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SPEAKERS

Heather Harrelson Nutick, Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo)

 E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 01:06

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for joining us today. We have about 30 people registered for this event. So I'll just give folks a couple more minutes to trickle in. And we'll go ahead and really start kicking it off with our presentations two or so minutes

 01:54

Ara I'm glad you got the skullcap and big headphone memo today. Good morning. Good morning

 E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 02:12

Pacific Northwest vibes. Alright, let's wait just a couple more minutes. Anybody else trickles in? Does anybody have any fun plans over the weekend that you would love to share with the group?

 02:31

I don't. So I can't go first.

 02:36

Well, in my in my spare time, I'm a singer. So we're performing all weekend and I'm gonna be singing for probably six hours a day for the next tonight and tomorrow.

 02:46

Wow. That's awesome. That's really fun. That's really cool.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 02:51

And er said that she's going on a haunted tour of stadium high school, the school from 10 Things I Hate About You. Fun. I want to go on a haunted tour. My partner planned it.

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 03:14

Amazing.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 03:15

I could never drag my partner to a haunted any sort of anything like this is all bogus. Well, it's fun. All right. So I think we have most of the folks who will be joining us today, folks. And as they, you know, enter the waiting room, but I think we can go ahead and get started. So before I kick us off with our agenda, I did want to just start us off with our ACE for Wildlife land acknowledgement. So across the region of our network ACE for Wildlife network members recognize that we are on the lands of tribal people, we acknowledge their stewardship of these places that continues to this day, and that it is our responsibility to join them to restore the relationship with the living world around us. Now, in today's event, this is one of the learning groups that the DEA I working group has coordinated. And today we're going to be hearing from a variety of our network partners around how to start a D AI committee at your zoo or aquarium. So we weren't going to have four presenters today. However, at the last minute, one of them did have to cancel because some personal issues came up. So we'll only have three folks presenting today. And then depending on how much time we have left, we'll either have an open discussion in this group here or we can go into breakout rooms with each of the presenters in their own breakout room where folks who are interested in asking that individual more questions and kind of delving in deeper with that This topic can do so there. And we'll just kind of see where the event takes us. Presenters, you should have the ability to share your screens. If not, please let me know. And I can go ahead and change that really quick. And for those of you who are at this event, or if you have folks at your organization who wanted to attend, but were unable to, the presentations that you will be seeing today will live in this Google Drive folder here. And this is also where the recording is going to live once I posted up on the website, so you have all of that at your disposal. However, I think you have heard enough of me talking for this event. So I will go ahead and turn it over to our presenters. Fernanda Heather, or Beth which one of you would like to go first? I can go first. Awesome. All right. Go ahead. Fernanda.

 05:59

Let me share my screen

 06:16

can you hear me?

 06:18

I think I froze.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 06:19

Yes, we can hear you. We just can't see your screen just yet. It just says that you've started screen sharing.

 06:25

Okay. Yeah,

 06:26

my computer's now frozen. Let me Yeah, it's completely frozen.

 06:34

Is there somebody else who would like to go? Well, Fernanda figures out her computer.

 06:40

I'd be happy to get started. Awesome. Okay, thank you bad. All right. So let me just find my. Okay, and let's get this rolling here.

 06:58

All right. Can everyone see that?

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 07:01

Yes, we can see the main slide as well as the other slides on the side. Oh, interesting.

 07:06

Okay, that's not what I want to do. So let me escape and try that one more time.



07:12

Hmm. All right.



07:15

I do not want to show I mean, you can see it if you want. Nothing is crazy. But let me just stop sharing for a minute and see if I can get the right information shares. Not exactly. Sure what is going on here.



07:38

Okay, one more time.



07:57

All right. I'm gonna try sharing the screen instead of the PowerPoint to see if that will do it when I hit go.



08:07

Probably seen a bunch of email right now. We see oh, there we go. Got it. Okay. Yes. Okay.



08:14

Awesome. All right. So I just wanted to kind of go through an overview of what we'll what I'll be covering today. And I'll try to touch on some of the key questions that were asked in advance as we go through. So I'll be talking about the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. We are the nonprofit partner of the Milwaukee County Zoo. And we have had a DEA committee for about two years. So I'll walk through the formation some of the activities that happened in each phase, the the pillars that have resulted from that and try to touch on time commitment, and how the work has evolved over time. And then I'll wrap up with some comments about the empathy practices and how they're interwoven. So this is kind of a big picture of the evolution. We are in basically phase three right now. So we started with a pretty high level. And this was actually before my time, this happened. It started about about, I think, just five or six months before I started. So the first phase was really about figuring out what the big picture goal would be with the AI. It was led by a facilitator and and basically what happened in that stage is that there were staff surveys and some some key concerns addressed and are key concerns lifted up for consideration. Then we moved into an operational stage where we started to write As we were, we started to define our pillars like what are the key foundational aspects of dei work that we think will continue into perpetuity. And, and then we moved into phase three, which is about where we are now, where we've now share some of the successes on that. The DEA I committee started as something that staff could volunteer to participate in. And it has evolved now to where we are specifically looking for staff from across the entire organization

