

spring-2024-ace-for-wildlife-network-introduction-session

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Welcome. Welcome, welcome. This is our first introduction to empathy and the ACE for Wildlife network introduction session, we'll go ahead and get started in about a minute or so. But as you pop in, and get yourself situated, if you want to drop in the chat, your name, what organization that you're joining from, so they get a sense of who is all in the virtual room with us today. That would be fantastic. And we'll get started in just about a minute or so.

So, for those of you who are just now joining, if you could go ahead and pop your name and the organization that you are joining us from in the chat, that would be fantastic. So we can get a sense of who was all in the room with us together. And then we'll go ahead and get started in just a couple of seconds. And Sarah just dropped in the chat some helpful resources for the day things that we'll be referencing or things that might be worthwhile to check out after today's event. To give you a little bit of a foundation in empathy practices, though, feel free to open those up, have them up in a window in your browser and peruse those at your leisure.

Awesome. Hi, folks. Hi, Amy. Hi, Lauren.

Hi, Bianca. Hi, Sarah.

All right.

We will go ahead and get rolling. It looks like the waiting room.

attendees have kind of started to peter out a little bit. So welcome, everybody. Thanks for joining us for our very first introduction to empathy and the ACE for Wildlife network session. My name is Emily

Bernhardt, I use she her pronouns. And I'm the empathy network specialist over at Woodland Park Zoo. And I'll be leading us through the session today. If you haven't already, if you're just now popping in, feel free to pop your name and the organization that you are joining from in the chat. It's always great to see who is here with us today. And if you registered and are not able to attend the entire meeting, this recording is going to be shared out with all the folks who are registered as well as the like supplementary materials as well. And we tend to do that within a week of the events happening. So by next Monday, that should be all of your inboxes.

Now, before we run over our agenda for the day, if you haven't either accepted your invite to our discussion board, or created your account. Please do that now. So that way you have access to all of the resources that are going to be shared in this event. And assuming if you were able to enter it, you have access to the website in some way, shape or form before so just make sure that you're logged in, in order to see the resources we'll be sharing.

If you were an affiliate, or if you're are an affiliate that invites to join the website, and the discussion board should be in your inbox if you haven't seen it already. If it's not in your primary inbox, chances are it's in your spam account.

Now, in today's session, we're going to be kind of breaking today into four chunks. So we're gonna be doing a brief introduction to empathy, after our welcome and our breakout room intros. And then we are going to be doing some discussions amongst ourselves hearing from other network members, and then learning a little bit more about the network itself. So today, we don't have time to do a super in depth coverage of empathy practices, but highly encourage you to deep dive into those resources that Sara dropped in the chat or were included in your pre event email, if you registered before Friday, and you can also find those resources in our resource library all the time to learn more. But if you or your organization think that you would benefit from doing an in depth empathy workshop, we highly recommend that you check out our partner organization, Seattle Aquarium they have empathy workshops that they do

You all across the country. And that is really the opportunity for folks to get this in depth introduction into empathy, work and empathy practices.

So after our brief introduction to empathy portion today, that second section on the screen that you see, when we're talking about who we are, as a network, highlight some key resources and where you can learn more, and cover some opportunities to get involved. And then if you have any questions about anything that we talked about today, anything related to the network will allot some time at the end, probably about 15 or so minutes for Q and A.

Now, before we really start our discussion, we have some questions that would be some we're curious to know curious to know how you feel about these. What are you most interested in learning about regarding empathy in zoos and aquariums? And what are you most interested in learning about

regarding the network? So you should see a poll open on your screen right now? I believe these are free response or long answer questions. If you have a whole sentence, that's fantastic. If you have one word, that's also fantastic. But this will help us kind of cater parts of the session, as well as later sessions as well. So yeah, if you could just take a couple minutes and let us know your thoughts to these two questions will be fantastic poll open for about two minutes.

If you are just now joining, you will likely see a poll box on your screen with two questions. Were showing a quick tempered temperature check excuse me, before we get really into the meat of today's session. So investigating and thinking about the two questions. What are you most interested in learning about regarding empathy in zoos and aquariums? And then what are you most interested in learning about regarding the ACE for Wildlife network?

We'll leave this open for

about

30 seconds or so.

Okay, if you are still typing your answer, don't worry, I'm going to technically leave the poll open. But we are going to move on to our next portion. So if you are still typing out your answer, and you want to submit it totally fine, it's still going to be open. But I'm going to move to the next slide.

