HALF A MILLION VISITORS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE WILD CENTER

Tupper Lake, NY – On August 10th, 5-year old Maleeya Martin from Round Hill, Virginia became the 500,000th visitor to see The Wild Center. “A half a million is a big number in the Adirondacks,” said Wild Center Executive Director, Stephanie Ratcliffe. “The staff was counting down visitors all day yesterday and today because we knew we wanted to celebrate with the person who got us to that number.”

Maleeya, her sister Mariana, grandmother Melinda Preston and family friend Mary Hall were treated to a Back of House tour with Assistant Curator Leah Valerio, a membership, balloons, t-shirts and stuffed otters. “It was a memorable moment for us,” said Ratcliffe, “and we wanted it to be memorable for Maleeya too.”

Hall, who is also a member of The Wild Center, wanted to bring Melinda and the girls to the Center because “I knew that they would love it and learn a little more about natural history.” The girls are visiting their grandmother, “Mimi”, at “Mimi Camp” in Lake Placid. It’s their first time in the Adirondacks and their first vacation away from their mom.

The 500,000 number represents close to four times the entire population of the Adirondacks and Ratcliffe said that more than 150,000 of the total visitors to date are children. “I think about that, that’s more children who have come through here than all the people who live in the Adirondacks. We come to work here because we believe in the power of education to make the next generation a great one, and knowing that sea of kids has been through here, and all have a memory of something they liked, is a great feeling.”

The 500,000 visitors came from at least 40 countries, all 50 states, and include teachers, governors, senators, civic leaders, scientists and Adirondackers of every generation. “I think Clarence Petty at 104 was our oldest visitor, and I would have to say the wood ducks that were born here this summer have to be our youngest, although on the human side we have seen plenty of very small children getting their first view of a fish,” said Josh Pratt, who heads the Center’s admissions.

This summer The Wild Center added three major new experiences enhancing the visitor’s experience and perspective. Planet Adirondack features an interactive Earth, where visitors are able to see how the world really works and ask questions about everything from population to animal migration and watch the Earth answer in an amazing display of images and ideas. Daily Guided Canoe trips on the Raquette River allow visitors to discover the Oxbow, an excellent place to see waterfowl, wetland plants, beavers, otters and more. Visitors can now also peek ‘behind the curtains’ during Behind the Scenes tours to see where the animals sleep, what life support systems are needed for them and what it takes to run a 54,000 square foot facility filled with hundreds of live exhibits.

For more information, please contact The Wild Center at 518 359-7800 or visit us online at www.wildcenter.org.