

ZOOGRAM

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore



FALL/WINTER 2018

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We appreciate everyone’s patience as we continue what is arguably the most extensive exhibit renovation in the Zoo’s history.

If April showers bring May flowers, then what do July thunderstorms bring? Well, they bring a LOT of water, as we learned here at the Zoo and surely you did too no matter where you live in the metro area. While we lost several trees during those torrential downpours, I’m pleased to report that the animals and their habitats weathered the summer storms just fine. Now bring on the sunshine and cool breezes! As fall approaches, it’s a thrill for me to get outside and see families and friends enjoying the Zoo.

Despite the rain and other unpredictable twists from Mother Nature, construction is proceeding apace in *African Journey*. We see progress every week, and it’s amazing to watch the earthmovers transform the exhibit landscape. The elephants and giraffes are handling changes to their environment with impressive adaptability, and meanwhile Hassan and Zuri, our resident lions, are faring just fine off-exhibit. Through this major transition, all three species remain under the expert care of animal staff. We appreciate everyone’s patience as we continue what is arguably the most extensive exhibit renovation in the Zoo’s history.

No matter what the day may bring—sunshine, thunderstorms, or excavators—we welcome you to the Zoo and we assure you that we are constantly at work on behalf of our guests, the animals in our care, and wildlife everywhere. This issue of *Zoogram* introduces you to some interesting community partnerships that we’ve embarked upon in order to make the Zoo an even more accessible place for all of our visitors. In the pages of this issue, you can also read about a great animal rescue story. The stars of the story are a tiny bog turtle, her even tinier offspring, and the people who cared for them at the Zoo and in their native wetland.

Don’t forget OktoBEARfest, coming up soon, and check out all the other events and programs we have planned for this fall. And remember, any day is a good day to visit the animals, so I hope you’ll join the fun and visit us soon.

Don Hutchinson
President/CEO



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PICTURED HERE:
Kilgore the bobcat has something in his sights.



Photo: Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park

ABBY THE CHIMP

If you know your chimpanzees well and if you pay attention, you may notice that the Zoo has a new chimp in its troop. Her name is “Abby” and she came to Baltimore in May from ZooTampa at Lowry Park in Florida. Over the course of several weeks, keepers introduced her slowly, carefully, and in stages to the other chimpanzees and now all are doing well together. Abby comes to The Maryland Zoo at the recommendation of the AZA’s Species Survival Plan (SSP) for Chimpanzees.



KUNEKUNE PIGS

Two new pigs are living in the Farmyard and these baby swine will make you swoon. Born in late February, they are kunekune pigs, a rare breed known for their smaller size and friendly, easygoing temperament. Kunekunes were once found only in New Zealand, living among the Maori people, but are now bred elsewhere, including the United States. Stop by to see the Zoo’s kunekunes during your next visit!

BLUE BIRDS

Last spring, Zoo Teens built and installed 4 nest boxes on the Mansion House Lawn to provide safe nesting habitat for eastern bluebirds and other small, native, cavity-nesting birds. Nest boxes have been key to helping eastern bluebirds thrive once again in Maryland (including Druid Hill Park) and other parts of their native range. The nest boxes were a hit! A pair of bluebirds nested in one and hatched 5 chicks; house wrens settled in another and hatched 4 chicks; tree swallows nested in a third and hatched 5 chicks; and both tree swallows and house wrens briefly occupied the fourth.

SPUR-WINGED LAPWING

If you see a small, skinny-legged, black-white-and-brown bird stomping its feet in the African Aviary, odds are it is the new spur-winged lapwing, a species of African wading bird. Spur-winged lapwings are known as “foot tremblers” because of their tendency to stomp their tiny feet in order to stir up tiny prey from dirt, mud, sand, and water. The Zoo’s spur-winged lapwing is our first ever.