Now one of the things that we really value about our network is the ability for folks within it to make connections with their fellow network participants. And so there's gonna be a few chances throughout this event for you to talk with each other about event content, and kind of the topics that we're touching on. But this first breakout room, get to know you portion of the meeting is really just for freeform conversation. So for about 10 minutes, I'm gonna put y'all in randomized breakout rooms with about four to five other individuals. And this is really intended for you to just kind of get to know each other. So introduce yourselves, chat, maybe get to know your work, what you do, you're most interested in favorite animal, favorite food, all that kind of stuff. And we'll be in the same Breakout Rooms later in the event. So if there's conversations that start in these first 10 minutes, there will be other opportunities in the meeting to start those conversations back up again. And since you are now all a part of this professional network, you can always find time to talk with each other outside of the two breakout rooms today, which is fantastic. So I'm going to go ahead and

pull up the breakout rooms

and you'll be in these breakout rooms for about 10 minutes.

And we will have about four to five folks per room. So there's gonna be six individual rooms. I'm gonna open them right now.

Okay, all right.

Awesome. Those rooms should be open. They should have the opportunity

The opportunity to join them. And we'll be coming back at about 20 minutes after the hour. So if you're pacific time that is going to be 120.

And if you are not seeing the breakout rooms pop up, please let me know I might need to manually pop you in somewhere.

Zoom is always a little bit funky.

Awesome.

Wait for everybody

Hi, everybody, welcome back.

All right, everybody is coming into the main space. Welcome back all I hope you all had some good conversations with folks in your rooms, if any questions came up that everybody in the room was curious about. Just a reminder, we will have that q&a

portion at the end of today's meeting. Now, I'm going to take a break from talking for a little bit and pass it over to some network members to talk about some of the empathy work that they are either have done or are currently doing at their organizations. So we have Ryan Stacy from the Racine zoo, tyranny ball from Zoo Boise, Isabel, these are from Zoological Society of Milwaukee, who are going to be sharing with us today. And if you have any questions for them, that will also be lumped in with the q&a portion at the end.

So feel free to drop them in the chat or to keep them in your brain. But we're going to do all q&a At

the very end of the event. So Ryan, I'm gonna go ahead and pass the mic off to you, you should have the ability to screenshare and floor is yours.

Great, awesome. Hello, everybody. I'm so happy to get to share some of the empathy work that we've been doing. Since 2021. Since we started, we began the work done under a capacity building grant through the network. So just give me one sec, while I pull up my screen to share.

Oop, and of course it is not on the right page. Look at this. We're gonna go back you guys just got a little bit of a sneak peek. All right. We can we've seen my page, okay.

Yes, yes. Okay, cool. This is my first time sharing a separate window not sharing the whole screen. So hopefully it works. So thank you. We've got empathy, a couple of different projects of empathy, the racing Zoo. My name is Ryan Stacy. But the my kind of other half in terms of empathy work here at the zoo is Adam Weingarten. And he is our empathy behavior coordinator. And he works out of the animal care department. So it's really really helpful having to folks like myself in education in Adam and animal to animal care to kind of bridge the gap that sometimes exists between departments at all zoos. This, of course, we have Gilly on the left there and partly on the right, um, two portrait style photos that we have been really trying to take more of, because some some work done by Cam Whitley has shown that portraiture may be related to increase in feelings of empathy for animals as well. So we've been trying to use portrait style photos more frequently. So today, I'm just going to be highlighting the work that we have done on in three different areas of focus. So we focused on keeper chats, animal fact sheets, and Ambassador animals since 2021. And we have some more stuff going on now, as well. Um, so for all of this work, we started out with some pretty big goals. We knew that we really wanted to increase the knowledge that our guests have about the personalized care we provide to our animal residents. And that's something that is not always super accessible for your average zoo guests. Sometimes zoos seem they're just this very mystical thing. And what happens behind the walls of the zoo is it's just a mystery to a lot of people. So we wanted to really be more transparent with that work, and also increase our ability to do that work increase our ability to train voluntary husbandry behaviors. So our staff are able to show our guests those behaviors. Hey, look, let us tell you, or show you how well we take care of our animals. We don't we're not just going to say we do it. You can actually watch it happen in real time. And then

Alongside that we wanted to increase kind of bring more intentionality behind empathy in our education programming. We wanted to do that through evaluating our programs and training all of our education staff in empathy, effective practices. And then along with that, we want to work on establishing hands off presentation methods for our our ambassador animals, and then building and sharing resources on all this work with other institutions. And I outlined that in red, because that's mostly what I will be sharing on today's various resources we have created in pursuit of these goals. I'm so sorry, I don't mean to interrupt you. If you have changed your screen, we cannot actually see it for some reason not working. Oh, my God. Sorry, I didn't realize until you had said outlined in red and I was like,

okay, there we go. Okay, we're gonna, I'll try this. I'm just not going to use my speaker notes. And we'll see how this goes. All right. Can you see? Oh. I'm so sorry, everybody. All right. Can you see a

we'll see how this goes. All right. Can you see? Oh, I'm so sorry, everybody. All right. Can you see a page that says keeper chats? Yes, we can. Okay, wonderful. Thank you for bearing with me. So we, we wanted to focus on, like I said, increasing empathy, through assuring folks of the welfare of our animals or well being, as we are saying, Now within the ACA. So what you're seeing in front of you is what our cat chats used to look like, we would do keeper chats, whether the animals were visible or not, there would be an intern or a volunteer or a keeper, standing by the habitat of the given animal and kind of just talking about them again, whether the animals there or not.