representing different areas, we do have a lens of, of paying attention to what the diversity of the participants is. But we are working to diversify our staff. So it's not super diverse just yet. So we would like to do that happen as our accomplishments bring more diversity into our staff. This is just another view of what our DEI work is looking at the internal internal priorities, like how do we create this DEI culture, then there's some some space that's kind of in between, like what is our commitment to DEI, influences, our internal work and our external work. And then there's the external communications and making sure that we're promoting an organization that is welcome to everybody in our community, the city mark is a pretty diverse community. Ours is located right on the edge of the city of Milwaukee and the next suburb over which is not as diverse as the city tend to be, at least from racial diversity, and income tend to be higher income and primarily white to the west of us, then we defined early on what we thought would be, would make the team how we would we know if we're successful. And you can see that there are these five, five key key things that we're looking at, you know, what is the engagement of management and senior leadership? One of the early concerns was that our organization was very siloed, we've seen a lot of changes there. And, and that will help us overall with creating a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging, then the roadmap and we'll look at that in just a minute, broadening the reach of our programs, and increased representation of see is this in Europe? Does this help? If I move that, can you see this better? Do you see the images of our video squares move or no?

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 12:44

No, we can just see. Well, we know that he was successful. Okay,



12:48

super. All right, that's good. I thought that might have been blocking some of the content. So and then increased representation of BiPAC individuals in our organization. So the key accomplishments so far, one of the big things that we learned early on, is the the Zoological Society had embedded their HR work pretty much in finance or with the external, third party and the staff were really looking for have a stronger foundation related to HR issues to create that sense of belonging and staff training, and those kinds of things. So the biggest accomplishment was that we hired an HR director last year, and that has really been helpful. The HR director and myself, I didn't even introduce myself, I'm about to tell I'm the VP of program. I also am Sarah, Sarah, the HR director and I are the two executive sponsors of our DEI work at the at the society. So we had, we hired our HR director, we did a salary survey to look at to make sure that there wasn't disparities or inequities in the way that we compensated people. And and then we have worked to improve our communications, which includes breaking down silos, I kind of put that siloed organization in that communication space as well. I figured we'd send this PowerPoint along. So if you want to, you can see the link to the DEI statement on our website. That was a big focus of our work in phase two. And getting that approved and approved through our leadership, our marketing and the zoo. Our partners was important to us. So that was a long and intentional process. And when we send this information along, you can click on it and look at that. The other big accomplishment is working on alignment across the entire organization through our goal setting and operating plan and I'll show you that in a moment as well. Then we are in a process now of looking to go from what I would say has been a tasks worth approach to our DEI committee where we had specific goals and the start and an end. So more project based to an ongoing committee that have a lasting

