

# ZOOGRAM

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore



SPRING 2020



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I enjoy talking to people I meet around the Zoo and hearing what they think.

As you might imagine, running a zoo is not a Monday-through-Friday 9-to-5 job. More than 1,500 exotic animals in residence make sure of that. No hour, much less day, is predictable or the same. There are late night calls, early morning meetings, and weekends that hum with activity. It may surprise you to learn that Saturdays and Sundays are among my favorite days to be “at work,” but I’ll tell you why. There are no meetings scheduled, no conference calls placed, and less e-mail traffic. When I come in on a Saturday or Sunday, I walk.

Leaving the confines of my office behind, I walk through the Zoo. Yes, I’m looking at animals and their habitats, but I am mostly focused on you, our members and guests. I enjoy seeing people of all ages marveling at the penguins, wondering how big the elephants really are, and gasping as the polar bears dive and swim past the underwater viewing window.

This is what I see: people sharing experiences together, not reading their email or texts, not staring deep into the abyss of a smart phone. I see people asking questions, learning something new, and just having fun being outside in beautiful, natural surroundings.

I enjoy talking to people I meet around the Zoo and hearing what they think of the new habitats, the animals they’re visiting (including two new baby chimpanzees), or their interactions with staff and volunteers. These moments I have with guests on grounds serve to make me proud of the things we have accomplished with the help of our supporters, including you. The conversations are meaningful and provide insight into what we do well and what we can do better.

Here at the Zoo, we are constantly inspired by the awesome responsibility that we have to care well for our animals and to provide the best possible experience for our guests. When you visit this spring, you’ll be able to see how positively the lions, elephants, and giraffes are responding to their new habitats and how the chimpanzee troop is responding to the new additions. Maybe you’ll also catch a glimpse of the black-and-white colobus monkeys outdoors in their new overhead trail! All are incredible experiences to be had here at the Zoo. Read through this issue of *Zoogram* and you’ll also learn about awesome experiences that the Zoo is delivering in the community, including to children in some local hospitals.

These experiences are all possible because of your support. I thank you for that and look forward to seeing you soon.

*Don Hutchinson*

Don Hutchinson  
President/CEO



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Thank you to Zoo sponsors *Chase* and *McCormick*.

PICTURED HERE:  
Hassan leans in for a drink in the new African Journey lion habitat.





### PENGUIN CHICK UPDATE

Every year between Labor Day and late January, a dramatic scene plays out in the inner sanctum of *Penguin Coast*. African penguin pairs guard their nest boxes fiercely and take turns incubating precious eggs. One by one, the eggs begin to hatch and a new generation of chicks joins the Zoo's colony. This year, as of late January, we were eleven and counting! African penguins are endangered in the wild, and the Zoo maintains one of the world's most successful breeding programs for this species. Breeding recommendations are made by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) African Penguin Species Survival Plan (SSP). Jen Kottyan, Avian Collection & Conservation Manager, serves on the SSP's Steering Committee.

### SENSORY INCLUSION CERTIFICATION

"We strive to make the Maryland Zoo welcoming to everyone," says Zoo president Don Hutchinson. That is good reason for the Zoo to now be the first public destination in Maryland certified as "sensory inclusive" by KultureCity, a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that provides sensory inclusion training and tools. Guests with sensory needs can come to the Zoo and check out a sensory bag, at no cost, equipped with noise-canceling headphones, fidget tools, and verbal cue cards. New signage throughout the Zoo denotes loud areas where noise-canceling headphones might be helpful and quiet areas where guests can take a pause.

### BABY ANTELOPES

As the weather warms this spring, two baby antelopes born recently at the Zoo will make their public debuts. Look for tiny "Poppy", a pint-sized baby blue duiker, in the African Aviary exhibit with her parents. Across the boardwalk, you'll see months-old "Joel", a male sitatunga calf born in late September to first-time mother, "Noel." These two births came at the recommendation of the AZA's Species Survival Plans for these species. The Zoo now cares for a herd of 12 sitatunga and a family of 3 blue duikers.



## through the LOOKING GLASS



Late one sunny afternoon, three young visitors to the Zoo popped in and out of groundhog "head poke" bubbles while a brightly banded eastern milksnake slithered nearby. Mind you, the snake was separated from the children by glass. That might explain why it slithered so calmly, unfazed by their play, tongue-flicking all the way.

