



City of New Bedford  
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## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Orphaned and Blind, Eight Week-Old Red Fox Finds a Home at Buttonwood Park Zoo**

*fox kit “Piper” thriving in new enclosure  
built with support of two local companies*

**New Bedford, Massachusetts**--In late April the Buttonwood Park Zoo received a call from a local resident who had discovered an orphaned red fox kit (pup) whose mother had been struck by a car and killed. The concerned resident had been raising the kit in their home for several weeks prior to contacting the zoo. The fox was turned over to the zoo and upon examination zoo veterinarians determined that the young fox was blind.

Recognizing that this blind, human-imprinted fox could never survive in the wild, the Buttonwood Park Zoo has dedicated resources to raising this animal with the hope of incorporating her into its Animal Ambassador Program. The zoo’s Animal Ambassador Program allows rehabilitated wildlife to become an instrumental component of the zoo’s wildlife education initiatives and provides a home to many injured or orphaned native animals that would otherwise be euthanized. These “Ambassadors” are brought out into the community and into classrooms as part of outreach programs that help the participants garner a better appreciation of wildlife and understand the impact human activities can have on native species.

Although the fox, affectionately named “Piper” by zoo staff, had a rough beginning to life with the death of her mother and her lack of eyesight, the zoo’s newest member is still a playful, pouncing, energetic eight week-old animal. Piper, who currently resides in the zoo’s veterinary hospital, is thriving under the dedicated care of knowledgeable zoo staff. Staff has been working diligently to allow Piper to become accustomed to the sounds and smells of her new home at the zoo and she has proven to be incredibly resilient in spite of her blindness. Zoo staff are also acclimating Piper to a harness and leash so that she can safely explore zoo grounds and eventually be brought on school outreach programs.

The unexpected arrival of this special fox has resulted in the zoo reaching out to the community to help build her a permanent home at the zoo. Fairhaven Lumber Company has kindly donated the materials needed for Piper's behind-the-scenes enclosure and Ketcham Traps is also donating supplies for construction of a pen for the new fox.

The not-for-profit Buttonwood Park Zoological Society is accepting contributions on behalf of the zoo's Animal Ambassador Program. Those interested in helping further develop this zoo program can contact the Zoological Society at (508) 991-4556 ext. 13.

### **About Buttonwood Park Zoo & Buttonwood Park Zoological Society**

The Buttonwood Park Zoological Society (BPZS), a private, non-profit organization, was founded in 1969 to support the Buttonwood Park Zoo (BPZ) so that the Zoo will be a significant contributor to the conservation of nature both at home and throughout the world.

Buttonwood Park Zoo (BPZ) features over 180 animals and 30 exhibits, including elephants, bison, mountain lions, bears, eagles, seals, otters, and farm animals. BPZ is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and has been called "one of the finest small zoos in the United States" by that organization. For more information, visit [www.bpzoo.org](http://www.bpzoo.org) or call (508) 991-6178.

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