impact in the organization. So I've got an outline of the charter that we just started to draft again as the sample if others want to want to do that work. So then, next, I'll just flip through some of the the priorities we've identified. This is the way our organization is looking at the AI and its role in our organization as a whole. So this organizational priorities slide has been shared across the board with staff volunteers, board of directors, this is the way that we communicate how the the AI work, is the foundational to everything that we do our fundraising, our capital campaign, our strategic planning, and that we're, we're still rebuilding and growing our programming and impacts from the pandemic. This statement is, is something that the committee worked really hard on, we have both an internal statement that's about the work of the committee. And then we have this which is shared on our website and is shared outside of our organization. I think it's worth just reading the statement because it's pretty powerful. And I'm just going to read the paragraph. At the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, we believe diverse people with different perspective, backgrounds and values lead to our best conservation outcomes. Our commitment is to cultivate an equitable and welcoming environment to retain talent, and strengthen our mission to support the Monterey County Zoo. We are growing accessible and inclusive education, programming, to experience wildlife conservation and empathy for animals. So here's another place where you can see how empathy is connected to our D AI work and specifically noted and our D AI statement. And though we have a now a nice shared language around the the core pillar that we'll go into next, which is about reflecting the community we serve, celebrating our collective diversity and empowering you. And this, again, is this external, so this is empowering our community to take conservation actions. So then, I will flip through these kind of quickly, because again, you can you can look at them in more detail later. But this is, was developed in phase two, these are the foundations to our dei work. So we're looking to have our organization reflect the diversity of the community around us. And there are different ways that that we're looking to do that. So if you look at the, the box, that's the high level, shorthand, the pillar, and then some of the strategies that we would use to get to those are in the in the area that are embedded in the arrow, celebrate and welcome that is about a little bit more about our external facing programming and initiatives. empowering our organization and in the people who are participating in their organization to conservation action, is the third pillar and you can see some of the strategies there that we're working on. We haven't done all this yet. We're looking to engage the EAA consultant in 2023. And then we added this systematic planning and accountability. And this is just making sure that we have the right metrics in place. So we can continually learn and be held accountable, both internally and to our community. And then the the exciting new thing that is happening right now at the in phase three, is that those pillars exists there, and they're intended to be longer term like three to five year pillars. And then each year, we'll want to make sure that we're updating our operating plan with specific goals. And this year, we have our requiring that all of our staff align their performance goals with at least one of these dei goals. So now we're drilling down into a little bit more day to day operational work. And they again, are based in the pillars and you can see that that we put some measurements with it. So we're looking to develop some engagement surveys, we piloted one this past year through our strategic strategic planning process, we're gonna want to build that out. And that's in the reflect goal that's making sure as we recruit and engage more diverse audiences that they are feeling a sense of belonging at at the society. I'm not going to walk through all these because I know it takes it we want to hear from a lot of people, but again, I'll send this Have you want to read what these goals are? I think the most important message here is about the process that we went through to get to a place where now in that phase three, we have some goals. And now we're just we're figuring out how to sustain the work. So this out line is a charter that we're in process of drafting. I didn't share our first draft, because it's really, really rough first draft. But I just wanted to share with all of you if you're interested in doing this kind of work, that we are looking to write a charter so that we can better define the what an ongoing committee looks like. The purpose

was pretty easy. That was that kind of internal document that we created. And actually phase one. We want to make sure when someone comes into our dei committee, that they have the background, they need to understand why the committee exists and what its history is. We have we are working on a vision for the committee. Actually, the vision I'm sorry, the vision is the thing that was written in phase one, the purpose of the charter is just kind of a generic purpose. Why do we have a charter for a committee? Here, I know one of the questions that we wanted to touch on is committee membership. And that is in process of discussion, we already have mentioned that, we want to make sure that we have all of our different functions represented. We also are in the middle of a conversation about what it means to work with the zoo and the society together. So far, we've shared resources, and we've shared trainings. But this committee has really been a committee of the society, not of the combined society and Zoo, and we're looking to change that. And that and that's about all I can say so far. But we know that we want to have that be this be for both organizations, and then doing some definitions of what it means to be a member of the committee, we have committee norms, so we'd want people to adhere to that. That's an example of an expectation. Logistics. I know that was one of the questions, we are looking at about four hours, a month of work that we expect.



22:16

We this is where I wanted to just touch base on the frequency of meetings. Early on, we are meeting about once a month, we surveyed at the beginning of phase two surveys of staff. And the concern there was like if someone missed a meeting, they got really far behind. And it was hard to keep up on pace. Two weeks felt like it was too frequent. So we landed on every three weeks. So in phase three, we've been meeting once every three weeks, we meet over lunch, so we reward our staff of a lunch that that we cover. And and that has been working really well to get these foundational efforts done. As we move forward, we're probably going to back off again to every once a month now that this really kind of hard work on defining our priorities is done. And it's more about accountability and sharing, we think we can back off to a monthly meeting. But that's, that's what we're looking at. And then the objectives would be to, to keep an eye on how we are meeting operational goals and how we are making sure we're aligned with the ACA and our accreditation that's coming up soon. And then the last thing as defined in the charter is how often, and who reviews the charter if it needs to be updated. So it's just a way of formalizing the process. So the last thing I wanted to connect on is empathy integration. They're kind of two ways to look at this. I'd like to I think Isabelle might be on the call, she helped me with this. And that is like, what are the inputs into the D AI work from our empathy work? And what's really wonderful right now is we've got like, we have four staff that are very involved in Ace initiatives, who are serving on our dei committee. And so we're bringing that lens in. And then we are sharing any trainings, for example, you know, the ACE network posted the the ACA videos about incorporating dei into your organization, and we share those so we're doing a fair amount of sharing. On the output side. We, we have a access program that we're growing, that is incorporating our empathy work. So those, those two things are coming together really nicely. Access is about the fundraising side if there are people who need financial support, and then we're connecting them to our empathy programs. Then building crew, which is one of our big initiatives with ace is specifically aimed at bringing the community voice into our mission and the way that we're designing our programs and interactions for our audiences and And, and having that voice sitting at the DEI tables really important because that that's going to influence the way that we reach our mission. So it's both the input and output. And then we did use the DEI committee as a resource when we were looking to define

community relevant language around what does it mean to incorporate a more diverse audience into our programming, so the DEI committee served as a resource for that work. And that is

 25:31
what I got.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 25:36
Awesome. Thank you so much, Beth. So to ensure that we can hear from everybody, we'll go ahead and save questions until after all three of our presenters have have gone. That's fantastic. Thank you so much for sharing. Heather or Fernando, would you like to go can try again?

