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**THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS EARNS
COVETED 4-STAR RATING FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR**

THE ZOO RECEIVES THE HIGHEST HONOR FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

PALM DESERT/INDIAN WELLS (August 1, 2018) -- The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is proud to announce it has earned the highest rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, for the third consecutive year. The coveted 4-star rating was awarded based on the zoo's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency.

"The Living Desert is proud to earn such prestigious recognition from Charity Navigator," said Allen Monroe, President/CEO of The Living Desert. "The Living Desert works diligently every day to be good stewards of the generous donations we receive and ensures we are making an impact locally and globally, as we fulfill our mission of inspiring people to care about plants and animals from desert habitats around the world and helping save species from extinction."

The Living Desert is one of only 40 national zoos and aquariums to receive the 4-star distinction, and the only non-profit in Palm Desert to be recognized in 2018.

"The Living Desert is honored to be recognized by the country's preeminent charity rating organization," said Jan Hawkins, Director of Development of The Living Desert. "We rely on the generosity of our donors and members to accomplish our mission, and we are grateful for their continued support."

Since 2002, using objective, data-driven analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a 4-star rating. In 2011, Charity Navigator added 17 metrics, focused on governance and ethical practices as well as measures of openness, to its ratings methodology. These "Accountability & Transparency" metrics, which account for 50 percent of a charity's overall rating, reveal which charities have "best practices" that minimize the chance of unethical activities and whether they freely share basic information about their organization with their donors and other stakeholders.

"The Living Desert's exceptional 4-star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public," according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. "Based on its 4-star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support The Living Desert."

The Living Desert's rating and other information about charitable giving are available free of charge on www.charitynavigator.org.

The Living Desert is open daily from 8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., with last admission at 1 p.m. For more information about summer memberships and The Living Desert visit livingdesert.org or call (760) 346-5694.

About The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit, accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, ensuring the highest standards of all aspects of animal care, education, conservation, public service, and operations. The Zoo is active in conservation research, habitat protection, breeding programs and education initiatives around the world, as well as in its own community. The Zoo has been a top attraction in the Palm Springs area for nearly 50 years. The Living Desert is located at 47900 Portola Ave, Palm Desert, CA 92260. For more information: (760) 346-5694 or visit livingdesert.org.

About Charity Navigator

Charity Navigator, www.charitynavigator.org, is the largest charity evaluator in America and its website attracts more visitors than all other charity rating groups combined. The organization helps guide intelligent giving by evaluating the Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency of more than 8,000 charities. Charity Navigator accepts no advertising or donations from the organizations it evaluates, ensuring unbiased evaluations, nor does it charge the public for this trusted data. As a result, Charity Navigator, a 501 (c) (3) public charity itself, depends on support from individuals, corporations and foundations that believe it provides a much-needed service to America's charitable givers. Charity Navigator, can be reached directly by telephone at (201) 818-1288, or by mail at 139 Harristown Road, Suite 101, Glen Rock, N.J., 07452.

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