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## NICMA hosts finger painting world record bid

*Thousands of children take part in NICMA's world record attempt*

Date issued: 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2009

**Embargoed to: 00.01 hours, Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August**

**Filming, radio interviews and photographs facilitated all day. The event will be launched by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Naomi Long, at 10.30am at the Zoo's Visitor Centre. Please see editor's notes for more details of the arrangements for this event.**

**Nearly 3,000 children and adults are expected to converge on Belfast Zoo today [Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August] to try to beat the current Guinness World Records® record for the world's largest finger painting.**

The event is being staged by NICMA – the Childminding Association which is aiming to break the current record which was awarded in 2007 to a 2,000 square metre (21,800 square foot) painting created in Austria.

The charity is undertaking the ambitious challenge as part of its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

***“We wanted to do something a bit different to celebrate our Anniversary,”*** explains NICMA's Director, Bridget Nodder.

***“And we've been overwhelmed with the interest we've already had from children, childminders and the public. We're pretty confident we can beat the record.”***

The gigantic artwork, dubbed 'The Big Picture', will comprise more than 2,000 pieces of canvas which will be painted separately and then sewn together.

More than 4,000 children have already contributed to the artwork, while nearly 3,000 children and adults are expected at the Zoo today to paint additional canvases.

The huge painting will feature a central image of a house to symbolize the home-based care offered by childminders.

NICMA staff and volunteers will be working all day to assemble the huge artwork in the Zoo's overflow car park.

The Zoo's Business Development Manager, Joy Bond, says the Zoo is delighted to be hosting the event.

***"This is one of the most exciting and challenging events we've ever held at the Zoo,"*** says Ms Bond.

***"We're not sure what the animals will make of it – but we know the children will just love this opportunity to get both messy and creative."***

The event is being launched by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Naomi Long [at 10.30am in the Zoo's Visitor Centre].

***"This wonderful and ambitious event will provide a great opportunity for children to get involved in a creative project which is tremendous fun,"*** she says.

***"At the same time, the event is helping to highlight the very valuable role of NICMA and the thousands of childminders who care for children in Northern Ireland."***

***"I wish this record attempt every success."***

In order to break the record, the finished artwork will need to cover an area more than half the size of a football pitch.

Some 1,000 litres of paint and 3,500 metres of canvas have already been used during the advance painting which has taken place for this event.

ENDS

**Editor's notes:**

1. **More details** about the NICMA finger painting challenge can be found on the event's website: [www.fingerpainting.org.uk](http://www.fingerpainting.org.uk) . For the latest information and updates, check the event's Twitter feed at: <http://twitter.com/NICMApainting>
2. **Timetable.** The Zoo will be open to the public from 10am to 7pm (last admission 5pm). However, it may be possible to facilitate media coverage prior to 10am if advance notice is provided. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Naomi Long, will launch the event at 10.30am at the Zoo's Visitor Centre.
3. **Arrangements. Media personnel should enter through Zoo reception, to the left of the Visitor Centre. Please bring photographic ID and sign in with Zoo reception staff.** Painting will take place by the lakeside at the Zoo or, if wet, in the Zoo's Education Centre. NICMA staff and volunteers will be assembling the giant artwork in the Zoo's overflow car park. It's provisionally estimated that NICMA will know sometime between 5pm and 6.30pm whether the artwork is larger than that produced by the current Guinness World Record holders. **A cherry picker will be available to facilitate filming and photography of the finished artwork at the overflow car park.**
4. NICMA – the Childminding Association is a charity, and is the sole organisation representing childminders in Northern Ireland. 74% of registered childminders here are members. For more details about NICMA, please go to: [www.nicma.org](http://www.nicma.org)