 25:58
Let me see if I can share my screen this time.

 26:06
Okay. Beautiful, we can see it. Okay.

 26:16
So my name is Fernanda, and I work for Zoo Montana. I am the outreach education lead, and I am the idea committee chair. So we say D AI, we say idea, just a little bit more fun, it still means the same words Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and accessibility. Just so you know a little bit about our zoo, we are located in Billings, Montana, which is a bit of a conservative area. We have 70 acres, but four acres are in current news. So we don't use all of the land that we have. We are a 501 C three nonprofit organization. We currently have about 85 animals, and they are across 59 different species. And currently, we have less than 30 employees. That includes both full time and part time. So our committee is fairly new, it did start back in September, so it's only a couple of months old. Currently, we have seven members. So I am the representative for the education department and also the Chair for the committee. We essentially sent out a big ask to all of the members of organization and ask people to join the committee, we sent out the responsibilities that it would be if you join the committee, and then we asked for a certain number of representatives from each department. So we asked for our director to be on board, which he absolutely was we asked HR to be on board, we asked for one to two care staff members, we asked for a non animal representative. So that would be our guest services or someone from facilities or maintenance. We also asked for a board member. And then from our board member pick, we also ended up getting a community member because he moved off the board. So it was really, really nice to add that position into our committee. So listed down below I have our vision and our mission, our mission. So that first one is our mission statement, which is the inclusion Diversity Equity and accessibility committee is established to support and

advance so Montana's mission, vision and values by providing guidance for the development and implementation of practice inclusion, diversity, equity, access, research and retention initiatives. And then our vision is Zoo Montana strives to be an organization that fosters respects that fosters respect and dignity for all living beings with respect and value diverse life experiences, Natural Histories and backgrounds, and will ensure that all life is value. So the reason why we created this committee was because our director actually gave us the opportunity he wanted to send one person to this d i workshop that that the Billings chamber was putting on. And D AI stands for diversity, equity, inclusion and implementation. And so the person that was running this workshop really talked about, you're coming here to learn these things, but how are you going to put these things in action? And so that really stuck to me. So coming back to my director, I had a lot of ideas going on. And I wanted to share everything I was learning from those workshops. So we decided to start a committee. And we did have leadership buy in just because our leadership is amazing. And we're really, really lucky to have them. But we noticed that it was an ACA requirement to have this like a DEA committee. So we have buy in from there. And also because we're really small organization, we didn't have the funds to hire a single person that was dedicated to our work. So having a committee made a lot of sense and it helped me convince our organization that we needed a committee. We also had a A big event occurred to us during the summer, which kind of pushed our D I work. Some of you may have heard of it, we had, we decided to host a drag queen story, our thinking nothing of it. And we actually got quite a bit of backlash from our community. But we also received so much love from our community and so much support. So I believe that kind of pushed everyone to want to go into this work. And previous to starting this committee, I had done a couple of short trainings for all of our staff members and gotten them into that dei brain. So that helped us start that committee and kind of



30:35

get people involved.



30:38

So after we started the committee, obviously, we didn't know what direction to go in initially. But I did know that I wanted to create a collaborative team, I wanted everyone to feel comfortable around each other and comfortable in sharing their ideas. So we did a lot of icebreakers every single session, or every single meeting, which was once a month, for about an hour, we do some kind of icebreaker that helps get people to know each other. And then we also did some expectations to that setting for the members. So I asked questions like, What do you want to contribute to this committee? What are you willing to take on? Where do you see it going? And what do you want to take out of it or get from it. So it kind of helped us set the guidelines for our committee members. And then we started creating our policies and procedures. And I know that can be really boring, but we thought it was important to kind of set our foundation. So the first thing that we did is that we looked through the ACA accreditation guidelines. And that kind of made us or let us look at what we've been doing well so far, and what we can improve on on and kind of helped us build up a backbone and a guideline for how we wanted to run our committee. We also created our committee bylaws. So we had bylaws from a animal wellness committee. And I kind of took those, and I just rewrote most of it to reflect the idea in committee. And there was some sections that were really simple for me to write. And there were others that I wanted to have the committee come to together and write.

