

# Zoological Society of Milwaukee

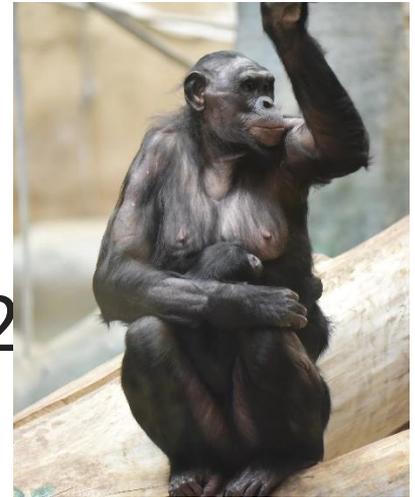
**Empathy for Wildlife at ZSM**

**WPZ: Volunteers Amplify Empathy**

September 15, 2022 – September 15, 2023

\$50,000

Funder: **Woodland Park Zoo**



# Zoo Pride

## ***Mission Statement***

**Zoo experiences inspire people to learn, conserve, and take action to positively impact the natural world.**

## ***Vision Statement***

**The Zoo Pride volunteer program supports the Zoo and Zoological Society by engaging people through education and action to conserve wildlife and the environment.**



# Woodland Park Zoo Grant: Amplify Empathy

## Objectives:

- Establish Empathy and Activity Leaders
- Produce three empathy-based videos
- Staff and Volunteers have provided feedback on structure
- Presentations off site to nearby AZA accredited organizations



# Woodland Park Zoo Grant: Amplify Empathy

## Outcomes:

- ZP will reflect the value of empathy for wildlife by using empathy based best practices
- AZA Institutions will have access to resources to build their capacity to incorporate empathy into their volunteer programs
- Zoo Pride volunteers will feel empowered and prepared to engage with the public to support empathy for wildlife



# Objective #1

## Establish Empathy and Activity Leaders

1. Recruit Volunteers to serve as leaders
2. Develop an Empathy Committee
3. New Information Sharing



# Objective #2

**Hire an experienced videographer to produce three videos that use a story telling approach rather than factual classroom style teaching**

1. Why Empathy?
2. Empathy in Action
3. Integrating Empathy for Wildlife Volunteer Roles



# Objective #3

**ZSM Staff & Volunteers have opportunity to provide feedback**



# Outcome #1

## ZP Volunteers will recognize the value of empathy for wildlife in conservation settings

1. Restructure to Categories & Activities
2. Have at least 16 Leaders in empathy best practices
3. Produce updated resources for sharing animal information
4. Hold specialized trainings
5. Resources are accessible for all volunteers

# Outcome #2

## AZA Institutions have free access to resources to build their capacity to incorporate empathy into their volunteer programs

1. Trained volunteers will present empathy practices to identified organizations
2. Release videos by producing a public link



# Outcome #3

**Zoo Pride volunteers engage with the public and feel empowered to support empathy for wildlife**

## Knowledge of empathy for wildlife

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Moderately knowledgeable | 49.47% |
| Very knowledgeable       | 11.58% |
| Extremely knowledgeable  | 3.16%  |

# Outcome #3 continued

## Zoo Pride volunteers engage with the public and feel empowered to support empathy for wildlife

How often do you incorporate empathy best-practices into your work?

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Never             | 0%     |
| 2-3 times a month | 34.62% |
| Weekly            | 26.92% |
| Daily             | 38.46% |

# Outcome #3 continued

## Zoo Pride volunteers engage with the public and feel empowered to support empathy for wildlife

1. Use videos for trainings
2. Increase in annual hours for Animal Ambassadors from 3,708 in 2022 to 5,164 in 2023



# In what ways are you integrating empathy into your work?

- Discussing the uniqueness of the species
- *Talking to visitors as I work my Zoo shifts*
- When volunteering as an Animal Ambassador, I refer to animals by names and let Zoo guests know the relationships between the animals.
- *Using names, ages, stories of specific animals. Asking questions of guests that open a dialog for them to learn specific animal details. Pointing out specific behaviors and enrichment in exhibits*
- Use of gardening practices that are non-toxic or hurtful to wildlife

# Challenges

- Re-establishing Volunteer and Zoo Keeper relationships
- Having the patience to take this step by step, seeing the big picture

# Surprises

- Our goal was for 16 Leaders, we had over 50 apply
- Cooperation and support from Zoo staff, mainly the Keepers



# Accomplishments

- Established over 50 Leaders within Zoo Pride
- Volunteers eagerly attended meetings and workshops on empathy
- Training for Leaders
- Category and Activity Meetings
- Established empathy building resources
- New information and style of information for activities that will be sustainable and applicable to many areas of volunteer support
- Relationship with a professional videographer & produced 4 videos
- Zoo Pride volunteers showing up ready to learn and put practices to use!



# Inspired Projects

## Biofact Collection

- Inventory
- Database
- Storage
- Training



# Future Project

Evaluate and Update our Animals in Action talks

- Build in empathy best practices
- Use the Empathy Bridge
- Connect Conservation actions
- Produce a training video



# Questions?

