



PITTSBURGH ZOO
& AQUARIUM

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

125 YEARS



Highland Park Zoo, circa 1898

The Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2023, proudly embracing its history while looking toward the future. Since 1898, the Zoo has united the community as the place where guests can spend unforgettable quality time together while deepening their understanding of, and appreciation for, wildlife and the natural world. The past year marked the first full year of the Zoo's new Strategic Plan, bringing with it a renewed sense of purpose and a rapid change of pace to accomplish the established goals.



ANIMAL HEALTH

The elephant team continues to advance our husbandry training so we can best care for our herd. This training was put to the test when 15-year-old Zuri became positive for elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus (EEHV), a deadly disease that can affect all elephants. In African elephants, this disease tends to occur more and most critically in young elephants. Because her training was so solid, we were able to give her the treatments she needed for supportive care while her body fought the virus. After Zuri recovered, her half-sister Angeline also became positive for the virus. Just like Zuri, Angeline is also trained for these treatments, so the elephant team was once again able to

give the support she needed to get her through. Both girls are now healthy and clear of the virus thanks to the efforts of the elephant and animal health care teams.

Overall, 2,156 fish & aquatic invertebrates, 8 terrestrial invertebrates, 20 birds, 4 reptiles and 15 mammals went through the quarantine process.

Animal Health staff continued their diligent care of our residents, including a complete exam for Jiwa, the orangutan; monitoring Harry the gorilla's heart disease and managing his medications; and treating cheetahs with viral infections. The operating room was also busy with surgery on both Brigid the ring-tailed lemur and Ellie the guinea pig to remove cancer.

Our team of vet techs were kept very busy performing over 120 immobilization procedures, filling close to 2,000 prescriptions, and conducting over 450 fecal and urine tests and over 1,100 blood tests.

Animal Health staff worked with a veterinary nutritionist consultant to review every animal's diet and make appropriate modifications to ensure they were receiving a balanced and nutritious diet.



ANIMAL ARRIVALS

We welcomed two critically endangered baby western lowland gorillas into our troop. Charlotte was born on Valentine's Day to mom Ibo, while her brother Bo followed on May 11 to Moka. We welcomed two critically endangered Amur leopards, Mila and Grover, born to mom, Semba, and dad, Roman. The baby boom continued with three calves welcomed to the nyala herd. Hadari, a one-year-old pygmy hippopotamus arrived in May from Alabama's Montgomery Zoo to the delight of Zoo visitors.

The Kids Kingdom Australian aviary opened, featuring a variety of Australian birds including masked lapwings and blue crowned, wonga, and crested pigeons. The former alpaca yard, now a walk-through macropod yard, is home to our resident red kangaroo and newly added wallabies.

The Zoo also received a new female red panda, Marcy, to be a companion for our longtime resident Xia. As she gets more comfortable in her surroundings, she is becoming more outgoing and personable.

CONSERVATION

Zoo staff continued to define a new conservation strategy, as well as an aligned evaluation mechanism. This cross-team collaborative effort will enable us to strive for organizational impact around the key environmental challenges of our time. This conservation strategy also incorporates the latest science and applications that will help transform the Zoo as a conservation leader in local and global contexts.

A new animal welfare monitoring process was rolled out in January. Through this process, every animal in our collection has a welfare assessment completed at minimum once every quarter. These assessments ensure that welfare evaluations are done strategically to meet the needs of each individual animal to maximize overall care provided to our animals.

The Zoo replaced compostable and plastic disposable serveware – plates, bowls, knives, and forks – with



reusable washable aluminum trays and silverware. This action has reduced waste at the Jambo Grill by a significant amount: our landfill contribution will be decreased by an estimated 5,700 pounds each year! We also switched our receipt paper to Eco-chits, which is 100% phenol free, made from 100% recycled paper, and has a compostable cardboard core. As an added bonus, each time we purchase receipt paper from EcoChit, they will donate money to OneTreePlanted which is an organization that plants trees in California. It was determined that 210 trees were planted this past year because of this relationship.



Utilizing the Zoo's new **Species Selection Tool**, the Aquarium team went to work deciding which species of fish and invertebrates would generate conservation awareness for various areas around the world. Close to 30 new species of freshwater and saltwater animals were selected to join the Zoo's collection from over 5 different regions, including the Congo in Africa, the Amazon in South America, and the South Pacific.

CONSTRUCTION

All the many improvements to the Zoo's physical structure were designed to place the animals first. An Australian Aviary was created in Kids Kingdom. Placing the rocks and boulders in that exhibit was a Sisyphean task, but it came out great. As it matures, it will look more and more like an Australian rainforest. This couples nicely with the work we did just above this exhibit in the Kangaroo/Wallaby yard.