So it was a really, really good introduction to how the committee could work together and created a lot of teamwork. We are also in the process of creating an idea action plan. So again, ACA has an action plan on their own, and we're kind of basing it on that. So we can break up into departments where goals will be for the next year and the years coming. We also had a diversity statement. But we took that statement, and we are now reviewing it as well to make sure that we are including empathy for animals. So when looking at all of these things, our statements, our missions, our visions, we did want to include animals, because we are a single logical organization. And we wanted to incorporate empathy into all of our documents, we also created a feedback form. And that is currently only internal. So we wanted to make sure that we are giving our staff members what they want. For this first year, we are focusing on just internal idea, and essentially making this an equitable and make it an inclusive workplace. So there are a couple of things that we are creating that are kind of coming out of this idea committee. So we do have a newsletter that comes out once a month, just introducing people to new ideas, kind of like a simplified training. So what we have on there are upcoming events in our community that can help them learn about diversity and inclusion, inclusion and equity. We also do a short little blurb on something that is related to idea topics or something that is in the current news. And then we also have a resource of the month and I try to make that a resource that we can be accessible to anybody. So some months that will be a short articles. Sometimes it'll be a video or podcasts just so people find it fun to go ahead and use that resource. We also do trainings, we try to do them once a month for our all staff meetings, so they tend to be like 20 minutes long. Again, our keepers are really busy. And we want to keep that in mind. We want to keep those training short. And we make them as interactive as possible so that people feel like they're getting something out of the short trainings. We are now an autism certified center. We had a ton of front facing staff become certified in order to get the certification and are currently working on getting sensory bags and then also creating low sensory areas and getting some of its going to certified Autism Center certification. We also have a mental health fund that our HR and our development director person are doing so they applied for grant and we got it. They are going to have a large mental health fund that you can apply to and it can be related to any kind of mental health thing as long as it helps your mental health. They will pay for it. And they also are doing some team bonding and building to kind of create an inclusive workplaces with some of that grant money. So how can you start your own idea or D AI committee. So for me, it was really important to get leadership buy in. And again, I am extremely lucky in that my leadership didn't believe in this kind of work. But again, knowing that it was in ACA requirements really helped, and kind of seeking the leadership members that I felt would be advocates for me, it was really helpful. And again, we are a small organization. So having a committee was much more it made more sense than going ahead and getting a person that was just focused on the work as their job. We also did some introduction to di before the committee, which kind of again, prepped people to get into that thinking mode and see if they wanted to be interested. I did a lot of encouraging people who I knew may not feel like they were super interested. But I let them know that everybody's opinion matters, and that everyone had a role that they could play within this committee. So getting people on board was really, really important for our committee. And then I also had a lot of community support. So I found a lot of people that were willing to help me through the workshops, there is always someone out there in your committee who wants to help set up the work in your organization. And I found some of that help or all of that help, for free. It just reaching out to people and asking their opinions and asking me how I should start RDA work was really, really helpful to me. So of course, it may be hard to already know who is in your community and who may be able to help you. But I am here to help. I would love to support anybody in your GI journey. Um, here is my email and my phone number. And of course, this will be available to you all through that link that Emily posted. So that is all I have for you. I'll turn it back over to Emily.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 36:51

Amazing, thank you for that it was great to see all the progress that you made. All right, Heather, do you want to take us home?

 37:06

Yeah, absolutely.

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 37:08

There's been a pretty natural progression that you'll see here in a second in the way that we managed to line ourselves up. But let me just get my screen sharing going. And I'm going to

 37:24

move you into a spot that makes sense for my viewing. And we'll get going. So I'm present but

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 37:37

which screen are y'all seeing right now? Is it the PowerPoint? Or is it a different one?

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 37:41

We see the PowerPoint, and what I'm assuming is a Google Chrome browser?

 37:47

Yes. Okay.

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 37:49

Why are you there you go. I was like, why are you not wanting to present? Oh, there we go. Technical difficulties about so much like Fernanda we chose the idea acronym. And we ran into a comedic snafu that has not prevented us from changing the name. But when we set out on this journey, about a year and a half ago, we realized that we had some bigger questions to ask, we got to committee building before we got to plan making. And that goes into my next slide. So where to start? For us, we had to have a conversation about whether it was an internal committee or an external committee. We have our size mirrors, Zoo, Montana pretty closely when it comes to staff and facility. And we already have a lot of components going on in house that we ask members of every team to be a part of. And so it felt like a natural time to reach outside of our Arzu bubble, and into our community to invite to invite people to this table to join