RISE & CONQUER

OFFICIAL MASCOTS OF  THE BALTIMORE RAVENS

Two famous birds live at The Maryland Zoo but they don’t act like celebrities. They act like ravens. They chatter with each other, they size up newcomers with a sideways glance, they offer each other food, and they hide snacks for later. These are not just any ravens, though, these are Rise and Conquer, the official mascots of The Baltimore Ravens football team. Through a partnership with the Zoo, the franchise supports the birds and celebrates their presence at every home game and the Zoo trains and cares for them. As Animal Ambassadors, Rise and Conquer are featured in education programs on and off grounds year-round. But when football season begins each fall, they return to familiar territory: the field at M&T Bank Stadium in downtown Baltimore.

Game Day begins early in the morning for Rise and Conquer and according to Animal Collection Specialist Amy Eveleth, the ravens’ long-time lead trainer, “they always seem to know and they love it.” They get to Ravens Walk outside the stadium around 9:00, visit with fans for a few hours, and then head indoors to relax before going on field. They share a locker room with the Ravens cheerleaders, but that doesn’t faze them. They stay on their perches, eat their lunch, and mind their own business, even as the occasional cheerleader stops by for a visit.

Shortly before game time, Rise and Conquer go on field with Eveleth and their other trainer, Rick Wilson, to greet fans. Their fan group includes former Ravens star, Ed Reed, who seems to have a special way with ravens. “Conquer usually bristles when he’s on my arm and someone gets too close, but not Ed,” confides Eveleth. “One time, we were standing in the end zone and Ed had just scored. He had his helmet on, he still had the ball in his hand, and he just walked over and started chatting with Conquer, no problem.”

At the start of each game, as the players enter the stadium, Rise and Conquer raise their wings in salute. The song “Lose Yourself” by Eminem is always playing, and they recognize it. In fact, whenever and wherever Conquer hears that song, he bounces along to the beat. You might think that loud music, thousands of people, and a hyper-charged environment would fluster Rise and Conquer, but they don’t. “They are very, very smart birds,” says Eveleth, who have learned, through careful and constant training, to focus on their trainers. So long as that interaction is safe and predictable, they remain calm. Their ability to tune out even while tuning in to every whistle and every replay on the Jumbotron is remarkable.

“I’m impressed by them every time I’m with them,” says Eveleth. “I know how lucky I am to work with them. I never forget that.”



PLAN

YOUR NEXT VISIT

Every day at the Zoo, rain or shine, you can see animals, talk with staff and volunteers, visit education stations, and make great memories. There are plenty of ways to add a little something extra to your next visit, too, from Penguin Encounters to Stroller Safaris to special fall festivals at Waterfowl Lake. Check out our calendar, mark yours now, and we'll see you soon!

The Zoo will keep regular visiting hours through the end of December. During the months of January and February, we will be open to guests Friday through Monday. Please visit www.MarylandZoo.org for timely updates on events, exhibits, and construction progress.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Goat Corral: Brush, pet, or just visit the goats.

Creature Encounters: Start your visit – and meet Animal Ambassadors – at the Zoo's outdoor education center.

Education Stations: Stop by for some hands-on learning and fun at stations throughout the Zoo.

Keeper Chats: Keepers share stories and answer questions about Zoo animals and animal care.

Penguin Feedings: Twice a day, a Zoo educator narrates while keepers feed the penguins.

Jones Falls Zephyr: All aboard the Zoo train. Open daily, weather permitting. \$

Carousel: Take a spin on our vintage carousel. \$

Giraffe Feeding Station: CLOSED DURING CONSTRUCTION

\$: fee to participate

SEPTEMBER

Musical Petting Zoo

A kid-friendly event with the Baltimore Gamers Symphony Orchestra

September 15
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Yoga at the Zoo

Can you say downward dog?

September 16
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Field Talk

Gorilla Doctors in Africa

September 16
6:30 p.m. – 9 p.m.
Mansion House Porch
\$ R

CrossFit at the Zoo

Prepare for bear crawls and burpees.

September 20
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
\$ R

Animal Craft Safaris

Creative animal fun for kids 4+

September 20 & 30
11 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
Penguin Education Center
\$ R

Wild About Rhinos Day

They do mega-fauna proud.

September 22
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Wild About Primates Day

Say hello to your animal cousins.

September 23
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Stroller Safari

Tour the Zoo with your toddler.