And you can see, not very boring, very hard to read, there is information about the individual animals, which is very, very cool. So that is something I'm really proud of that even before we formally formally started pursuing work through an empathy lens, we were already doing a lot of it. And a lot of the work that we've done here has just been kind of reframing how we look at the work that we already do. We already do a lot of empathy stuff, we're just giving it a name now. So we worked to redesign our keeper chats to focus more on the individual animals, and have them happen during training sessions. So this part of this work was also developing empathy for our animals amongst ourselves, and how can finding out how we can use empathy to make decisions around our keeper chats. So part of that involves retiring our Rhino chat, because we found that that just wasn't really effective. The rhinos aren't always outside, and the training that they do is not in a space that's visible to guests. So it's really, really hard to do a keeper chat about a behavior that is happening behind a barn door. So instead, we wrote specific chat outlines for our lynx, as well as redoing stuff for lions and tigers. And we also introduced a two new chats this year, we retired Rhino and bat and introduced zebra and Penguin. And in addition to information about the animals, their names, how to identify them, and we have some keeper notes spots as well. We also didn't still have those facts, they still have the information, where people always you know, how long are they? How much do they wait, how old can they be? Where do they live? What do they do? What does that body part do? We took out the kind of the overwhelming, just onslaught of information, we have more in depth information available and new fact sheets, which I'm going to be moving to next, which our staff can reference if they need more thorough kind of Knowledge Review. But for quick review, during our keeper chats, they have these documents now that they can reference it, it provides them a little bit more context for the behaviors that they're watching. So the keepers are able to focus on training the animals, and the interpreter is more equipped to interpret through an empathy lens, the work that that keeper is doing.

Now, we also have kind of paired this with some fact sheet rejuvenation. Thank you Henry Vilas Thank you, Courtney Cordova and the fact sheet heard around the ACE network. We wanted to increase the use of empathy practices from the start here. So our fact sheets are used by folks who are doing keeper checks, but also volunteers in education interns, even us with us full time education staff, sometimes we like to refer back to refresh our memory. What you're seeing right now is what our fact sheets used to look like. They're fine. They had some personal information you couldn't meet hardly you can meet Azizi and Zuri but pretty boring, pretty bland, not a lot of empathy based languages.

It got the job done but it will

wasn't very exciting compared with a rejuvenation of the fact sheets and including more information about the individual as well as species where they live. And we have an empathy and action portion. Again, thank you, Courtney Cordova and Henry Vilas Zoo. So instances of you know, examples where

an educator could use empathy practices to connect directly to this animal. Now, what you are seeing is what I started with what I made, we found it to be more helpful to also helpful to allow me to do more of my job and free up some office time to have our AmeriCorps members take on this task, because ultimately, they are more the audience for this document. Like I said, full time staff will reference these every once in a while. But volunteers interns, AmeriCorps members use these a lot. So we really valued their input and what these look like and what the finished product was, since they're the ones who are going to be using the tool. So this is what they have consolidated it down to, they found that having the three separate pages was kind of a lot. And they want to be able to reference this quickly. Our volunteers who do guest engagement, chefs want to be able to reference these quickly and not have to flip back and forth. So these are a single front and back a laminated paper that can be easily updated in Canva still include species specific behavior, and addition to information about the individual. So this is a bit a bit more robust information about the species and the keeper chats. So the keeper chats and more about the husbandry behaviors that the guests are observing. And then the fact sheets kind of are more to give our staff and our interest in our volunteers the information they need to interpret. Well, and we have, we did take out those empathy building blocks on because we found that we don't need that at the top of every paper, theoretically, after we've been practicing. And we've been training, we don't need to reference those building blocks all the time. So part of this process has also been learning, the way you the way I Ryan might think is the best way might not be the best way for the people who will be using this tool. And that's okay. And that's been an opportunity for growth and our team as well. And then the final things I want to highlight are the work that we've been doing with our ambassador animals. So we wanted to increase empathy for ambassadors to improve their well being so really increasing empathy among us among our staff, as well as Among our guests. So working to develop more hands off presentation methods on this on it has been a whole journey on its own of trial and error, figuring out what works, what doesn't. Part of having empathy for animals is understanding some of them might actually thrive on handling or being touched animals like our ferrets, their domestic animal, if we never touch them, there's an argument to be made that that could be detrimental to their well being. So kind of thinking a little bit more deeply about these decisions. And then something I'm really excited about that has happened since our grant. So we've been able to continue the work that the capacity building grant program allowed us to start we have been making SOP sheets, standard operating procedure reference sheets for handling every single Ambassador animal. So my colleague, Jack Malyshevski He's amazing. He made these reference sheets so you can see. Here's an example of the reference sheet for Gilly our lesser Madagascar tenrec and again, this is just a quick front and back on this lives in a binder where we check out our animals so we can always reference if we're ever like Oh no. How do we how do I present Gilly, we can have references really quick, quick notes, any stress signals, just more robust information that stuff we were all responsible for keeping in our head is now in a place it's easy to see. And then we're tracking performance, tracking how they feel with programs in general, in addition to how they feel the animals feel about their new presentation methods by using the stress behavior scale. So we've been working on being a bit more concrete and more specific with how we interpret how an animal does on a program. Instead of saying Gilly did great, we can say I will really was about about a two. She puffed up a little bit when I first woke her up. And then she calmed down and I observed no stress behaviors for the remainder of the program. So we've been able to increase our own empathy for our animals. And then the next step down increasing their well being and then as we know, assurance of welfare is a huge part of developing empathy for wildlife so we can use these new presentation methods to show people hey, we are assuring their worth their welfare. We know they're doing better because of this and here's how we know. And then just now currently moving forward our