In neighboring enclosures along the well-lit passageway, a copper-colored American toad peered out from its perch high atop a log and a diminutive bog turtle rested in a pool of water. These animals, along with a broad-headed skink, are now living in the Zoo's newly refurbished Meadow exhibit in *Maryland Wilderness*. The exhibit showcases native species in inviting new habitats and is enhanced by eye-catching signage and upgraded behind-the-scenes space for keepers.

Each animal resident is a wonder in its own right: a tree-climbing lizard whose head turns red (males, at least), a well-known toad with a penchant for song, a non-venomous mimic of the notoriously venomous coral snake, and a turtle both tiny and rare. Of these four species, only American toads are commonly seen and heard in Maryland's backyards, fields, and forests. The other three go about their lives less visibly, which makes seeing them at the Zoo all the more exciting. Bog turtles are especially elusive, given that they are critically endangered in the wild. They are a prime focus of the Zoo's Native Species Signature Animal Program (SAP), meriting strong conservation action.

The next time you pass through the Meadow, be sure to follow the path that leads behind the eastern box turtle yard. Don't move too fast. Spend a few minutes quietly visiting these animals in their new habitats, and your appreciation for native wildlife will surely grow.



# PLAN

## YOUR NEXT VISIT

Celebrate a new season of outdoor fun at the Zoo. Come visit the animals and then join us for breakfast with your favorite animal, an overnight campout, an adventurous day of nature exploration, or a relaxed twilight stroll. And mark your calendar for Brew at the Zoo over Memorial Day Weekend!

While planning your next visit, please check the Zoo’s website – [www.MarylandZoo.org](http://www.MarylandZoo.org) – for timely updates on events, programs, exhibits, and improvements.

## DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Goat Corral:** Brush, pet, or just visit the goats in the Farmyard.
- Creature Encounters:** Start your visit at the Zoo’s outdoor education center, where you may encounter Animal Ambassadors.
- 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:** Enjoy an up-close moment with the world’s tallest animal. \$

\$: fee to participate

### MARCH

**Family Edventure Program**  
Explore nature with your family.  
**March 1**  
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
\$ R

**Breakfast with Chimps**  
Start your day in a wild way.  
**March 14**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Zoo Snooze Overnight**  
Enjoy the Zoo after dark.  
**March 14-15**  
6 p.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Penguin Education Center  
\$ R

**Zoo Bloom**  
Get wild about Maryland & Farm Day!  
**March 21**  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Breakfast with Penguins**  
Fish is on their menu, not yours.  
**March 22**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Junior Science Explorers**  
Put your curiosity in play.  
**March 28**  
11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
\$ R

**Yoga at the Zoo**  
Strike a pose near penguins.  
**March 29**  
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

### APRIL

**Family Edventure Program**  
Bring the kids for hands-on nature adventure.  
**April 4**  
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
\$ R

**Yoga at the Zoo**  
Is there a penguin pose?  
**April 4**  
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Mary Sue Candies Bunny Bonanzoo**  
Colored eggs galore and more  
**April 10-12**  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Breakfast with the Easter Bunny**  
Hop on over to the Mansion House.  
**April 11**  
8:30a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Citizen Science: iNaturalist and Camera Traps**  
Investigate and contribute to photo-science.  
**April 14**  
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
R

**Breakfast with Penguins**  
No tux required.  
**April 18**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Zoo Snooze Overnight**  
Don’t forget your sleeping bag!  
**April 18-19**  
6 p.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Penguin Education Center  
\$ R

**Party for the Planet**  
Celebrate Earth Day with us.  
**April 19**  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Citizen Science: Bio Blitz**  
Party for the Planet Bio Blitz  
**April 19**  
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
R

**Wild About Penguins Day**  
Wonder why they waddle? Come find out!  
**April 25**  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Breakfast with Bears**  
Did you ever imagine such a morning?  
**April 26**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Junior Science Explorers**  
For kids who love science, nature, and animals.  
**April 26**  
11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
\$ R

### MAY

**Breakfast with Penguins**  
Sip your juice, sight a penguin.  
**May 2**  
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
\$ R

**Family Edventure Program**  
Try something new at the Zoo.  
**May 3**  
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
\$ R

**Twilight Stroll**  
Bring your friends, family, and flashlight!  
**May 9**  
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
\$ R

**Yoga at the Zoo**  
Vinyasa, then visit.  
**May 16**  
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Sip & Stroll**  
An after-hours Zoo tour for adults.  
**May 16**  
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
\$ R

**Zoo Snooze Overnight**  
Leave the s’mores to us.  
**May 16-17**  
6 p.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Waterfowl Lake  
\$ R

### M&T Bank Presents BREW AT THE ZOO

Raise a glass and dance the afternoon away at this good-time fundraiser for the Zoo. Bring a date or bring your kids– it’s a party for all ages!

