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Contact: Amy Weirick
Office: (614) 848-8380
Cell: (614) 296-8513
Amy@WeirickCommunications.com

Great Vacations Travel EXPO Kids Day to feature Travel Channel star, family vacation giveaway, Zoo animals and more

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Great Vacations Travel EXPO, presented by AAA, announced today that Kids Day is slated for Saturday, Jan 20. Designed for the whole family, Kids Day offers parents the opportunity to talk one-on-one with travel experts to plan the perfect vacation tailored to their family's needs, interests and budget, while Columbus Zoo animals, fun activities, celebrity appearances and live entertainment delight the kids.

A special appearance by the biggest kid of all, Josh Gates, star of Travel Channel's *Expedition Unknown*, will highlight this year's Kids Day. Back by popular demand, Gates returns to the AAA Travel Stage, presented by Royal Caribbean, at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20 and 1 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 21. A noted adventurer with a deep-rooted love of off-the-map excursions, Gates spans the globe in search of the truth behind the most captivating and iconic unsolved legends. A favorite of kids of all ages, Gates will share amazing tales of his expeditions and will sign autographs, giving guests the chance to meet him in person.

Star of PBS' *Travels with Darley*, Adventurer Darley Newman will appear on stage at Noon on Kids Day. In addition, animals from Columbus Zoo and Aquarium take the stage at 11 a.m. as kids meet the critters that travel with Jack Hanna.

Also returning for Kids Day, the extraordinarily popular "Passport for Prizes" adventure game lets families collect stamps from exhibitors throughout the EXPO in order to be entered to win the grand prize. Valued at more than \$1,500, this year's prize is an unforgettable Explore Hocking Hills family weekend, including:

- Two nights in a deluxe three-bedroom Cedar Grove Lodging cabin with super-sized hot tub, family games and videos, on-site hiking trails and a fishing pond
- Fully guided Hocking Hills Canopy Tours for four
- High Rock Adventures, including eco tour, high rock challenge and rappelling experience for four

Beyond celebrity, animal and mascot appearances, and the family getaway contest, kids will love exploring the EXPO, including The Great Outdoors area. Presented by Metro Parks, The Great Outdoors lets kids discover area wildlife as they walk through a woodland setting, meet with naturalists and try their hand at the putting green.

Favorite family vacation destinations are all well represented at the EXPO, with parents having face-to-face access to the experts from exotic, far away destinations to close-to-home escapes. Trafalgar Tours, Caribbean islands, Universal Parks & Resorts Vacations, West Virginia Adventures, Ohio Amish Country and Ohio's Hocking Hills are just a few of the the more than 200 exhibitors, events and attractions on hand to help families plan their dream vacation.

The 2018 Great Vacations Travel EXPO, presented by AAA, opens Friday, January 19 and runs through Sunday, January 21, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Downtown Columbus. Hours are Friday, noon to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$8 at the door or at any AAA Ohio Auto Club store. AAA members who show their AAA card receive 50 percent off admission. Children ages 16 and under are admitted at no charge. Additional event details are available at www.AAAGreatVacations.com.

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EDITORS NOTE: Images, video, special media access and interviews are available. Contact Amy Weirick, O: (614) 848-8380 M: (614) 296-8513 or amy@WeirickCommunications.com.