Current Project is increasing empathy among guests by inviting their participation in welfare assurance. So we are designing Adam. Adam. I say we Adam is designing the signs in the surveys

assurance. So we are designing Adam, Adam, I say we Adam is designing the signs in the surveys that guests will be able to scan out a variety of animal habitats, fill out a quick ethogram survey. And that will allow the guests to make a direct take a more direct role and active role in assuring the welfare of animals, increasing their knowledge, increasing our knowledge about what goes into caring for animals, and what what does a healthy zebra look like? What does a healthy Rhino look like? What do they need, and then our keeper staff will be able to use this data to generate things like heat maps and charts on enrichment usage, and will inform future decisions about Habitat design, enrichment, design, training things, all sorts of things, it's going to really improve our ability to care for our animals even better than we didn't already do.

So those were just a few a few highlights of I don't know where my thank you slide went. But I'm going to stop out. There we go. I'm going to stop sharing my screen. And thank you all. I do see some chats. But Emily, I'm gonna let you moderate any questions for them. Awesome. Thank you. Yeah. And Ryann, can you drop your email in the in the chat there in case folks want to reach out directly to you for any of that stuff?

Thank you. All right. Tierney The floor is yours now to talk about empathy at Zoo Boise. antastic. Okay, let me get my screen loaded up.

Should be

gotta love Canva. If you don't use Canva, everyone should use Canva. Lovely.

All right. So hello, my name is Tierney ball. And I'm the Director of Education at Zoo Boise. And similar to Ryan, I'm just going to share a little bit about kind of the overall scope that we've had of our empathy journey app Zoo Boise, also really fast. I'm so sorry, my dog is right next to me. And he should be asleep this whole time. But if you hear random noises, it's him. So with that said, we have been part of the ACE network since 2019. And then have been very fortunate to have some capacity building grants over the years, as well as just our initial jaunt into the empathy network. So to begin with, we recognize that we as a staff, we wanted to get everyone on the same page. And while we had some annual trainings that went over your basics of guest engagement, and everybody had different roles that they all played, we recognize that if we really wanted this to be a whole zoo wide initiative, we needed to step back and recognize that we needed to identify what empathy was, and what it individually looked like at Zoo Boise. So we created some training videos for our staff. And we had four videos. So the main one was for everyone to watch. And this was about a seven minute introduction to what empathy was very similar to what Emily showed us. And then we broke it down a little bit more into each of the subgroups that we thought would resonate the most with our staff. So for our keeper staff, and our educators, the ones that are going to be doing a little bit more of those formal presentations, we put together an example of what a keeper chart might look like, of what an education presentation might look like for our volunteers to view and utilize, that we also recognize that as great as it is to say that we have 1015 minutes to chat with a guest. That's not super realistic. And so we also wanted to have some examples of what empathy could be like for our maintenance staff workers and our front gate staff who only have about 60 seconds interact with guests, or it's kind of that passing fleeting moment of how can I get the most information across in this very small

interaction. And so we create created a best practices video. And it's just about three minutes kind of going over some here's some basics. Here's some language to use, really trying to shift from the use of exhibit to habitat and home and not talking about animals in captivity, but talking about them in human care, really highlighting, you know, what are enrichment items? What does that mean for an animal? What does it mean to have you know, an animal that does that? What does that look like? What is the best wellbeing we can provide for these animals. And then finally, we also had an opportunity to kind of highlight what storytelling opportunities we wanted to talk about at Zoo Boise. And we tried to initial initially, we wanted to do some high profile animals that we knew all of our you, staff members would get questions about. But we also recognize that those are generally not the ones that our guests would need to get more information about. So we instead decided to highlight on animals like penguins, and Pandora, or crocodile, and maybe some of those lesser known ones that maybe people wouldn't know what to ask. And so that started a really good conversation with our staff as well. So after we did that initial staff training with videos, we then initiated a all staff in person training. And so this is an example of one of the slides that we had for this. And with this one, we really wanted to kind of highlight the four buckets of what we saw as the biggest challenges for us as a staff in our empathy journey. And for this one, this is really talking about that perspective taking So what could we do?