September 27
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
\$ R

Breakfast with Penguins

Sip your juice, sight a penguin.

September 29
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
\$ R

OCTOBER

Yoga at the Zoo

Vinyasa, then visit.

October 6
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

CrossFit at the Zoo

Add in some push-ups.

October 7
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
\$ R

Wild About Penguins Day

Celebrate our colony and their wild cousins.

October 13
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Yoga at the Zoo

Strike a pose.

October 14
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Animal Craft Safaris

Animal-themed creativity for kids

October 18 & 28
11 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
Penguin Education Center
\$ R

Stroller Safari

For our youngest animal lovers!

October 6 & 25
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
\$ R

OktoBEARfest

Fall brew fest at Waterfowl Lake

October 20
12 p.m. – 5 p.m.
\$ R



Zoo BOOO

Halloween happenings at the Zoo

October 26-28
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Brunch with Santa

For those who like to sleep in

December 1
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
\$ R

NOVEMBER

Yoga at the Zoo

Last chance this fall!

October 14
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Wild About Bears Day

How well do you know your bears?

November 4
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Where the Wild Things Art

Craft beer + crafts = fun for grownups

November 14
5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Penguin Education Center

Yoga at the Zoo

Let's move our mats indoors...

December 16
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Where the Wild Things Art

A Zoo take on "happy hour"

December 19
5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Yoga at the Zoo

Treat yourself!

December 30
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

DECEMBER

Breakfast with Santa

Holiday fun on the Mansion House Porch

December 1, 8 & 9
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
\$ R



ON THE GO AND IN THE KNOW

If you really want to be in the know about what's going on at the Zoo—from animal care to wildlife conservation to exhibit design and more—then we invite you to sign up for a brand new **Insider's Tour**. Take an hour-long walk with a Zoo educator and experience the Zoo like never before!

Insider's Tours are offered Fridays through Mondays from 2-3 p.m. For more information and to reserve your spot, please visit www.marylandzoo.org/insiderstour.

TINY TURTLES TIMES TWO

By Sarah Evans, Zoogram Editor

When you are a turtle no bigger than a credit card and lighter than an unpeeled banana, you need to react quickly when trouble comes sniffing around. You need to get inside that house you carry around on your back and lock the door tight, so to speak, before some larger animal eats you. Presumably, that is exactly what a tiny female bog turtle living in a Delaware bog tried to do in early summer 2017, but not quite quickly enough. An exposed front foot was bitten by an unidentified predator—maybe a raccoon, maybe a snapping turtle. The predator didn't make a meal of the bog turtle but it got away with a small snack.

A baby bog turtle, hatched at the Zoo, was later released in the same bog where its mother was rescued.

In any event, there she was with her mangled front foot when agents from the Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife found her. Luckily, she was a “known” turtle. She was wearing a transmitter and already being monitored. This facilitated her rescue, and she was quickly referred to The Maryland Zoo Animal Hospital for treatment. The Zoo collaborates often with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), other local and state agencies, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and it is not unusual to get a call from a neighboring state agency as well.

“We were in a great position to help because of the experience that we have with bog turtles and with other similar native species,” says Dr. Ellen Bronson, Director of Animal Health, Conservation, and Research. “Working in a zoo, we learn something new every day about so many different species. We’re always very honored and happy to put that knowledge to work to help out a wild animal like this one. It’s one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of our job.”

As soon as the new patient arrived, it became apparent that she was also carrying eggs. This was big news because bog turtles are a rare and threatened species; every potential hatchling is precious. Hospital staff set the injured bog turtle

up with mud and nesting material—the trappings of a mini makeshift bog—and within a few days she laid her eggs. They were transferred to an artificial incubator and the mother turtle was prepped for surgery. Zoo veterinarians successfully operated on her tiny foot and within a few weeks, the wound had healed completely. She was soon released back in her Delaware bog.

“Turtles are very seasonal animals—they’re out from spring until fall—so it was really important to return her to her habitat in plenty of time to brumate, or hibernate, through the winter,” says Dr. Bronson. The Delaware DFW has since been able to track the mother turtle and confirms that she is thriving. “She’s an adult turtle so she knew exactly what to do when she got back,” says Kevin Barrett, the Zoo’s Reptile & Amphibian Collection and Conservation Manager.