Advance tickets can be purchased online and include unlimited beer and wine samplings, a complimentary tasting glass, and admission to the Zoo. VIP packages are also available. Purchase your tickets soon– this event will sell out!

**DATES: MAY 23 & 24**  
**HOURS: 12 P.M. – 7 P.M.**  
**PRICES: \$15-\$76**



**Junior Science Explorer**  
Curious young minds welcome.  
**May 30**  
11 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
\$ R

**Citizen Science: Nocturnal Animals**  
Focus on frogs, bats, and owls.  
**May 30**  
5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
R

### JUNE

**Family Edventure Program**  
Join your kids in nature fun.  
**June 6**  
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
\$ R

**Sip & Stroll**  
Enjoy a sunset stroll.  
**June 6**  
5 p.m. – 7 p.m.  
\$ R

**Zoo Snooze ADULT Overnight**  
A camp-out for the 21+ crowd.  
**June 6-7**  
6 p.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
\$ R

**Citizen Science: Stream Clean-Up**  
Streams & Debris  
**June 14**  
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
R

**Wild About Giraffes Day**  
Look way, way up and admire.  
**June 20**  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Yoga at the Zoo**  
Outdoors at Penguin Coast  
**June 20**  
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Breakfast in Africa**  
Enjoy a different watering hole.  
**June 20**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Breakfast with the Penguins**  
Say good morning to the colony.  
**June 26**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R

**Wild About Enrichment Day**  
What is it and why does it matter?  
**June 27**  
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**Breakfast with Giraffes**  
Pancakes for you, browse for them.  
**June 28**  
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.  
\$ R



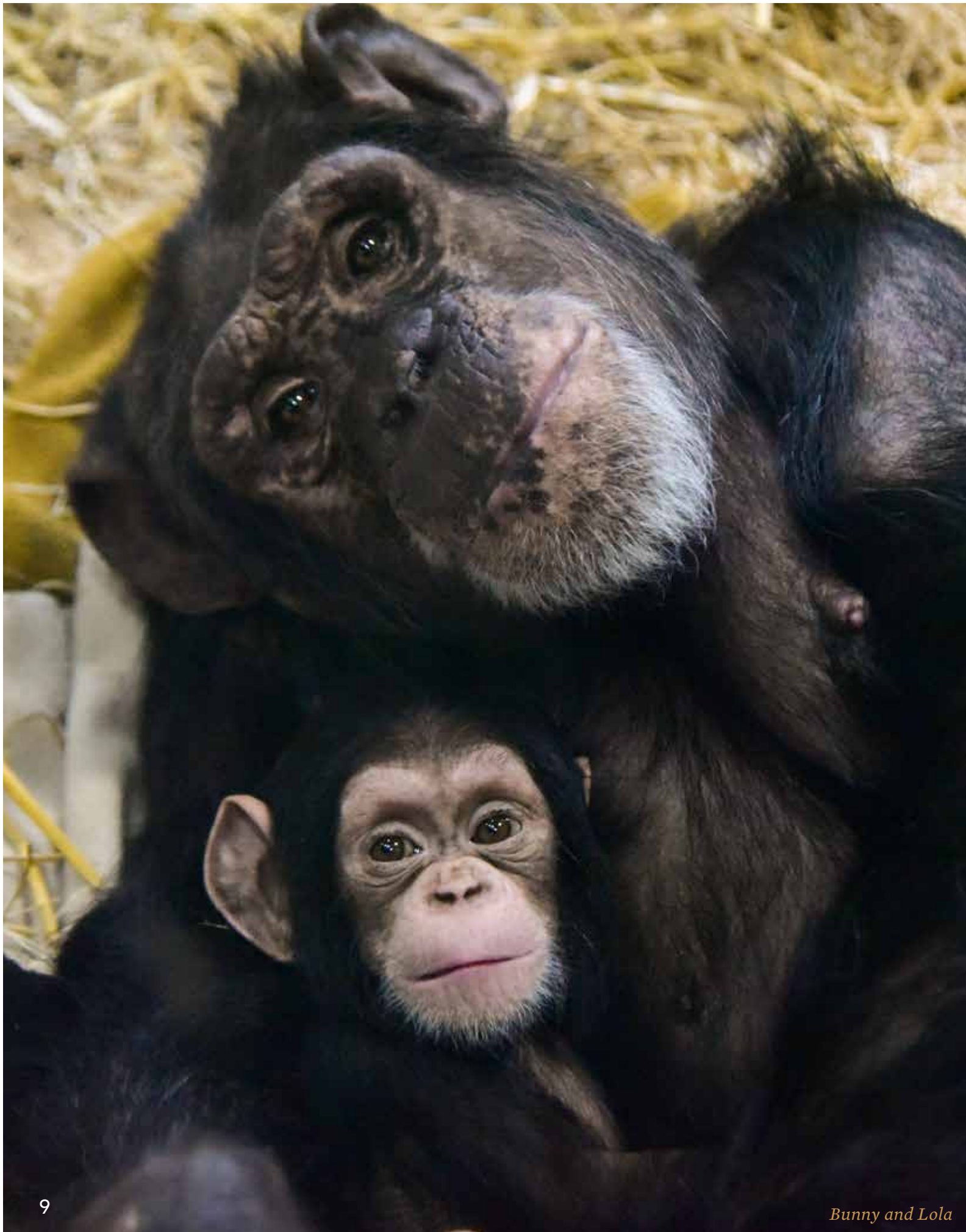
A young chimpanzee with dark fur and a pinkish mouth is sitting on the back of a larger adult chimpanzee. The adult's back is covered in dark, shaggy fur. The background is a blurred forest with green foliage and brown tree trunks. The title 'DAUGHTER TIME' is written in a white, hand-drawn, slightly irregular font across the upper left portion of the image.