As staff members to kind of make sure that we are framing things in a way that we're not only positive for the guests and their learning, but also asking them to see the animal as an individual, as well, as you know, thinking through, hey, this animal might not be out right now, because they're an animal that's built to live in relatively cooler weather, and it's 110 degrees in Boise. So rightfully so they are not super comfortable being outside. We also again wanted to highlight some of those lesser known animals. So you'll see on our top left, we've got Jules, who was our screech owl, she unfortunately passed away earlier this year, and that she had an injury that resulted in the loss of one of her eyes. And so we often had people asking, you know, what, what's going on with her? Why is she in a smaller exhibit. And so we were able to really tell that story of you know, she has a smaller animal, but she also has an injury. And for her, it's very uncomfortable to not know where she is. And so being in a smaller exhibit allows her to be in a place where she feels comfortable and competent, and she can maneuver around her exhibit in a very safe way. Also talking about millipedes, most people are not going to say that they're going to come to the zoo specifically to see millipedes. But they're really cool too. And they've got a great story. And so thinking through if you were really small animal, and your main job was to decompose all of these foods to make other things that people really like and enjoy like coffee and chocolate and fresh fruits and everything else, we can really present it in a way that makes people excited about learning.

And then lastly, we've got Fletcher our bat eared Fox. So talking about how with some of our animals, they are made for different again, made for different jobs. For these guys, in particular, one of the things we highlight with our campers is that they can, you know, hear animals moving around. And so we talk about what those really large ears, do you think you would want to have a bunch of movements and loud noises around you? Or would you want to be a little bit more quiet. And these are the best ways to engage and learn about our animals. And while initially we started this more focused on our campers and our field trips, we also noticed that with our parent chaperones, and even just adults in general, around the zoo, a lot of them were responding really positively to this as well, which is great, because I think for us our biggest hurdle to jump over was how do we engage our adult audiences. Because it's so easy to do perspective taking when your kiddos cold, you're like a

snake in the grass, you're jumping like a frog. But it's a lot harder when you're trying to navigate that relationship with the adults in their learning as well. And so for us, this was a really good way to initiate that.

And then we also made some interpretive guides. So like Ryan was saying, we had your run of the mill, black and white, very standard taken from animal diversity web fact sheets. And while those were helpful for those that had a biology background, we have lots of volunteers that don't have a biology background, we have various staff members coming in from our front gate services and our cafe and our gift shop who had really wanted to learn and be able to answer these questions. But they didn't have the opportunity to learn these stories about these animals. And so something we did was he put together kind of focus groups that took key components of all of the different

departments around the zoos, we had education, we had animal care, weight development, we had guest services, and they all kind of came together and decided what would be best for them and their learning and what would work well for everybody. And so we came up with this idea of these interpretive guides and kind of made a biography for all of our big animals. So we are still working on this project. But we've got about 47 developed, which for about 80 species is pretty good. So this is an example of our snow leopard one. So we kind of talked about their story, how did they get to the zoo, a lot of people when they are, you know, coming to the zoo, they either think, oh, this animal must have been born here, or it must be a rehab animal. And you just you're curious about their stories. So talking about that story, talking about names and birthdays, favorite foods, for our two snow leopards, one of ours, he's got some tummy troubles. And so he actually gets canned cat food pretty frequently. And people are shocked when you just walk by with your camera fancy feast like that can't be going for the Snow Leopard. But it's a really great sorry to talk about how even with animals, they have very specific diets. And we have to make sure that we're taking into account their preferences as well.

And so after all of these trainings, we did a quick self evaluation poll with our staff and our volunteers. And we did see a 20% increase both with our staff and our volunteers across our average and what they were self reporting under comfort and knowledge. So we asked him on a scale of one to five, how comfortable were you before the trainings, and how comfortable were you afterwards. And that's where that 20% increase came in. And then we did have 42% of our staff. And so just staff celebrate themselves as a five out of five and knowledge and comfort with empathy techniques after our initial rounds of training, which we thought were pretty great.