Meanwhile, one of the five eggs turned out to be fertile and, after a few weeks’ gestation, it hatched, producing a baby bog turtle about the size of a nickel. The hatchling spent the winter at the Zoo and was released a few months ago, in early summer, in the same Delaware bog. “Every bog turtle is important at this point,” says Dr. Bronson, “so we were honored to step in and help this female bog turtle and her hatchling get another chance at life in the wild.”

Keeper Chris McIntosh prepares to release an adult female bog turtle that was treated at the Zoo’s animal hospital.



Zoo Staff Assists With Maryland DNR Bog Turtle Survey

Once a year, an e-mail goes out to Zoo staff inviting them to participate in a day of “muddling.” To “muddle” is to crawl around on hands and knees in wet, marshy mud. It sounds very Harry Potterish, but in fact it’s what you do when searching for bog turtles. “It’s a grueling day and when I offer it up, I definitely don’t try to oversell it,” jokes Kevin Barrett. Even so, several staff members signed up this year, eager to participate in the annual bog turtle survey conducted by the Maryland DNR.

Bog turtles are very small, very rare, and very secretive. Few Marylanders have ever seen one, even though they are native to this and neighboring states. They are threatened in Maryland and the U.S., victims mainly of habitat loss, yet small populations persist in spring-fed wetlands located mostly in northern counties of this state, including Cecil and Harford. For more than two decades, federal and state biologists have worked closely with private landowners and conservation partners such as the Zoo to monitor local populations of bog turtles,



protect the secret sites where they live, and safeguard or restore their vanishing habitat. The annual survey is critical to this work; it presents an opportunity to check on the turtles, check in with landowners or managers, and assess habitat conditions.

Bog turtle survey season runs from about mid-April through mid-June. This year, Barrett and other Zoo staff spent six days searching for the tiny turtles. They gathered early in the morning, disinfected boots and hip waders, traveled to the site, and met up with DNR agents. They started each survey with a "surface walk" to note any amphibian or reptile resting at surface level; what you see can be indicative of the health of that site. Then came the muddling. Surveyors get down on hands and knees and move from tussock to tussock, feeling for bog turtles in tall grass, buried in mud, or burrowed in holes or tunnels beneath the water's surface. To a person, Zoo staff described the work as messy, mucky, and somewhat uncomfortable but well worth it, especially since each saw at least one wild bog turtle.

"It was a little unnerving at times to have my entire arm shoved down a hole in the mud because you just never know what's at the other end," joked Andrew Young, manager of the Zoo's Commissary, about his first stint as a bog turtle surveyor. "But it was an experience that I will never forget because it's not every day you get to help a vanishing species in your own backyard."

"I'd heard of the plight of the bog turtle for many years but obviously had never come across one in the wild," says Peter Martin, Zoo Naturalist. "I was thrilled to be out there and, as with other citizen science programs I do, I felt like I was helping to make a difference."

"I was tired by the end of the day and covered in mud," adds Danielle Regan, Area Manager of the Zoo's Maryland Wilderness, "but was it worth it? Absolutely! It's important work for the Zoo to be doing."



TURTLE CHARM

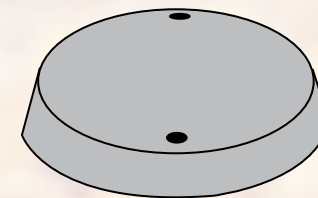
October is just around the corner, so let's start planning your Halloween costume! Follow these step-by-step instructions and you'll soon be turning on the turtle charm. See you at ZooBOOO!