In habitat spaces, the rhino building's roof was replaced, new environmental enrichment opportunities were added to our tiger habitat, and the indoor gorilla

climb structure was replaced. The roof of the Education Complex was also replaced.

The entire HVAC system for the penguin exhibit was replaced. This was a one-of-a-kind improvement, as an air conditioning system for a penguin exhibit cannot simply be purchased and had to be specially constructed to replicate their environment. This extensive undertaking was completed in only four days!

A much-needed shade improvement was implemented for the Savanna exhibits. For 40 years, this area did not provide regular shade for the elephants and giraffes, and, with evolving standards, the Zoo was

glad to rectify the situation. Forty-foot-long timbers were installed and capped with 20-foot shade sails. The shade structures have improved opportunities for the animals to get relief from the sun. Shade sails were also installed on a smaller scale in the Kids Kingdom sea lion exhibit.

The Internet Technology department performed a highly necessary upgrade to the Zoo's virtual server system. These servers run most of our internal services, including email, the financial systems, animal daily reports, the phone system, security, and access controls. The new system is much more powerful and will provide us with years of use.

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CENTER

The International Conservation Center (ICC) is now included in the daily planning and operations of all the departments of the Zoo. This partnership and collaboration ensure that the ICC continues to accomplish great things.

The large elephant paddock was reinforced over the course of many months of hard work. Hay production activities restarted, and we were able to harvest a good amount of hay, despite an extremely dry spring followed by a sopping wet early summer.

New programs at the ICC made the facility accessible to the public for the first time. In July, we hosted the now annual Picnic with the Elephants, which saw close to 500 attendees and many wagon rides. Starting in the fall, we launched our own weekly guided wagon tours guided by our new ICC education staff. More than 500 people from Western Pennsylvania and nearby states, including West Virginia and Maryland, participated. The tours were selling out within minutes of going on sale and we are looking

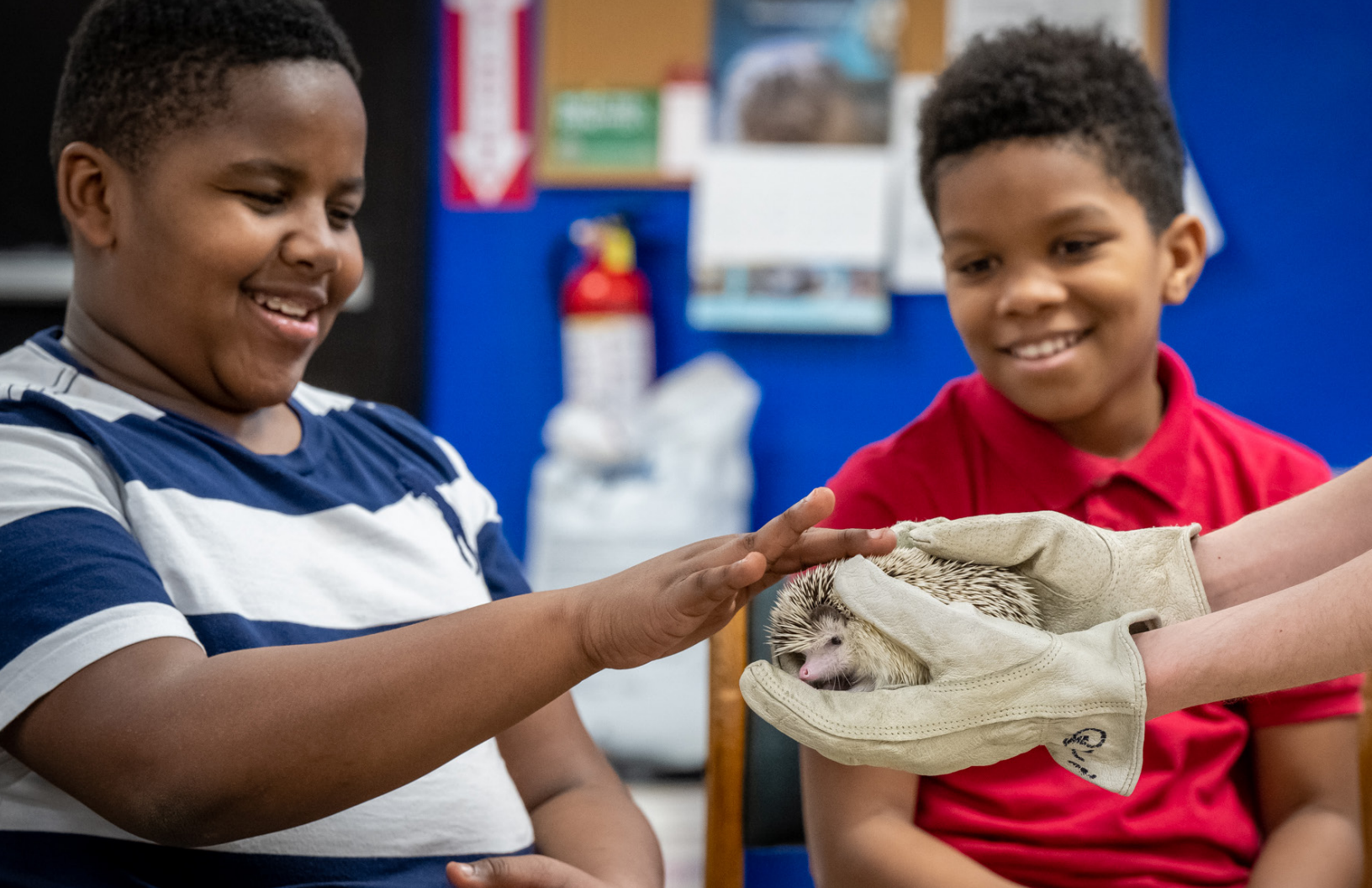
forward to relaunching the tours in 2024 as soon as the weather allows. The Trunk or Treat Halloween community family event was sponsored by six local organizations and attended by hundreds of guests. Elephant Wild Encounters were launched in December and allowed visitors to connect with elephants and observe training sessions.

