stimulating environment for the animals.

"The Fort Worth Zoo houses 380 Asian animals and supports more than 25 conservation projects in countries throughout Asia," Director of Conservation and Science Tarren Wagener said. "It seems fitting that as the Zoo continues to educate a million people annually on the importance of Asian animal species, that the Zoo also makes an effort to support the people of Asia during this crisis."

For more information on the Fort Worth Zoo, visit www.fortworthzoo.org. For more information about the American Red Cross, call 1-800 HELP NOW or e-mail info@usa.redcross.org.

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