# DAUGHTER TIME

By Sarah Evans

*Nobody has spent more time studying the social and family life of chimpanzees than British primatologist and conservationist, Dr. Jane Goodall. More than half a century ago, she moved to Gombe National Forest in Tanzania to start what would become the world's longest-running and still ongoing field study of chimpanzees. She lived among our closest primate relatives for decades, observing their every move, and has written extensively about mothers and babies and the primacy of that relationship in chimpanzee life.*





One theme resonates throughout Goodall’s writings on chimpanzee mothers and babies: not all mothers are alike. Some are playful, solicitous, and nurturing. Others are bungling and inept. Others still are perfunctory in their maternal duties but inconsiderate and even callous toward their offspring.

### LESSONS FROM GOMBE

Old and experienced “Flo” was a model of maternal excellence. She supported her newborns well, holding them close, helping them to nurse, and teaching them at the right time how to ride on her back. She was appropriately protective of each new baby but also playful, and she knew how and when to invite older offspring to get to know their small siblings. She managed the dynamics of her large family expertly.

“Melissa,” by contrast, was less experienced and more “normally fearful and cautious” than Flo. Too afraid to let others see her infant, “Goblin,” she inadvertently caused chaos in the troop when she first appeared with him. She did not understand, or had not yet mastered, the social complexities of introducing, protecting, and supervising an infant in a group setting.

“Passion was positively callous,” wrote Goodall. Passion often ignored the cries of her infant, “Pom,” cut feedings short, and walked impatiently ahead. “When Pom was a year old,” wrote Goodall, “it was a common sight to see Passion walking along followed by a whimpering infant who was frantically trying to catch up and climb aboard her moving transport.” Passion remained indifferent, and for the duration of her childhood, Pom remained terrified of abandonment.

### KUDOS TO BUNNY

Given the variability in interest, aptitude, and temperament among chimpanzee mothers, one has to admire the maternal instincts of “Bunny,” a 29-year-old female in the Zoo’s chimpanzee troop. She gave birth to her first infant, “Lola,” on July 5, 2019. Since then, she has been consistently gentle, patient, and attentive to her daughter, even if a bit quirky in her mothering style.

The Maryland Zoo manages a troop of 14 chimpanzees, with Lola as nearly its newest member (keep reading; we’ll explain). Her birth came at the recommendation of the Chimpanzee Species Survival Plan (SSP) of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Chimpanzees are native to the tropical forests of equatorial Africa but are becoming increasingly rare there. The species is classified as endangered by the IUCN, the world’s leading conservation organization.

### FIRST-TIME MOTHER

If Bunny were a wild chimpanzee, she would have introduced her baby to the troop within a few days of birth.

Bunny would need the support and protection of the troop, and so would have to risk whatever reaction her daughter’s debut sparked. In a zoo setting, though—and especially at this zoo, where we have the resources and the staff expertise to effectively manage the complex dynamics of a large troop—Bunny can afford to take her time.