The ICC hired its first permanent education staff members. Both the KFC Foundation and Somerset Trust awarded the ICC grants to renovate the basement of the lodge into a classroom which will allow us to launch additional education programming onsite.

A Bactrian camel and four reindeer have been selected for our collection at the ICC and we are looking forward to getting to know these new residents.

EDUCATION

In 2023, the Zoo welcomed 27,604 students for field trips and nearly 11,000 students for Learning Adventure classes at the Zoo. New guided tram tours for seniors (55+) were initiated to offer those with limited mobility an opportunity to see the Zoo in comfort.



The Zoomobile program rebounded in a big way this year. With the help of our education animal ambassadors, we have visited over 200 schools and organizations to support our mission of connecting people to wildlife and inspiring our communities to conserve nature for future generations. This year we have traveled more than 10,000 miles round trip. This is equivalent to a gray whale's migration!

Our community was able to demonstrate their commitment to conservation during Electronic April. We collected 12,938 devices and received the Silverback Award from the Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE) gorilla program for collecting almost half of the entire nationwide collection (31,967) for World Gorilla Day.

GUEST EXPERIENCE

Sixteen staff members successfully trained in sign language to engage with our guests through an initiative offered by the Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion committee.

Draw Alive, a new interactive element in the Aquarium, allows future graphic artists to color an ocean animal image, scan it, and then watch as it comes alive on the

screen. During the colder months, a winter theme was installed to celebrate Penguins on Parade and refresh the interactive for guests.

The Zoo chose to introduce international cultural exchange students to bolster our ranks during our busy season. We hosted a total of 45 university students from 14 countries, including Thailand, Ecuador, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

Expanded offerings of Wild Encounters include Giraffe Feedings and Penguins on Parade Marshals. These two new visitor experiences were completely sold out a week before they started.

The Asian Lantern Festival was even bigger and better this year. Increasing the number of displays from 60 last year to 75 this year, we had multiple themes and acknowledged the Zoo's 125th

anniversary with our welcome gate and recognition of some of the Zoo's most iconic animal ambassadors and conservation programs over the years.

Zoo Lights provided a popular Pittsburgh holiday experience again this year and included more illuminated displays. Over 35,000 attendees were dazzled by the lights in more than 7,000 cars. We had multiple requests to host a walk-through version of Zoo Lights and experimented by including four weekend nights with added entertainment and food offerings.

The Zoo again partnered with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, to offer free visitor admission on December 27 in exchange for a donation of canned goods. Attendance for the event approximated 1,000 visitors, and 2,000 pounds of food, in addition to monetary donations, were collected.



FINANCE

Total attendance for 2023 was 936,483 guests, which exceeded the forecasted budget of 900,000. This was the result of solid daytime admissions coupled with Asian Lantern Festival, ZooBoo, and Zoo Lights.