Materials:

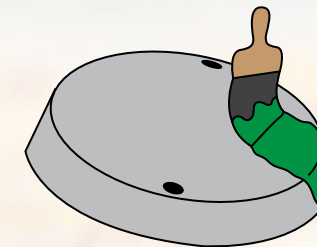
- long-sleeve shirt and pants (green or brown)
- oval roasting pan
- felt (black, tan, white)
- sash or belt (brown)
- headband (brown, black, or bright color)
- socks (brown or green)
- green paint
- brown and green face paint
- scissors, paint brush, adhesive glue or tape

Instructions:

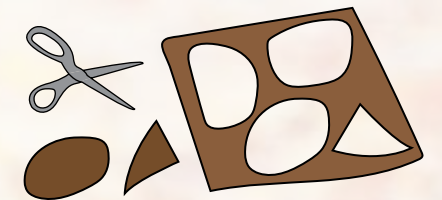
1. Cut a hole midway down each side of roasting pan (your shell).



2. Paint roasting pan green.



3. Cut a large oval, several circles, and a triangle from brown felt to create belly, shell spots, and tail.



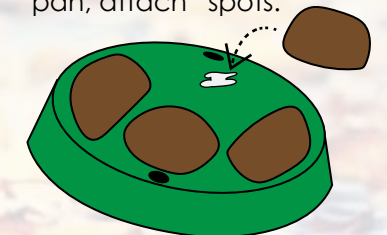
4. Cut 2 fist-size circles from white felt and 2 quarter-size circles from black felt. Glue black circles on white circles to create eyeballs.



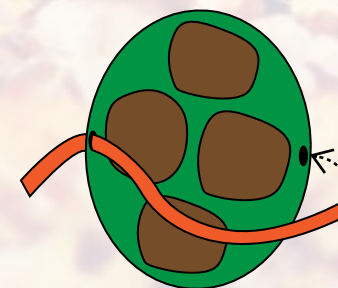
5. Glue or tape eyeballs to headband.



6. When paint is dry on roasting pan, attach "spots."



7. Run belt or sash through roasting pan "shell."



NOW LET'S TRICK-OR-TREAT!

Paint your face, put on pants and long-sleeve shirt, affix "belly" and "tail," tie on your "shell," put on your eyeball headband and "hand socks," and you're ready to go!





BUILDING CONNECTIONS

By Sarah Evans



For years, Kerrie Kovaleski, Director of Volunteer Programs, has wanted to create a pathway for people with intellectual or physical disabilities to volunteer at the Zoo, but there have been limits to what she and her staff could do on their own. “We’re really good at ‘zoo,’” she admits, “but lack experience with disability.”

In recent months, that has begun to change thanks to a new partnership among the Zoo, Towson University, and The Image Center, a local non-profit organization that serves people with disabilities. Together, the three organizations have created Zoo Partners, a mentoring program that matches current Zoo volunteers with young adults with special needs interested in volunteering here. “We found somebody who can teach us what we need to know, in The Image Center and the Towson [occupational therapy] students,” says Kovaleski, “so I thought let’s take full advantage of all that extra support and give it a try.”

For six weeks last fall and again this spring and summer, volunteer pairs were on grounds together a few days a week, greeting visitors, answering questions, sharing biofacts, and helping in the Farmyard’s Goat Corral. From the start, enthusiasm has been strong on both sides. So many current Zoo volunteers signed up as mentors that some had to be wait-listed. Meanwhile, partners from The Image Center who at first might have been shy or hesitant took to their assigned tasks, shadowed their mentors well, grew increasingly confident about engaging with guests, and are having fun.

“It’s been a beautiful marriage of three organizations and a great experience so far,” says Jessica Leone, Program Director for Transitioning Youth at The Image Center. Working with Kovaleski and the Towson students, she has helped advance the Zoo Partners program by conducting disability awareness training at the Zoo, preparing participants in advance for their responsibilities, and providing regular feedback and support. Participating families have noticed and appreciated the high level of care and coordination. “Every single family has commented on how impressed they’ve been with the steps that the Zoo has taken to understand the people they’re working with and to create a positive, enriching environment,” says Leone.

For Kovaleski, the Zoo Partners program is a win-win proposition that promotes inclusion, builds connections, and expands the Zoo’s reach. “I want to facilitate volunteer experiences for everyone and I think that’s in the Zoo’s best interest,” she says. “When people come to the Zoo and see a more diverse group of volunteers on grounds—and see that they’re all passionate about animals—it has an impact. It really drives home the message to all of our visitors, who are a diverse group themselves, that no matter who you are, you can care

about conservation and you can participate.”