This works to her benefit because Bunny is almost entirely deaf. Years ago, keepers came to realize this by observing her interactions with other chimps. “When males would display,” explains Pam Carter, Area Manager of Chimpanzee Forest, “they would tear around and stamp their feet and bang on the mesh or glass, and Bunny wasn’t moving out of the way. She wasn’t hearing them.” Knowing this, Carter decided to give Bunny space and time apart from most of the troop while getting to know her newborn. “We were concerned that if Bunny were in with a large and dynamic group, she wouldn’t be aware quickly enough to get out of the way in order to protect herself and her newborn,” she explains.

Additionally, Bunny is a first-time mother and a chimpanzee that was separated early from her own mother while living at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center in Atlanta, Georgia. She moved to the Zoo in 1995 at the age of five and was integrated into the current troop, but she undoubtedly missed the opportunity to model important behaviors from her mother. “She’s a first-time mom, so we weren’t sure how she was going to react,” says Carter, “and we knew she would just have to learn things on the fly.”

### EARLY DAYS IN THE DAY ROOM

When Bunny went into labor in early July, she was with “Joice” and “Raven,” two chimps to whom she is closely bonded. Joice, 47, came to the Zoo with Bunny in 1995. She is the troop’s oldest chimp, its alpha female, and an experienced mother. Raven, 24, is also a high-ranking female in the troop and the first chimpanzee ever to be born at the Zoo.

Soon after giving birth, Bunny started spending time in the Day Room inside Chimpanzee Forest with her newborn. From the very beginning, Joice or Raven or both kept her company. In those early days, Joice mostly napped quietly in a corner and Raven kept a respectful distance while Bunny explored with Lola. During that time, Bunny also experimented with motherhood. She would sometimes put Lola down for brief spells, but always thoughtfully and carefully, often on a makeshift nest of hay, paper, or even lettuce leaves. She tried back-packing Lola early on, too, but must have realized this was a bad idea. She did a few other things that Flo or Joice might consider unusual but not ultimately harmful.

Keepers watched Bunny closely to be sure that she was responding to Lola despite her deafness. They observed that while she might not hear a normal cry of hunger, she could



hear—or at least feel—a full-fledged scream from her daughter and was always quick to respond. Despite her quirks, Bunny is figuring motherhood out. “She does things her own way, but it’s working for her,” says Carter. “And there’s no doubt she’s a good mom—very sweet and very loving.”

### MEETING OTHER CHIMPS

For chimpanzees, infancy lasts about five years, until a baby chimp is weaned. During this period of time, mothers provide all parental care while fathers remain anonymous. Infants receive warmth, food, and protection from their mothers, as well as early life lessons on how to survive in the forest and in the troop. At first, an infant is too weak to hold up her head much less cling to her mother’s fur, so a mother holds her baby close to her chest or stomach. By about two months of age, a baby chimp is strong enough to hold tight, and by six months, strong and coordinated enough to ride on her mother’s back.

It must be very exciting for a baby chimp to start riding on top rather than underneath because suddenly the world comes into focus. Instead of a face full of fur, the baby chimp can look around and see all sorts of new things. It should come as no surprise, then, that this is also about the age when a baby chimp starts getting curious about other chimps.

The dawn of new relationships is an important milestone. As essential as a mother is, she cannot raise a baby chimp on her own. These are highly social animals with complex rules of engagement, and it takes more than one chimp to teach a baby how to get along in a group. A young chimp needs to interact with other chimps in order to learn her place in the troop. Over the course of the first three years, she will become increasingly mobile, playful, and independent.

### NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS

The process of interacting with other chimps starts slowly, though, while an infant is still in the protective care of her mother. For Lola, it began over the fall and winter. She was

exposed gradually to other members of the troop as they started spending more and more time with Bunny in the Day Room. This was a learning experience for mother and daughter, as Bunny reasserted her place in the troop and established herself as Lola’s protector.

As the weather warms this spring, keepers plan to get Bunny and Lola outdoors so that they can spend time with other chimps in the yard as well as in the Day Room. This will present new challenges for Bunny as her little daughter approaches her first birthday. To date, Bunny has been relatively low-ranking in the troop, but she gets along well with all other chimps and mostly stays out of trouble. Her demeanor and relationships won’t necessarily change now that she is a mother, but she will have to decide how much and how often to intervene on Lola’s behalf. “When Lola begins to wander towards other chimps and do other things, it will be very interesting to see how Bunny deals with that,” says Carter.

Luckily, chimp society builds in a grace period for its youngest members. “Normally, small infants are shown almost unlimited tolerance from other members of the community,” wrote Goodall. Lola will be able to get away with overtures that won’t be accepted a few years down the road. That will give her and Bunny plenty of time to learn.