The Zoo expanded its efforts to reach underserved community members by removing financial barriers through its participation in the Museums for All program. This program recognizes the cost of admission can be a deterrent for many low-income families or individuals and, in April, the Zoo began offering \$3 general daytime admission for groups of up to four people when a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program EBT or Access card is presented along with identification. A total of 55,595 individuals have already attended via this program (or 6-7% of monthly attendance). We are excited about the utilization and overwhelming success of this program and even more excited to report that more than half are from Allegheny County!

DEVELOPMENT

The Development Team raised over \$7.2 million in 2023. Of this total, \$3.61 million was from Memberships purchased by over 22,000 households.

The new Corporate Membership program launched, designed for corporations to provide access to the Zoo as a benefit to their employees, while also receiving marketing benefits and showcasing their community involvement. The Grow Wild Society was revamped, adding new giving levels associated with some of our more popular animals and revising benefits to be more aligned with Zoo goals.

The onsite Round-up Campaign was initiated in retail and dining locations Zoo-wide, allowing guests to round up to the next dollar when making purchases. The Zoo is averaging about \$1,000 per month in revenue through this simple, but effective, program.



MARKETING & CREATIVE SERVICES

The well-received “Oh, Baby! A Future for Wildlife” ad campaign featured our newest bundles of joy, the Amur leopards, gorillas, and nyalas. These adorable ambassadors were showcased on ads, banners, and buses and had guests oohing and aahing as they learned more about these species.

The Zoo received over 51 million impressions on Facebook for the year, which, if spread to every person individually, covers about five states: the entire population of the tri-state area, Maryland, and most of New York.

A thundering herd of 21+ party animals converged on the Zoo throughout 2023. Summer Safari welcomed over 1,400 guests to A Pittsburgh Party on June 9; other successful community events included Animal Instincts, Sip & Swirl, Cinco de Rhino, and ZooBrew. As another one of our DEAL initiatives, the Zoo hosted its first Family Pride Night for the LGBTQIA+ community. The Zoo also hosted 151 private events.

The Zoo won six awards from the *Pittsburgh City Paper*, winning Best Birthday Spot and Camp for Kids; in Marketing, we placed in the top three for our TikTok and Twitter social channels, as well as best wedding venue. Lewis the giraffe received a third-place recognition as Best “Yinzer”.



