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*** MEDIA ALERT***

Brain Expo Helps Bring Science Education to Local Seventh-Graders Even As Educators Face State Budget Cuts

ATLANTA — The Brain Expo — a fun, interactive science education program created by neuroscientists at Georgia State University’s Center for Behavioral Neuroscience (CBN) — is helping a local middle school provide its seventh-grade students with a free, hands-on science education experience as educators are being forced to make budget cuts amid Georgia’s decreasing state revenues.

The expo is a unique partnership between the CBN and Decatur City Schools’ Renfroe Middle School, which will bring all 180 seventh-grade students to Zoo Atlanta on Friday, April 30, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for a unique science event.

While at the zoo, students will participate in hands-on teaching stations that present short neuroscience lessons designed to engage the students in fascinating topics ranging from brain cells and anatomy, to learning, memory, sleep, and neurological disorders.

For example, expo participants can touch real brains, visit “Club Neuron,” a 40-foot brain cell model, and wear visual distortion goggles to experience how alcohol disrupts normal brain functions such as vision and coordination.

“Science literacy is a challenge nationwide, and our U.S. student performance scores are declining in comparison with scores of other countries. So it is important we work with our local schools and community on science education programs such as the expo,” said Kyle Frantz, Ph.D., Brain Expo director and an associate professor of neuroscience at Georgia State University.

“Nationwide surveys indicate that most high school seniors are not ready to make a C or better in college science courses, so we are trying to get them more excited about science at a younger age through the expo field trip coupled with classroom visits,” Frantz explained. “Our data indicate that students find neuroscience more fun and interesting and are more likely to see neuroscience as a potential career choice after participating in the expo.”

The expo is sponsored by the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, and Zoo Atlanta.

Location: The expo will take place in the Zoo's Ford Pavilion.

For more information, video, and list of hands-on stations, visit the expo website at www.cbn-atl.org/education/brainsrule.shtml

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About the CBN

The Center for Behavioral Neuroscience is a consortium of seven metro Atlanta colleges and universities including: Georgia State University, Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. More than 100 neuroscientists are engaged in the research program with the goal of understanding the basic neurobiology of social behaviors. The CBN also directs a comprehensive education program designed to educate the next generation of scientists. For more information go to www.cbn-atl.org.

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. An all-new carnivore complex, featuring the exciting debut of two new sun bears, is scheduled to open in summer 2010. Zoo Atlanta is also the proud home of Xi Lan, the only giant panda cub born in the U.S. in 2008, and the popular Boundless Budgies: A Parakeet Adventure, the largest interactive experience of its kind in the Southeast. Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of great apes and a global center of excellence for the care and reproduction of vanishing amphibians and reptiles. Zoo Atlanta is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.