Meanwhile, at some point in the not-too-distant future, Lola will also become a teacher, as role model and playmate. That is because even at the tender age of less than a year, she is no longer the youngest chimpanzee in the troop! Remember Raven, companion to Bunny during those early days of motherhood? Well, it turns out Raven was pregnant, too, and is now a first-time mother herself! She gave birth to a daughter of her own, “Violet,” on December 29, 2019.

With two new babies in the troop, the Zoo’s chimpanzees are in for some rollicking, frolicking times ahead. Come visit this spring and see for yourself!



Raven’s newborn, Violet

# SPICE IT UP!

WHAT is Sage?



A Mediterranean herb known for its sweet and savory flavor and medicinal properties

WHO is Sage?



A female African penguin chick—the first to be hatched at the Zoo this breeding season!

**WHY** name penguins after spices? Every year, we choose a theme for naming the Zoo’s new crop of penguin chicks. This year, we chose spices as a theme and, in partnership with McCormick (see p.16), held a naming contest for our first chick of the season.

Now let’s get cooking! In honor of Sage, try making this delicious sage brown butter to spoon over chicken, pasta, or vegetables.

Bon appétit!

## SAGE BROWN BUTTER\*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 8 Tablespoons butter
- 1 clove garlic, crushed and chopped
- 1/4 cup sage leaves, coarsely chopped
- 1/8 Tablespoon ground black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Melt butter in medium saucepan.
2. As butter begins to bubble, add chopped garlic and stir for 1 minute.
3. Add chopped sage and continue to stir for another 1-2 minutes until butter turns pale brown and has a rich, nutty aroma.
4. Remove from heat and season with pepper.
5. Spoon and serve!

\*Recipe courtesy of The Spruce Eats.



MC Mandolia connects a young patient with Zoo penguins.



# Reaching Out

By Sarah Evans

“Echo” is a 21-year-old female African gray parrot with strong opinions, a telling squint, and a good ear. She prefers women to men. She’ll let you know when she is not in the mood. She is small and chatty. She says “hello” in a surprisingly deep voice, trills “la, la, la” in song, and when minding her own business on her perch, beeps and squeaks and makes button noises just because. She can pinpoint voices that she knows well and demonstrates keen strategic understanding of how to get a peanut. She is a stalwart member of the Zoo’s Animal Embassy, accustomed to appearing before audiences of all ages in education programs on and off Zoo grounds.

Not long ago, Echo was listening in as a Zoo educator mentioned that said parrot could be asked to show her wings. Instantly, Echo stretched her dark gray wings their full breadth. The educator, Lauren Guzman, a member of the Zoo’s Outreach team, stopped in her tracks and asked in astonishment, “Did she just show her wings?”

“Absolutely, she did!” replied Kristin VanBuskirk, manager of Zoo outreach programs, who happened to be standing beside Echo.

The moment was astonishing not because Echo promptly demonstrated a trained behavior. She does that all the time.

She is an intelligent and reliable parrot who knows that if she demonstrates a particular behavior in response to a particular cue, she will be rewarded, probably with a peanut. Rather, the moment was astonishing because Echo improvised. Typically, she shows her wings when cued with a finger flick. In this case, she eavesdropped on a conversation, heard the word “wings,” trusted the voice, and showed her wings without waiting for the finger flick. Apparently, she surmised that this was the fastest route to reward.

What made the moment even more astonishing was that Echo heard the word “wings” through an i-Pad. At the time, she was responding to Guzman’s voice, but Guzman was

miles away visiting pediatric patients in a local hospital as part of a new outreach program recently launched by the Zoo. Meanwhile, Echo was in Druid Hill Park, on a perch in the Zoo’s Education Department, attended by VanBuskirk.

As this scene unfolded, a young patient lying in a hospital bed watched Guzman’s reaction with fascination. What could be better distraction from the unwelcome reality of a hospital stay than a parrot doing improv to get a peanut?

## *Piloting a pediatric outreach program*

This encounter with Echo captures the unique intimacy of the one-on-one visits that characterize the Zoo’s pediatric outreach program. That intimacy was born of necessity, as you will soon learn, but it is delivering unexpectedly wonderful moments for kids dealing with the stress of hospitalization.

The Zoo began developing its pediatric outreach program approximately two years ago with the support of a generous and flexible grant. VanBuskirk met with staff at two local hospitals to brainstorm ways to “bring the Zoo” to pediatric patients. The Outreach team then spent a full year piloting the program, which evolved into something quite different from a typical ZOOMobile visit.