WALKS ON THE WILD SIDE

Hannah Rupert, the Zoo’s Manager of Public Programs, shares Kovaleski’s interest in building connections to all sorts of Zoo visitors. She, too, is exploring viable partnerships with community organizations that can make this possible. Recently, Rupert started a new program in collaboration with the Greater Maryland Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association to bring people with early-stage dementia or Alzheimer’s disease to the Zoo along with their caregivers. The once-monthly program is called Walks on the Wild Side and is modeled after a similar program started at the Houston Zoo a few years ago.

“I was glad to be approached with the idea,” says Rupert, “because I’ve always been interested in developing programs for unique audiences such as this one.” As it turns out, the timing also was perfect. When the Alzheimer’s Association contacted Rupert, she had recently been reading about how nature can benefit those with dementia. She fully appreciated the impact that a Zoo program like this might have. “What’s true for anyone can be especially true for people with dementia,” she says. “Getting outside, getting fresh air and exercise, changing the scenery—all those things are beneficial for the body and, in turn, the brain. Being able to come to the Zoo might also be a way for some people with dementia to reconnect with their past and reconnect with nature because many older people—more so than today—grew up outdoors.”

Rupert and Susan Findley, Public Programs Coordinator, have now led a few Walks on the Wild Side and are very encouraged by the direction the program has taken. During the first hour-long walk, the guests were fascinated by the ravens in *Polar Bear Watch* and wanted to talk about them at length. Rather than cut their time with the ravens short, Rupert adapted the tour on the spot. “They had so many good questions,” says Findley, “and it was really neat to hear their stories.” Rupert and Findley quickly came to appreciate the value of slowing things down and letting conversations take their own natural course. With



each Walk on the Wild Side, they now tour a particular area of the Zoo, covering as much ground as the group wants, and then visit privately with an Animal Ambassador.

Yolanda Wright, who coordinates this and other social outings for the Alzheimer’s Association, attributes the relaxed, flexible approach to the program’s success. “It’s been really well received by everyone so far,” she says, “and that’s due in large part to how good Hannah and Susan are at presenting content and how easygoing they are. It’s been really excellent, and they’re just great.”

As with Zoo Partners, the success of Walks on the Wild Side is rooted in creative and constructive community partnership. “It’s something I’m very proud of,” says Rupert, “and I feel like this has opened doors.”

GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND

Erin Cantwell, the Zoo’s Mammal Collection and Conservation Manager, is exploring another interesting partnership that, at first glance, seems to cater more to four-footed Zoo visitors but ultimately will benefit two-footed ones as well. Last spring, Cantwell got a call from the Bay Region chapter of Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a national non-profit organization that breeds, raises, trains, and places guide dogs with people who are

blind or visually impaired. Cantwell and Dr. Ellen Bronson, Director of Animal Health, Conservation & Research, met with Cindy Tait, Guiding Eyes Regional Manager, and Paige Ritter, volunteer puppy raiser, in order to discuss the possibility of bringing puppies-in-training to the Zoo to desensitize them to all sorts of stimuli that the Zoo—and in some cases, *only* the Zoo—could provide.

At that meeting, it became clear that Guiding Eyes and the Zoo share a similar philosophy and approach. “We may be working with different species,” says Cantwell, “but the concerns that they have for their animals are very much the same as what we have for ours, and their approach to training is very much like ours, where you take things slowly, you don’t push too hard, you pay close attention to the animal’s cues, and you elicit voluntary participation.” Cantwell and Bronson agreed to a trial run at the Zoo with two puppies, a German Shepherd and a Labrador Retriever.

The Guiding Eyes group arrived on a weekend morning before the Zoo opened to the public. Cantwell and the two handlers took the puppies on a mobility cart, over the suspension bridge in the *Maryland Wilderness*, on the shuttle, and past many Zoo exhibits. Every new experience was a learning curve for the dogs, and it was especially

eye-opening for Cantwell to see how they reacted to the Zoo animals and vice-versa. The puppies did not enter the African Aviary but as they walked around its perimeter, the Hadada ibis tracked them closely and protested loudly. The puppies were caught off guard by the ibis as well as the cheetahs, which caused the normally languid big cats to sit up and take notice. The chimpanzees and colobus monkeys also warned the puppies off, with foot stamps and other displays.

