



Media Alert  
For Immediate Release

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## Get Closer to Blooming Butterflies

*Butterfly Exhibit Opens June 19, Wings of Wonder Event June 19-21*

SAINT PAUL, MN (June 5, 2009) - See hundreds of butterflies from Africa, Asia, North, Central and South America flying freely in an indoor, temporary exhibit among tropical plants in a lush garden environment at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. Como's Blooming Butterflies opens June 19 and is open daily from 10am to 6pm through September 7.

Returning for its second and final year, Blooming Butterflies offers visitors a total immersion experience. The wildly popular exhibit that opened its doors last summer can once again be found in a colorful 2,500 square foot greenhouse that resembles a caterpillar. Featuring a thriving butterfly habitat that over the course of the summer will become home to over 100 species of butterflies from around the world, guests will delight in their interactions with the fascinating winged-creatures.

Blooming Butterflies presents visitors with a one of a kind opportunity to get closer to nature. Introducing families to the wonders of metamorphosis, Como's seasonal exhibit showcases intricate silk moth and monarch caterpillars, countless vibrantly-colored butterflies sipping nectar and taking flight and the chance to better understand and appreciate the life cycle of the creatures and their importance to the ecosystem. Inside you can chat with volunteers and ask questions or simply relax and enjoy the beautiful garden while butterflies flit and lazily fly around you and your family.

As many as 6,400 butterfly pupae (chrysalis) will be sent to Como throughout the summer, an increase from the expected 5,000 last year. The chrysalis is unpacked, inspected for any sign of disease or parasitoids, then pinned to foam boards and placed into the emergence chamber. They emerge anywhere from two days to one week. Inside the exhibit everyday guests will have the opportunity to release a butterfly of their own for only \$1. Both children and adults will enjoy the intimate experience of seeing their butterflies take flight into a beautiful garden home.

While a few of the butterflies exhibited in Blooming Butterflies are found in Minnesota, the bulk of them are not native. Como holds a special permit to exhibit these non-native butterflies. Most butterflies are short-lived, and of the species we exhibit, the average life span is two to four weeks.

If creatures in flight capture your curiosity, Como's Wings of Wonder event also opening on June 19 is another must-see. A long weekend filled with memorable encounters with birds, bats and butterflies, activities run daily from 10am to 4pm through June 21. Zoo gardeners and keepers will be giving fascinating presentations about Como's resident winged animals, and families can look forward to the daily story time that is sure to be both entertaining and educational. In addition, Wings of Wonder features volunteer-run booths that provide guests of

all ages with a good time. Interactive activities invite kids to step in and join the fun, while adults can find educational materials on gardening for birds, butterfly gardening and other related topics.

### **Como Park Zoo and Conservatory Background**

For over 100 years, Marjorie McNeely Conservatory and Como Zoo in Saint Paul, Minnesota has charmed, educated and entertained millions of children and adults while fostering an appreciation of the natural world, helping to make Saint Paul the Most Livable City in America. The Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is open 365 days; 10am-6pm from April 1-October 1 and 10am-4pm from October 2-March 31. Admission to both the Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory is always free and a voluntary donation is appreciated. For more information, visit [www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org)