



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Zion Nature Center receives Duke Energy Foundation community grant**

Zion Nature Center, a part of Zionsville Parks & Recreation Department, has received a \$4,887 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to support two hands-on, science-focused initiatives: Traveling Teacher Trunks and Nature Play Days.

With the help of the Community Foundation of Boone County, Mindy Murdock, Park Naturalist, applied for Duke Energy Foundation's Community Impact Grant in March. The money from the grant will help fund the creation of Traveling Teacher Trunks and programing and printed materials for the Nature Play Days summer event series.

"This grant money will allow us to provide year-round environmental education opportunities to kids both in the classroom and outside of the classroom," said Murdock. "There are numerous benefits to hands-on learning and getting outside and playing so we are excited to put this grant money to use this year for Nature Plays Days and the Teacher Trunks."

Traveling Teacher Trunks will be available to educators around Boone County and the surrounding counties starting in the 2018/2019 school year. Each trunk, available for a \$10 rental fee, will contain natural artifacts, materials and resources that allow area teachers to expand their school's science curriculum. There will be six trunks total, each suitable for classrooms with up to 30 kids, ages preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The second annual [Zionsville Nature Play Days](#) will include a series of free, outdoor events around Zionsville from June 9 – 17. The goal of Nature Play Days is to get kids outside and remind families that nature play is important and can happen close to home. New this year, kids will be able to pick up a Zionsville Nature Play Day Passport at Zion Nature Center and the first 100 kids who turn in a passport with at least three stamps will win an aquatic net. One winner will receive a grand prize.

"Duke Energy believes our company does well when the communities we serve do well," said Dan Rhodes, Manager of Government and Community Relations at Duke Energy. "The environmental education connects with two of our core foundation support areas so this program is a great fit for Duke Energy and something we were pleased to have the opportunity to fund."

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