us in a conversation. Now, upon making the decision that it was external, we had to realize that the people would be inviting to the table. We're not from the zoo world. And so making the decision as to whether it was more of an advisory role or decision making. And for us that really naturally fell to advisory. It allowed us to set up things that we felt were well intentioned and good and strong, and then turn it over to people who represent our community and can look at the rest of it and say, yes, you're doing great or no, you're not or here's some feedback. And so advisory has proven to work quite well for us. And in the development of our plan, we've set aside things that are dedicated to the committee and their role as advisors versus they Things that we should be achieving in house. And then once we kind of made those first two initial decision, we will really wanted to set out the mission of our dia work, our values and kind of some some bigger achievement goals. So for us, we started with the values. And we selected values aligning with authenticity, biodiversity, connection, collaboration and flexibility. And then, taking those values we kind of circled back to our mission, which as as it reads now, and we're coming up on our one year mark of this plan where we're going to do some reevaluation. But the mission reads that the Red River Zoo serves our entire community, and is committed to ensuring that all voices are included. Red River Zoo will manage and evaluate an intentional diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility program that aims to celebrate successes within our organization, and support the growth of the Fargo Moorhead community. We invite the diverse community.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 41:10

Sorry, I hate to interrupt you, we see a Word document on your screen. Is that intentional? No, my,

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 41:16

my screen sharing is having a whole field day today. So give me just one minute. Hopefully it'll be under

 41:26

Are we back? The presentation?

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 41:29

Does not look like it? Yeah. Okay, no worries. Sorry. I

 41:34

thought there we go. Now we got

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 41:40

the tech is really like fighting today. Um, so yeah, so started with values list moved into our mission statement. And then we sat down and developed achievable goals, where we wanted to put our focus, where we wanted to put our efforts and what we were going to ask our committee to do. So this also meant we looked at what we were already doing. And we looked at where we wanted to be. And we realized that a lot of the things that we were already doing within this work weren't common knowledge, even to staff. So part of this in our in our big plan development, there's one page that just says ongoing initiatives, which is all the things we're actively doing, that we can stay focused on. And we can highlight as like, Okay, here's what we've done in the process of moving forward. Then when we finally get down to it, it was time to start looking at who we wanted to invite to the table. And that's when we started talking committee selection. And we knew that we wanted to look at members that represented historically marginalized areas within the Fargo Moorhead community. And I will get to the how of that in just a little bit. But when these people are invited, have been invited to the committee, and we're at a full committee of eight right now, I believe. We wanted to make sure that it was reasonable time expectations. So we have quarterly meetings, where I take our achievable is from our plan and say, Okay, this is where we're progressing. This is something we need to spend the meeting working on, this is where we're going forward. And so it's a one hour quarterly meeting, and then I try to keep it to less than five hours of homework of review and editing. And then for me as the committee chair that does differ because I'm coordinating both the internal efforts at the zoo, as well as the committee portions in the external. Now, when it comes to ensuring that we were representing our community, there was a really natural starting place, which is the data. So when when we sat down and we said okay, who do we who do we invite to the table? What does this look like? I started pulling demographic data and data USA has been a great source for that, as well as UCLA law school, surprisingly, has some really good demographic data. So comparing North Dakota as a whole versus Fargo, because Fargo holds about I want to say between a seven and a fifth of the entire state population just in our Rural Metro area. Metro I say very loosely. But you can see the difference in in groups just between the state level and the city level. Then looking at how this breaks down further within the city as a whole from a cultural standpoint, and then moving into what it looks like for our schools, so these are specifically from the districts. So you have student ethnicity and nationality, but you additionally have which languages are spoken. Because we are seeing an increase in immigrant populations coming from countries with that have multiple languages commonly being spoken. I think one of my slides will, ya know, is somewhere in the data the likes third highest immigrant country is Liberia and Africa. And they speak several languages, we're also finding more and more residents from Congo, where French is a common language. So being aware of all of that, this slide indicates what percentage of our population are immigrants and taking that into account as well. And then also identifying what portion of our population is LGBTQ plus, and what that looks like in regards to those demographics where the ages lie and and this kind of gave us a lens to begin looking at who we invite to the table. So Sally in the bottom left corner is our CEO here at the Red River Zoo, and she and I have collaborated together on the plan itself, doing all the writing the editing, so that we can set up the structure the skeleton for the committee to work from. And then above my little picture is Molly Swanston. She's a member of our board, and is a member of the LGBTQ plus community and very willingly very early on said yes, I want to be involved in this I really want to participate and see what we can do. Then from there, Melody Stegner joined and do to kind of a small town feel of Fargo, she brought with her David Berkman who then brought our reality and they encompass the Indian education program within the Fargo School District. David Berkman is responsible for changing the name of one of the high schools from Woodrow Wilson to Dakota High School. And that was a big push within the community. And his background is in English learning programs as well, which is where we have air Yachty Susie Izmail was a another early on inclusion because she is part of one of our partner organizations to North Dakota Autism