Things could have become overly tense for the puppies and some Zoo animals if not for the very professional way in which their handlers reacted. “When we walked by the cheetahs, the little [German Shepherd] got concerned and started barking. Immediately her handler drew back and understood that this was a serious situation for us,” says Cantwell, “We also realized that it was a serious situation for them because we’ve now pushed that puppy past her comfort zone.” Both sides knew exactly how to defuse each situation, and this is why Cantwell feels comfortable moving forward—albeit cautiously—with the partnership.

“Guiding Eyes is very excited to partner with the zoo,” says Tait. “The Zoo has given us a great opportunity to further socialize our puppies and provide them with a multitude of exposure opportunities.” Meanwhile, Cantwell sees potential for good give-and-take. “We’re providing a service to help train the puppies,” says Cantwell, “but part of my bigger plan is to have them help desensitize our animals so that ultimately the Zoo can be a more accessible place for everyone.”

That is, after all, what it’s all about, and that is exactly what interesting and rewarding community partnerships such as these make possible.



Each Tuesday and Thursday, a small convoy of trucks rolls into the Zoo at the Commissary Gate bearing loads and loads of fresh snacks for animals that like to feast on leaves, branches, and small tree limbs, also known as “browse.” All this fabulous foliage comes from healthy trees trimmed by BGE during its annual tree-trimming program, which helps ensure safe and reliable electric delivery for customers. Thanks to an innovative new partnership with BGE, the tree trimmings are not going to waste. Instead, BGE is donating and delivering them to the Zoo.

“BGE employees work every day to maintain quality electric power for our customers. By proactively trimming trees that could pose a threat to overhead electric lines serving our customers, we are able to reduce the number one cause of service interruptions,” says Derrick Dickens, vice president of Technical Services for BGE. “By partnering with The Maryland Zoo, we also are finding a use for the trimmings that enhances the animals’ diets and quality of life.”

Once BGE vegetation management crews identify healthy and diet-appropriate trees, they bundle and deliver trimmings to the Zoo twice a week. Commissary staff and volunteers help unload, sort, and wash the browse, which is then bundled up and delivered to various animal areas around the Zoo.

Animals both small and tall, from tortoises and rabbits to elephants and giraffes, receive the browse, which is spread throughout enclosures to encourage natural foraging behaviors.

“Tulip poplar, mulberry and beech are some of the most favored browse cuttings for the animals,” says Andrew Young, the Zoo’s commissary manager. “It’s been such a great program so far and the animals are really the true beneficiaries, which is really what it’s all about for us—providing the best possible nutrition for the animals in our care.”

“BGE has been a long-time supporter of The Maryland Zoo and we couldn’t be more proud to partner with them on this unique program,” says Don Hutchinson, president/CEO of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. “Not only are the animals benefiting from such fresh vegetation, but we also are able to funnel the funds we are saving to other areas of animal care within the Zoo.”

The browse program saves the Zoo nearly \$2,000 each week by reducing the need to purchase browse from farms. “There has been so much fresh browse coming in that we are now freezing some from various shipments so we can thaw it out and use it during the winter months when they are not trimming trees,” says Young. “This is such an important partnership for the Zoo and we are grateful for BGE’s support.”

FRESH MUNCHIES FOR THE ANIMALS!

The browse program saves the Zoo nearly \$2,000 each week, and the animals are the true beneficiaries.





Hiedi Sturm:

Exelon employee, excellent volunteer

Hiedi Sturm, like most dedicated Zoo volunteers, lives a double life. During the week, she works for Exelon in a suburb of Philadelphia. Many weekends, though, she dons her red shirt and spends the day at the Zoo, narrating penguin feedings, answering questions about any and all animals (especially penguins), guiding guests, and doing a variety of other good deeds.