And then some more examples and projects that we see throughout the ground. So after we did that initial training with all of our staff, we really wanted to implement it for the rest of our guests in our community to see. So we really put an emphasis on sharing more on social media. So a lot of our social media posts up until then, really didn't share a lot with names and personal informations that might be talking about, you know, oh, we've got our draft and you can participate in our draft encounter in sport conservation. And they were all great posts. But we saw that we really wanted to kind of add in that extra side. So this was highlighting our bearded dragon at the time mooshu And her birthday and some of mooshu's favorite things. And then we recently brought in a tiger Akasha

who was older, she's not going to be breeding so as an SSP recommendation that we are a holding facility for older tigers. And we also recognize that we wanted to prepare

community now that we weren't getting an older Tiger, and chances are good and we will provide the best care possible. But realistically speaking, this tiger is not two she's 14. And so we need to kind of prepare the community for that. And so we really highlighted it as her retirement home. So definitely late into the puns. But talking through, you know, she has around the clock care, she has her own pool, she has her own personal kitchen, like who wouldn't want this retirement home, and people gobbled it up. They loved it. And so with this, we started doing more personalized science, we've been doing biography signs, even for those more generic ones of like, oh, this animal is not you know, not here, right? Now, we instead turned it to oh, this animals visiting the doctor or so sorry, my home's a mess, you missed me. Or we have ones with animals that have just given birth, you know,

hey, please, to leave, you know, new new life around here, anything like that. And we do find that people actually stop and read them. And we'll hear people talking as we walk by it like, oh my gosh, that sounds so funny. We've got one near one of our birds saying please don't touch the mesh, I have a specialized diet that doesn't include fingers. And that is the most popular side we've got across the entire zoo. So humor works.

We also are working on master planning for a lot of new exhibits, including a new rescue red panda habitat, which is really, really exciting. We're breaking ground on that very soon. And with this, we were able to do some studies beforehand of our current red panda exhibit. So we were able to do a heat map study of how the animals moved and utilize their exhibit. And because of that, we were actually able to make modifications to our current home while we're building the new one. And then we were also able to do guests perception surveys of what guests were really seeking and their interactions with these animals. So we survey data red pandas out are celebrities, and other penguins, all new animal exhibits that we're going to be building over the next about eight years or so. And for a lot of these, it was really helpful for us because we had guests, guests coming up with questions that maybe we wouldn't have thought of, or brought up some really good points of you know, even just within the animals, natural history, things that we needed to highlight. If you have an animal that's more crepuscular, nocturnal, and guests are expecting them to be active at 2pm, what can we do to build them into this exhibit, so that they are aware of that and kind of setting those expectations. So did all of this work? This past summer, we really, really implemented using all of that language.

Using all of that language, and putting it together in a way that was coming out for our keeper chats, our public animal experiences and our private animal experiences. And we were able to hire survey data takers that were able to randomly pull our public. And we discovered with fantastic p values. So for those of you that are not in the stats field, like myself, I know this can feel really, really clunky. But looking across the board, so we had to group all of our zoo chats as one and all of our private experiences with one. So private experiences would be ones that people would book for a small group like our behind the scenes drafting counter, to see a tiger training or lion training. And then our giraffe and our slothbear, public feeding encounters occur every single day in the summer. And anybody who's there within that one hour can go and participate in these feedings. And so we ask

people to do a hostess pre survey. So they had 10 questions asking about their initial reactions. And then 10, asking, after the encounter, how did you feel, and then we saw across the board with a very low p value. So statistically significant information, that there was a positive increase in empathetic feelings after they participated in these encounters and had some sort of interaction with guests, or not with guests with staff members. something of note is with our zoo chats and some of our private animal experiences, there's not necessarily a direct connection with the animals. So all of these p values were significant, even with the knowledge that they didn't have a direct interaction with the animal. So it may have just been additional information, or having the time to speak one on one with a staff member or having their questions asked or answered. Or even just that, you know, time to make them feel like they're a valued member of the Zoo. Boise community was really, really impactful for them to feel motivated to not only want to learn more about animals, but ultimately lead them to conservation action.

So that was a really quick overview of some of the products that we've been doing at Zoo Boise. If you have any questions at all, you are welcome to email me at Tball@cityofBoise.org, or I'll be around at the end for any questions there as well. Thank you.

Awesome. Thanks so much, Kennedy. And last but not least, Isabel, from the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Hey, folks, I'll keep it pretty quick. There's definitely more examples in my slide deck than I truly intend to go over. And that's just because I figured the slide deck would be circulated.

So it will,

yes.

Oh, good to know. Oh, you can hear me right. We're all set. Yeah, yep. Can you see my screen? Yes. Perfect. So this is me. I worked with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. And I always start our empathy trainings getting rooted in our mission because that is why we do this work. Our mission is to consider in a nutshell to conserve wildlife, educate the public and to support the Milwaukee County zoo or the nonprofit partner to the zoo. So conserve you guys heard the theory of change for this group.

