



## Press Releases

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### **Born Free USA and Ian Somerhalder Foundation Launch "Give it Back!"**

#### **Kids repurpose donated fur to support orphaned and baby wildlife at Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary**

Washington, D.C. – On January 28 at Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary in Locust Grove, Georgia, Born Free USA and the Ian Somerhalder Foundation (ISF) collaborated for their first joint animal welfare event: a youth initiative called "Give it Back!" The program is part of Born Free USA's successful [Fur for the Animals](#) campaign, which collects donated fur items and then sends them to wildlife rehabilitation centers to provide warmth, comfort, and enrichment to rescued animals in need.

At the "Give it Back!" event, nearly 20 kids, ages five to 17, learned the truth behind fur fashion and about the Fur for the Animals campaign (which has collected more than 2,000 fur items since its launch in 2014, valued at more than \$4.7 million and representing an estimated 75,000 animals killed). Then, with the help of adult volunteers, the [children sewed and crafted cushions and pillows](#) from donated fur coats, hats, and more for the resident wildlife at Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary. The children were then able to witness professional animal caretakers delivering the furs to resident foxes, primates, tigers, lions, and bears.

According to Adam M. Roberts, CEO of Born Free USA, "It is remarkable to see young people working diligently for wildlife. Their efforts turned something that came from cruelty and misery into items that will bring comfort and enrichment to wild animals recovering from mistreatment and abuse. Approximately four million animals are trapped for their fur every year in the U.S., and millions of others languish in cruel fur farms. The success of our 'Give it Back!' event demonstrates that the next generation is paying attention to the needs of all animals and will fight for their welfare."

Actor and CEO of ISF, Ian Somerhalder, said, "Collaboration and youth empowerment are fundamental components of our mission. This was a perfect example of doing that by partnering with Born Free USA, Noah's Ark, and motivated, inspired young change makers. Together, we collaborated to actually 'Give It Back!' as a part of the Fur for the Animals campaign to repurpose old fur clothes for injured and abandoned creatures. The fashion fur trade industry is a horrific example of animal cruelty, but with this campaign and the dedicated hearts of these youth volunteers, we were able to take a stand against fur for fashion and reclaim it by sewing pillows, blankets, and enrichment toys for rescued animals. Thank you to everyone involved!"

Kaitlyn, an 11-year-old who volunteered at the event, was grateful for the opportunity and lessons learned. "This is really fun and it's great that we're giving back to the animals. I kind of already knew fur was bad, but I didn't know how many animals it takes to make one fur coat. It's nice doing this for animals. Instead of buying beds for them, we can just give fur back to them!"

Allison Hedgecoth of Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary added, "Noah's Ark is thrilled to partner with such incredible, passionate animal advocacy organizations like Born Free USA and the Ian Somerhalder Foundation. In addition to our rescued animals benefiting, being part of an event that has such a profound impact on children was simply amazing and is, in fact, what Noah's Ark is all about: bringing children and animals together. I couldn't be happier with how the event turned out, and we are so blessed to be part of a movement to create a more enlightened, sustainable, and compassionate society."

#### **Editor's note:**

**Photos available:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bornfreeusa/sets/72157679845622965>

**Videos available:** <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSU5ztQYEklvDXLUbNpnlyRpzMpD1U54m>

**About Born Free USA:** is a global leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation. Through litigation, legislation, and public education, Born Free USA leads vital campaigns against animals in entertainment, exotic 'pets,' trapping and fur, and the destructive international wildlife trade. Born Free USA brings to America the message of 'compassionate conservation': the vision of the UK-based Born Free Foundation, established in 1984 by Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna, stars of the iconic film Born Free, along with their son, Will Travers. Born Free's mission is to end suffering of wild animals in captivity, conserve threatened and endangered species, and encourage compassionate conservation globally. More at [www.bornfreeusa.org](http://www.bornfreeusa.org), [www.twitter.com/bornfreeusa](https://www.twitter.com/bornfreeusa), and [www.facebook.com/bornfreeusa](https://www.facebook.com/bornfreeusa).

**About Ian Somerhalder Foundation:** ISF, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was founded by actor and environmental/animal advocate Ian Somerhalder, and is dedicated to empowering, educating, and collaborating with people and projects to positively impact the planet and its creatures. ISF focuses on raising awareness about environmental and animal protection issues, and supporting initiatives to promote green energy, global conservation, and anti-animal cruelty programs, as well as empowering youth to become a united and spirited force for change. More at [www.isfoundation.com](http://www.isfoundation.com).

**About Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary:** Founded in 1978, Noah's Ark Animal Sanctuary is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational sanctuary dedicated to bringing children and animals together. Our mission is threefold: To provide the best possible home to exotic, domestic, and native wild animals who are injured, abused, or abandoned. To provide awareness through our rehab/education programs that emphasize all living things have value no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. When we as a society can recognize this fact, we will begin to win the battles for conservation and preservation. And finally, to provide unconditional love and care for animals who have special needs in their lives whether mental, physical, or emotional. To learn more, visit [www.noahs-ark.org](http://www.noahs-ark.org).

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