During each volunteer shift, Hiedi speaks to hundreds of people of all ages about animals and conservation. She conveys facts and aims to inspire people to care about wild-life and to get involved in making the world better. Hiedi's passion for animals magnifies the impact of her spoken message and ensures that Zoo visitors feel empowered to keep learning and finding ways to help.

When Hiedi began volunteering at the Zoo more than six years ago, she was living in Baltimore. Now she lives out of state, but that does not deter her from still volunteering at the Zoo. In fact, she has taken her commitment to a whole new level! She has contributed more than 350 hours of service and has leveraged her passion for the Zoo into a personal push to have Exelon partner with us.

"In 2017, I proposed that GenCo [Exelon Generation Company] partner with The Maryland Zoo for our Annual GenCo Environmental Summit. Through a series of planning sessions, we identified Mike McClure, General Curator at the Zoo, as keynote speaker," said Hiedi. "I thought this would be a great way to advance the missions



Sturm, 4th from right, with Zoo staff, Nancy Hinds, Executive VP of Institutional Advancement; Mike McClure, General Curator; Jane Ballentine, Senior Director of Development and Communications; Kerrie Kovaleski, Director of Volunteer Programs; daughter Constance Sturm; Albert Hatton, Exelon Manager of Environmental Programs; and William Swahl, Exelon VP of Operations, Power.

of both GenCo and The Maryland Zoo. Mike gave a wonderful presentation and brought four Animal Ambassadors for a post-session meet-and-greet with employees. He was able to discuss the various problematic environmental impacts on specific species. I know our employees appreciated the presentation and the opportunity to pose for pictures with 4 endangered species."

For the past twelve years, Exelon has honored outstanding employee volunteers during their Energy for The Community Volunteer Award program. In early June, during a special ceremony held in Philadelphia, Hiedi was presented with a Cherry E. Cooper Achievement Award for her volunteer work at The Maryland Zoo. McClure and several other Zoo staff were there to congratulate her on this fantastic achievement. The Cherry E. Cooper Award is Exelon Corporation's highest award of recognition, given annually to an employee for outstanding dedication and service professionally and personally to the company and community. The award was accompanied by a generous \$10,000 donation to the Zoo in Hiedi's name.

We are truly grateful to Hiedi for the work she does and for the example she sets, and we hope to have her on our team for many years to come!



SATURDAY
OCTOBER 20

BUY
EARLY & SAVE

Do you dance the polka? Do you drink beer? Do you love fall festivals? Then mark your calendar for OktoBEARfest, the Zoo's homegrown version of a German beer festival. Sample local and national brews, try some Oktoberfest-inspired foods, and enjoy live music at Waterfowl Lake. Lederhosen appreciated but not required!

Purchase tickets online at www.marylandzoo.org/oktobearfest. Admission to the Zoo is included, same day only.

Date: October 20 **Hours:** 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. **Prices:** \$15-65



WWW.MARYLANDZOO.ORG/OKTOBEARFEST

CONTACT THE ZOO

- General Information
(410) 396-7102
- Events
(443) 552-5276
- Membership
(443) 552-5281
- Adopt an Animal
(443) 552-5281
- Development
(443) 552-5275
- Education
(443) 552-5300
- Human Resources
(443) 552-0889
- Volunteers
(443) 552-5266
- Group Sales
(443) 552-5277
- Visitor Services
(443) 992-4585
- Gift Shop
(443) 552-5315
- Rentals
(443) 552-5277

Administrative offices are open Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Zoo is open daily during the months of March through December and Friday-Monday during the months of January and February. The Zoo is closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

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GET A *jump start*
ON THE HOLIDAYS

GIFT A ZOO MEMBERSHIP

**New animals, new events, and new experiences
make now a great time to be a Zoo member.**

This fall, enjoy all the wild benefits including:

- **25% off guest passes** - Bring the extended family and save big on extra tickets.
- **Connect with penguins for less** - Get members-only savings on a Penguin Encounter.
- **Discounts on events** - This includes tickets to OktoBEARfest, our fall beer festival!
- **FREE Admission** - To events like Zoo Booo! and Bunny Bonanzoo.