Along the way, there were unique challenges to overcome. First and foremost, there was the challenge of bringing live animals into a hospital setting. This would be logistically complicated, to say the least, and potentially dangerous to patients who are immunosuppressed. There was also the challenge of serving all kids who might want to participate. Few pediatric floors, if any, have auditorium-like gathering spaces where a ZOOMobile presentation could be hosted. Even if they did, not all patients would be able to leave their rooms to attend.

It soon became evident that there could be no one-program-fits-all solution. Every pediatric patient has unique needs and considerations, and Zoo educators would have to adapt their visits accordingly. They would go room to room, escorted by hospital staff, and visit one on one with each child. They could not bring Animal Ambassadors with them, so what could they offer instead by way of an animal encounter?

## *Virtual visits connect parrots and patients*

This is where technology came into play. The Zoo already had experience running distance learning programs that connect local school children through live video feeds to scientists studying polar bears in the Arctic. Why not try something similar to connect pediatric patients in local hospitals to Animal Ambassadors back at the Zoo? VanBuskirk and her team proposed “virtual visits” that could occur in real time through an i-Pad.

Here’s how it works: One educator, carrying an i-Pad,





Animal Ambassador penguins have also been featured in the Zoo's pediatric outreach program, including on a recent "virtual" behind-the-scenes tour at Penguin Encounters conducted by Kristin VanBuskirk.



## A NEW RECIPE FOR PENGUIN NAMES

By Claire Aubel

knocks on doors and visits patients at the hospital. Another educator, back at the Zoo with a featured Animal Ambassador, establishes a live video feed through a second i-Pad. Once the connection is made, the child can see and talk to both Zoo educators while also admiring the antics and adaptations of Echo or another parrot. (A green-winged macaw named "Louie" and a military macaw named "Tyson" are equally enthusiastic participants in the pediatric outreach program.)

So far, the program has been well received by hospital staff, patients, and their families. "What we've come up with is a really good model because we can adapt on the spot," says VanBuskirk. "We can reschedule a visit or reduce or lengthen the duration of a visit based on how a patient is feeling. That gives us great flexibility to meet the needs of each child."

"And since we see kids of widely varying ages, this model also lets us gear the conversation appropriately," adds MC Mandolia, an educator on the Outreach team who often does the hospital visits. "If I'm with a very young child, I might just ask Louie to say 'hi' and then we'll talk about his rainbow colors. But if it's an older child who has lots of questions, we might get into how African grays or green-winged macaws live in their native ranges or how these birds are cared for at the Zoo."

### Meet Louie, an i-Pad-loving macaw

To date, the three parrots in the Zoo's Animal Embassy—Echo, Louie, and Tyson—have been featured most often in the pediatric outreach program. That's fine by them. "They love the attention," confesses VanBuskirk, "and it's excellent enrichment for them." The parrots enjoy interacting with people and seem genuinely intrigued by the i-Pad screen.

"If a child waves to Louie on screen, he'll lean in really close to the i-Pad, like he's trying to get a better look," says Laura Newman, an educator who often handles the birds back at the Zoo. "Even when the screen goes black, Louie can still see his own reflection for a few seconds. He'll tilt his head, lean in, and listen really closely."

It could be that Louie is expecting that parrot on screen to start chatting him up. Or maybe he's waiting for the screen to light up again and establish a new connection with another child in a hospital across town. Either way, Louie would welcome it.



Louie, the green-winged macaw

The newest batch of penguin chicks at the Maryland Zoo will add a sprinkle, dash, and pinch of flavor to the *Penguin Coast* colony. Since last September, 11 chicks have hatched and each will be named after a spice, in keeping with this year's naming theme. The Zoo reached out to McCormick & Company, a Corporate Member of the Zoo since 1993, to partner on the name game and promote the Zoo's newest penguins.

"We're so excited to be 'adopting' these little chicks for the season and taking them under our wing," said Jill Pratt, VP of Marketing Excellence at McCormick. "We have supported the Zoo for years and are pleased to bring more attention to the great work they do in our community and conserving animals in the wild."

This season, the first chick hatched on October 19, 2019. The Zoo announced the partnership with McCormick in early December and invited the public to vote on the first chick's name. In the mix were Sage, Sesame, Tarragon and Thyme. The contest ended in early January with more than 7,000 votes cast. Sage won with nearly 50% of the votes!

McCormick broadcast the naming contest to its social media audiences and more than 9,000 e-newsletter subscribers. The Hunt Valley-based company also dished up customized recipes featuring sustainable seafood and some of this year's spice monikers (which, in addition to Sage, include Fennel, Dill, Coriander,

Za'atar, Sesame, and Bay—as in Old Bay, of course.) Overfishing is a major threat to African penguins in the wild, and the unique Zoo-McCormick partnership is bringing awareness to this conservation challenge while also promoting Seafood Watch, a sustainable seafood advisory for consumers, chefs, and businesses.