We believe that if you have empathy for wildlife, folks are more likely to take action on behalf of wildlife to do that conservation work, and then an education. When you have an emotional connection to what you're learning, you are also more likely to remember it. So we believe that it's also a way to increase our learning outcomes. And then lastly, participating in the ACE for Wildlife network has lent us support to the Milwaukee County zoo, both financially through the capacity building grants, as well as just through the resources provided by the network, we've really been able to apply those across our area. And throughout my presentation, you might see these little purple banners, that is me taking some of these effective empathy practices and just labeling the pictures with them. It's a way that we can kind of transparently and passively teach our teams about empathy for wildlife because they're seeing the examples labeled. So here around Milwaukee, we have staff and volunteer training,

as well as some pop up support. We've been really developing our empathy for wildlife infrastructure, including evaluation and infusing it across our operations, so that it is something that's sustainable. And then we've launched some specific empathy based programs. Starting off with staff and volunteer engagement, we now have empathy for wildlife as part of their onboarding process, folks participate in an online training. And then there is an in person follow up component that's more focused on applying and,

you know, making an action plan for how they can incorporate empathy for wildlife into their work. We host continuing education for our volunteer groups on a semi regular basis. And then three times a year, we have office hours where my team sits down, and whoever is interested in available is able to drop in and ask questions or develop projects. This last time, we ended up talking a lot about how we organize our bio facts. And that led to some really interesting questions about, you know, are they insured, for example? And how do we talk about, you know, the worth of a polar bear pelts. And then we also have an empathy program advisory committee created a group of community members who provide input into our empathy for wildlife initiative and our work around the zoo. So that's more of like a recurring listening group.

So related to those training opportunities, we have developed a series of like story based videos. So the video that we watched at the beginning of this was kind of more of a, a training, traditional training video, we have developed videos that are more interview style and story based, where we spotlight our volunteers. And they are talking about how empathy for wildlife shows up in their work. So here's one video that includes SEAN MILLER, the curator of reptiles and aquarium at our zoo. And he's speaking on how empathy has guided his work. And we can share that I also make a point in my trainings to highlight that we're already doing this work, we were just not doing it intentionally before. So I try and take a minute and point out how empathy is relevant across all of our operations. It's absolutely in the animal division. But it also shows up in our operations, like what kind of special attractions are we standing up at our zoo? And then in grounds even right, are we modeling wildlife habitat.

And then some of those infrastructure and operational pieces, we've developed facilitation tools, quick reference sheets for our instructional team to use in the classrooms and for our volunteer base to use as well. We have redesigned how we manage our bio facts, we are reimagining how we are using it animal ambassadors, I think Ryann spoke really well to that earlier, really trying to engage our guests more in some of the animal care aspects like building enrichment and less on like, let me touch that turtle and then leave. And then I will also showcase some of the evaluation tools that we have in place for empathy. So here's just some examples of,

of empathy showing up in our social media. So here's a post from a couple years ago, where they're modeling transparency around animal care by posting and sharing how we care for the new Victoria crowns pigeon chick. And then another example of our zoo pride, our volunteer group, preparing enrichment for animals and showcasing that as well.

It shows up in our signage all around the zoo, eat like a bird where you can activate imagination and compare birds to humans. framing Tommv and Alex by using their names and showing how they're

compare birds to humans, naming them and their by using their names and showing how they're different and similar, and then providing an opportunity to practice so here's a behavioral find found in our aviary reminding them that this is our birds home

We recently had a whole article spread to our membership base that shared five ways to build empathy at our zoo. And they had a little wildlife quiz, they could submit,

just kind of talked about the initiatives and some of the changes we were incorporating.

And then this is a little bit about about evaluating empathy. So we have rubrics that we apply to student projects to look at the learning outcomes. So here's an example of a stewardship poster a fourth grader had to create. And they correctly identified a green space in nature and placed themselves in that scene, supporting and taking care of that park. So they got a three on that project.

We do have a full time evaluator on staff, I know that not everyone has the capacity and support to do that. But we do have one.

Another example would be using the MECAP resources, which as a, which is the measuring Empathy Collaborative assessment project, which was a National Science Foundation funded project. I'm sure Marta and Emily could talk you in circles around that project if you have more questions. But we use a lot of the evaluation tools that came out of that project and gamified it recently into a bingo board, just to train our staff in a little less intimidating way. And that was a blast. We've also used word clouds to help us realize some major themes that are coming out from some responses.

And then we use these emotion wheels, they serve kind of as an evaluation tool. And as a mindfulness moment, before you meet an animal, you've marked down how you're feeling. And then after you meet an animal, you also mark down how you're feeling. And if you're using a more complicated emotion wheel, like you see on the right side of my screen, you get more information, because sometimes the kids are sad after the animal encounter, because they don't see the animal anymore. And that's helpful to know, we are planning on redoing some of these because we feel like embarrassed probably isn't the right emotion to showcase when you're meeting an animal. Like it isn't selected on purpose often.