Center where we do regular recertifications. And we wanted to include them for our neurodivergent community. And then our last wonderful member who joined the committee is Julio shot. She represents she's the communications manager over at the cultural diversity Resource Center here in town. And they work directly with immigrant populations and underrepresented communities, and can provide a lot of feedback in that area. So we took our demographics and looked at our community and said, Who are some voices, we can start inviting to the table. And then by proxy, these voices have made other suggestions that have helped us kind of round this out. And this is where our committee stands now, meeting quarterly, our next one will be in January. So hopefully everybody gets to the holidays, and we can start looking at our 2023 to do list. And then finally kind of, for us, the intersection of DEI work and empathy practices has been very, very natural. In that it requires a very similar foundation and some very similar practices with a different focal point. With the empathy network, the focal point is on more of the conservation in the animals. Yes, there's the people component of it. But this work has taken us from more of the animals as a primary focus to more of what our community is, and how we represent them and how we listen and how we can make sure that the zoo, from the staff to the facilities to the events is representative and serving of our community.



49:25

And that's what I got.



Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 49:28

Awesome. Thank you so much, Heather and to all the other presenters today. Y'all did a fantastic job technical difficulties and all. So we do have about a lot and if my math is correct, then it's for questions. And since we do have such a small group, I do think we'll have a little amount of time. I do think we'll stay in this room here. Feel free to drop your questions in the chat or if you would like to go ahead and just come off mute and ask. I welcome either, either one. So I will turn the floor over to y'all and let you pick the presenters brains. If no one has a question right off the bat, I was scrolling up in the chat to make sure I didn't miss any during the presentations. And it looks like that during your presentation, Tina asked if you have a DEI statement for your toners



50:38

Yeah, so the the external statement that I shared that I read out loud is what we would use that we use with our donors and our members and on our website. So that's, that's the statement we use with them. And we also will share that image of the organizational priorities that I that had the kind of the, the DEI at the base, and then the capital campaign and our, our growth of our programs and mission on top of that. So yeah, those images are used very frequently with our donors.



Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 51:13

Awesome. Thank you. It looks like there's another question in the chat from Suzanna for you as well. She said, You mentioned breaking down silos to improve communication as a key

well. She said, you mentioned breaking down silos to improve communication as a key accomplishment. How did you all accomplish that?

 51:26

Yeah. So that is, it's a discipline, I would say it's ongoing, right, because it's about breaking habits. Luckily, I think that a lot of the forward momentum came, we had a transition with the director of the zoo. And, and so Amos was our new director, and he works closely with the CEO. And the two of them have a shared commitment to make that happen. And so, so that that has been helpful across both the zoo in the society, and then internal to the society, it's just a matter of creating that new habit of who else should be sitting at the table when we're having this conversation. And, and that really, I would say is, is reinforced in our formal conversations when we have meetings, but it also is reinforced in our day to day conversations. You know, like, if there's an email that someone should be on, we loop them in, and then we remind each other, so that that's just like a practice that is about building a new habit.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 52:33

Amazing. Looks like we have a couple of questions rolling through the chat as well. Malia just asked to any of the presenters. And I would be, I think it would be great if we could hear an answer from all three of you. Did you have any unexpected learnings or challenges throughout your work?

 52:53

So I would say this was not an unexpected learning. But it definitely was one of the most valuable things I learned was that D AI topics can be made for everyone, not everyone knows what D AI means. And it can be extremely intimidating because most of the times we talk about like gender and race and all those like hard hitting, sometimes divisive topics. But through the workshops that I was taking, and through the trainings that I've done, I've learned that we can talk about it in such a large role to make people just feel comfortable with it. So we talk about like diversity of thought or belonging just to kind of introduce it to people and to show them that it doesn't have to be a big scary conversation.