HIRED & RETIRED



HIRED

Rachel Askey
Chief Financial Officer

Shelby Brokaw
*Visitor Service Evening
Events Coordinator*

Justin Conner
Laborer

Alyssa DeLuca
VP of Development

Kelsey Forbes
Mammal Curator

Evan Gates
Dive Safety Officer

David Gruber
Grounds Manager

Ron Gruca
Chief Advancement Officer

James Hannegan
Equipment Repair Specialist

Katie Hedderman
Major Gifts Officer

Jossette Hetrick
Senior Ambassador Animal Specialist

Whitney Jones
*Senior Education Specialist
Teen Coordinator*

Shafkat Khan
Director of Conservation

Brianna Kidd
*Institutional Advancement
Executive Assistant*

Silas Krupa
Life Support System Operator Level I

Vincent Laboon
Laborer

Nicholas Mantia
Keeper Transferred to Mammals

Zach McAuliffe
Accountant

Brandi Meadows
Receptionist

Lisa Melnik
Animal Keeper

Evan Mroz
Carpenter

Lauren Pawlak
Prospect Researcher

Matt Phillips
Communications Manager

Bailey Putnam
Aquarist

Alissa Rudolph
Corporate Relations Officer

Grayson Sloan
Development Coordinator

Gabriel Stevens
Laborer

Sela Tibbs
Laborer

Jenn Torpie
*VP-Education and Community
Engagement*

Troy Walters
Kitchen Attendant

Cheryl Werber
Education Sales Coordinator

Megan Williams
Marine Mammal Keeper

Mya Wood
Events Coordinator

RETIRED

Pamela Bena
Chief Financial Officer

Henry Kacprzyk
Curator of Reptiles and Kids Kingdom

Harold Leist
Equipment Repair Specialist

Margie Marks
Curator of Conservation Education

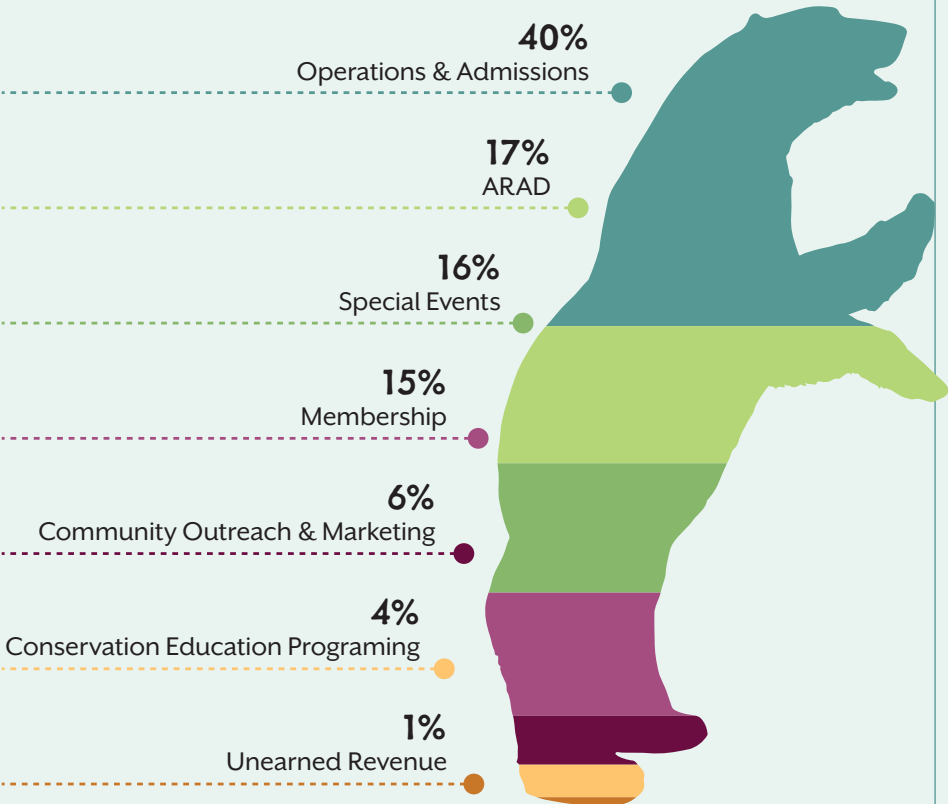
Lynn McCarthy
Lead Attendant

Kathleen Suthard
Lead Keeper

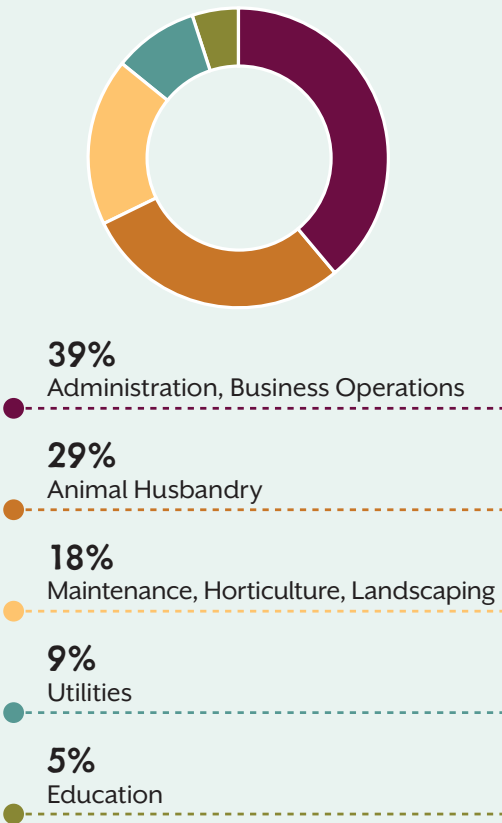


REVENUE & EXPENSES

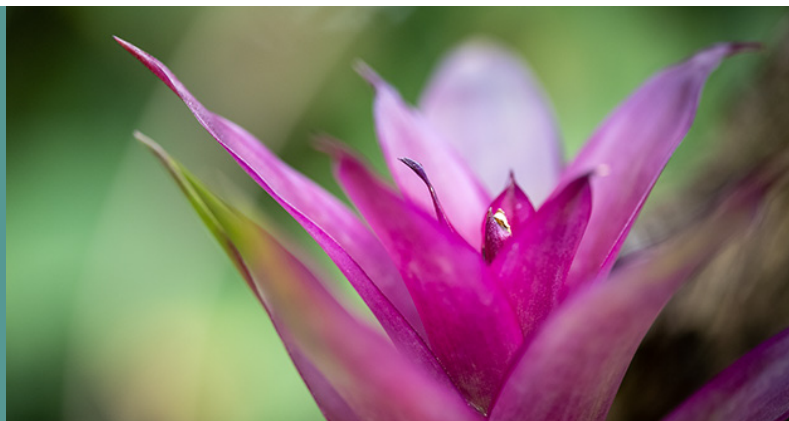
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