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Press release

Take a leaf out of the ants' book

Zoo, Tierpark and Aquarium Berlin ask for solidarity with a new donation campaign

Community-minded ants do a great job of showing us humans that great things can be achieved when everyone chips in. Aquarium Berlin may currently be closed to visitors, but its busy leafcutter ants are still hard at work – as are all the staff at the Zoo, Aquarium and Tierpark, who continue to work tirelessly seven days a week to ensure the wellbeing of the animals in their care. Aquarium Berlin, which has been a well-loved fixture in the city for more than a century, is now asking for donations during this difficult time.

Every day, Berlin's Zoo, Tierpark and Aquarium are faced with running costs of €140,000. In previous years, the majority of these costs could be covered during the colder winter months, when visitors prefer to be inside, by ticket sales for the Aquarium. But now, like many other indoor attractions, Aquarium Berlin has had to close once again – and this is hitting all three facilities much harder than the six-week closure in spring. Currently, Zoo, Tierpark and Aquarium are having to live off savings from previous years that had been earmarked for new and improved homes for the elephants, primates and other animals.

There are many ways to lend support to Zoo, Tierpark and Aquarium Berlin. Whether they are a worker, a babysitter, a gardener, a bodyguard, or the queen herself, anyone can donate to the "Ant Solidarity" campaign with as little as €1. With a donation of just €5, supporters can also help the Tierpark pay the heating bills for its naked mole rat colony. It thanks every donor by sending them a certificate as proof of their support along with the confirmation email. This PDF can be downloaded and printed out – making a donation a great Christmas gift idea for animal lovers.

Did you know?

Leafcutter ants...

- ... can carry up to ten times their own body weight? They use the leaf segments they snip off to actively cultivate fungus gardens, producing enough to feed the whole colony and sustain their community.
- ... have a symbiotic relationship with the friendly bacteria that live on their bodies? These produce antibiotics that fight off harmful bacteria.
- Teamwork is the basis of an ant colony's success, both in the nest and out on the trail. While ant teams are led by the females, male ants also play their part – although they have little function beyond reproduction.

Naked mole rats...

- ... have reduced sensitivity to pain and are highly resistant to cancer.
- ... form colonies similar to those of bees or ants. Like those insects, naked mole rats are eusocial, which means they live in cooperative groups with a clear division of labour.
- Ordinary female naked mole rats are not permitted to have offspring – only the queen may reproduce. She selects a small group of males with whom to mate. The queen can produce a litter every 80 days. It is not until she abdicates or is overthrown that a different female mole rat has the chance to take on her role and reproduce.

Ways to support Aquarium Berlin:

1 Ant	€1
2 Forager	€5
3 Worker	€10
4 Babysitter	€15
5 Gardener	€25
6 Bodyguard	€50
1 Ant construction team (100 ants)	€100
1 Queen	€500