"Having a company like McCormick partner with us to reach a whole new audience and get the word out about African penguins is absolutely amazing," said Jennifer Kottyan, Avian Collection & Conservation Manager at the Zoo. "These birds are on the brink of extinction for a variety of reasons, one of which is overfishing. The more we can educate the public about the dangers these birds face, and the small changes we can all do at home to help, the better off these birds will be in the long run. There is a quote I've seen that says, 'we don't need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly, we need millions of people doing it imperfectly.' I think that is important for everyone to understand. Even the smallest of changes, no matter how small you think they are, are helpful."

Thank you to our many friends at McCormick for helping us to raise awareness for African penguins and the impact that our choices have on their survival. We appreciate your support!





# TEAMING UP FOR WILDLIFE

By Claire Aubel

To run a great zoo, you need community support, and that is what the Maryland Zoo now has more than ever thanks to prime sponsorship from Chase, the U.S. consumer and commercial banking business of JPMorgan Chase & Co. In October 2019, The Maryland Zoo and Chase signed an agreement on a new, multi-tiered partnership, making Chase the lead sponsor of many Zoo events as well as its membership program and grizzly bear habitat in *Polar Bear Watch*.

“We’re so proud, at Chase, to be able to open our doors here in Baltimore and call everyone in this city our neighbor,” said Alfonso Guzman, Regional Director for Greater Washington and Baltimore at JPMorgan Chase. “It is exciting for us to partner with the Maryland Zoo because we want to ensure the region’s great cultural institutions continue to serve and educate the community.”

The bank, which operates more than 4,900 branches in 38 states and the District of Columbia, is the presenting title sponsor of six annual Zoo events, including the 2019 and 2020 OktoBEARfest, ZooBOOO! and Zoo Zoom events as well as the 2020 Zoo Bop and Trucks for Tots events. Additionally, Chase will be the exclusive bank and credit card sponsor for the Animal Ambassador Photo Booth at Bunny BonanZoo, to be held Friday, April 19 through Sunday, April 21.

Chase is also now sponsoring the Zoo’s family and individual membership programs. Current and future Chase cardholders are eligible for a variety of benefits in support of the Zoo, including discounts on membership and on selected items at Zoo concessions (not to be combined with other offers.) For more information on Chase cardholder benefits, visit [www.marylandzoo.org/chase](http://www.marylandzoo.org/chase).

And what would a great sponsorship of the Maryland Zoo be without some animal involvement? “Nova” and “Nita,” the Zoo’s 3-year-old grizzly bear sisters, are quite willing to make that happen. Chase has signed on to sponsor their habitat in *Polar Bear Watch*.

“We are very happy to welcome Chase as a major sponsor at the Zoo,” said Don Hutchinson, president and CEO of The Maryland Zoo. “The Baltimore business community has always shown strong support for the Zoo, our wildlife conservation initiatives, and our public education programs. We look forward to working with Chase and continuing to provide our members and guests up-close-and-personal encounters with the natural world.”

# ALL ABOARD THE JONES FALLS ZEPHYR EXPRESS!

Let’s say you know (or even live with) a young someone who loves trains. They yearn to wear a conductor’s cap and thrill to the steady rumble of wheels rolling down the track. Well, how about making that young someone our next Engineer for the Day? That’s the perfect ticket, don’t you think?

## This new Zoo Experience includes:

- Opportunity to walk the tracks and inspect the train with Jones Falls Zephyr Engineer
- Whistle-blowing privileges for the first ride of the day
- Ride-along with the engineer
- FREE train rides for the rest of the day
- 5 FREE train rides valid for one year from program date
- An engineer’s cap and bandanna
- Acknowledgement as “Engineer for the Day” over the Zoo’s PA system, at the Zoo’s train station, and by commemorative certificate
- FREE Zoo general admission for Engineer +1 other guest

Engineer for the Day is offered daily at 9:30, March through October, and lasts 45 minutes. Reservations are required at least one month in advance. Participants must be at least 7 years old. Details are available on the Zoo’s website.

Don’t get derailed! Move full steam ahead! Sign up today under “Zoo Experiences.”



## CONTACT THE ZOO

General Information  
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Membership  
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Adopt an Animal  
(443) 552-5281

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Education  
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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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# MARYLAND ZOO

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