 53:46

For for me, the

 Heather Harrelson Nutick 53:49

learnings are kind of surprise moments of and the biggest one being the self reminder that the EIA work requires a certain level of openness and flexibility that the rural surrounding communities do not always have. And so or are not quite there yet. And so operating within a facility and with people at the table for the conversation that are often at different places in the journey than just general members of the zoo and general members of the public. And finding

the way to communicate where the zoo has, has decided it wants to be in this journey and the progressions that we're trying to make, while also navigating a community that is moving in this journey at very different paces. And so, more often than not, it's a one on one interaction kind of reality check that that allows me to go Row, unlearn and remind myself, the work we're doing is important. And there are navigational things that also need to be occurring for myself and measures that can be put in place to educate the staff and the members of the committee in working with and representing the zoo, with a community that's moving at a different pace. Yeah, I,



55:26

I would. Second, the pacing, I think that the what pace to move out I loved at the ABA conference that this kind of phrase move at the pace of trust. I really appreciated how that evolved. Because pacing, I think is where some of the biggest learnings have happened. The other on the on the personal side, the other thing that was a big learning curve for me, I've been at in a zoo for a year and a half. And before that I was at a little entrepreneurial nonprofit for 21 years, that was a startup and was very, very embedded in the community. And, and so a lot of the D was called ETJ, equity, dignity and justice there. But that work had been going on for, you know, more than a decade. And to come into a space where this was really being formalized for the first time. Just, I think starting in January of 2021, just a few months before I started.



56:29

It's a different



56:32

it's a definitely a different pace when you have a large organization that's partnered with a governmental entity and the learnings I had from leaders here in this space was that I have been amazed that their intentionality around let's not move so fast that we, that we leave people in the dust or we alienate our staff, because they don't understand what's you know, why we're doing things. And that was a hard learning for me. You know, one, one simple example is, we don't have a land acknowledgement yet. And that was just something we did at my previous organization, we recognize that was something happening, and we shouldn't do it. Here. You know, the conversations at leadership level have been, well tell first week, I've made sure we're engaging really well with the indigenous population, and that they're informing the way that we talk about our land acknowledgement, like this has got to be more than just following a trend. And so I'm delighted that with our building crew grant, we have a member of the indigenous population is a leader in that population, supporting our work. But I just thought we could flip the switch, because, I mean, it's happening everywhere, we got a lot of example that's just pulled from him and go. And the reason we don't is that we wanted to be a little bit more intentional about what our relationship is, is with the indigenous population before doing something that would be a regular practice of acknowledging their their work in their influence in this space. So it was kind of interesting to me, because that was, that was a surprise. I thought we could just do it.

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 58:08

Yeah, thank you for sharing everybody. And thank you for sharing all of your like thoughts and journeys for that answer as well. We have about three minutes left, and we have a bunch of questions in the chat and it like breaks my heart that we can't get to all of them in that amount of time. But I think the last question we'll have for today is from Shanna Kent at the Alaska Sealife Center. Does anybody do a metrics survey for their facility? Is this valuable? Or does this hurt trust and inclusion?



58:40

You're talking about demographics. My metrics Center says

H

Heather Harrelson Nutick 58:49

yes about demographics. So I can speak to this one because we've had this conversation about not only internal but with our membership with with our guests coming through the zoo, and and that intentionality and what we want it to be portraying and how we want to gather that was really reflected in this conversation. And, and it was deemed that it would be more detrimental than helpful, especially when certain demographic data. I love data, sorry, I the fact that all of those infographics existed, and I didn't have to worry about them as my favorite um, but all of that does exist somewhere for your communities, the data USA, you can type in the name of your town and find the demographics from the 2020 census. And so us doing individualized information gathering in our conversations, we realized that it would inevitably be more harmful than helpful.



1:00:03

And I would say we haven't actually landed on a decision yet. We've had good conversations around what do we do? Like we had to define as these are represent, like, what are we representing. And so we looked at quite a number of different ways that information about our community of captured, we also looked at that first staff and and we didn't land on it, this is how we should use this information. We just had really good robust dialogue about the the risks and and importance of recognizing the makeup of your community. And and so it's a really good question. I think that could be a topic for a whole whole one of these learning sessions. Yeah, where



1:00:42

we're like, looking at just starting internal, but there has been a very big split on amongst committee members on whether or not we have the trust level of the facility yet as far as like the AI being a new idea for us to be able to, like, ask those questions of staff and have them feel comfortable and have it not necessarily do more harm than good. But again, we have obviously not come to a conclusion either.

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 1:01:16

All right, I do want to be mindful of time, it says 11 o'clock, from me, which means we are at the end of our hour. Thank you all for attending and asking questions and opening the space to listen and thank you all to our presenters, you all did a fantastic job tech difficulties and all. I will be posting the recording to this event on the discussion board shortly as well as sharing out the resources and video with everybody who registered including those who are not here today. And stay tuned for more of these learning group events in the future. But otherwise, I think if you're not on a committee, the next time I might see all of y'all is at the summit in February. So that is very exciting. I hope you all have a wonderful rest of your year and stay safe and healthy. And I will see you all later. Thank you so much for coming.