And then some of our programs, so we have been working across our programs, to embed empathy for wildlife. And this is true for our like special events that we host as well. And then there's two that I want to highlight specifically in our public programs space. So for school, we have the animal connections continuum program, which works with second through fourth graders, and builds kind of like a local to global perspective on wildlife and conservation work. And that program specifically has a lot of empathy for wildlife embedded into it a lot of perspective taking a lot of practicing conservation care. They provide the fourth grade culminates in like a big park cleanup, and they select the site and they select who they're helping. Second graders, they get to sponsor an animal,

for example, and we tie that directly into the course content. And then we also have a summer camp a day long program called the day on the paws, which is specifically focused on empathy for wildlife and perspective taking. And then in our community engagement, our community events, we've really been adding in an empathy for wildlife components. So here's a little some examples of cross department projects shout out to the International Crane Foundation. We have one of their amazing crane cards, staffed by two JAnes, so we call it to Janes and the cranes. And they provide pop up education and interpretation in front of our whooping crane habitat. And then at our snooze at the zoo, our overnight camping experience. We have incorporated that monitoring, and you can see this kiddo dressed up at her back costume all ready to go do a roost count.

Here's an example of us at Zoo Brew an adult's event, we took the tasting packet went through it and identified all of the beverages that had an ingredient supported or given to us by a pollinator, and we tabled and talked about leaving the leaves in the fall as a little conservation action. We were able to follow up with guests as well because we did a little raffle prize. And a lot of people followed through on having a little part of their yard where they just left the leaves for those pollinators.

Here we are at our local science fair, and we were talking about decomposers and having students named cockroaches we also put up a Venn diagram so they could see how they're similar and different to a cockroach. They came up with some pretty cute things

on that, and then also at the stem fair, we had an opportunity to practice some of that caring action by going through a faux fecal exam so they got to practice what our animal health team does often and go through a fake fecal sample looking for fake pair

Besides, and you get to talk about careers, animal wellbeing, and how you know, just those are actually the major two conservation careers in animal wellbeing with that exercise.

And that was it.

I see some chats.

Oh, awesome. Thanks so much, Isabel, can you drop your email in the chat too, so people can reach out to you if they have any questions? Yes. And I was Smidge over. That's okay. Now, we are going to go ahead and take some time to do a quick overview of some of the key resources. I'll also share these out with folks

after the meeting today. But before we begin, we have one more poll to launch that'll be up in the background while we cover these key network resources. And again, there's going to be two questions. So what opportunities if any, do you see to engage in work like this in your role at the

organization, and then what barriers, if any, do you see to engaging in a work like this in your role at your organization, and we'll have that up in the background for you to respond to, as we go through and cover some key network resources.

First, we have our welcome guide. And this is sent to any new affiliate upon joining our network. And as long as you're logged into the website, you're going to always be able to find this resource on that first photo banner underneath the title of our network. And this details things how to like how to create your account where to find the network directory that can connect you with all the other folks in this meeting, and more where to find resources, as well as answers to commonly asked questions in our FAQ section. And this is updated every year by our communications committee to catch any changes that may happen. Whether that's the website, network structure, or anything like that, it is always a great resource. Even if you've been in the network for a while to do a quick refresher on any questions you may have.

We also have our discussion board. And you can find the link to this in the top banner of our website circled by that green circle right there. And this is the primary space for you to connect with others in the network. We encourage anybody and everybody to post and generate conversation. But if you're ever curious about what what posting parameters are, we do have our network code of conduct pinned at the top of our discussion board channel. And it's also on our resource library, which I'll cover in a slider to

right now our topics on the discussion board are pretty broad. But the communications committee is working on brainstorming a way to create specialized like smaller group topics to kind of create these more niche communities in this larger one, then we hope to launch those sometime later on this year. And Sarah is also dropping all of the resources to these things that I'm talking about in the chat as well.

Now we also have our events calendar, where you can find events like these that's circled in the green circle there. It's to the right of our Network website after the resource library tab underneath the logout button. This is where you can find any and all events of ours. We tried to announce events at least two months ahead of time, so folks can put it on their calendars. And any resources or recordings that are shared in events like the ones today will be posted in our resource library. Now this library consists of over 100 resources, including papers and literature reviews. It also includes documents and things like the Tierney and Isabel and Ryan shared today, and other learnings from capacity building grant projects that include evaluation tools, program curricula,

think some literature reviews have come out of those things as well. And again, it also has these foundational resources like those sent in the pre event, email, and supplementary materials and recordings from all previous events. This is a library that is updated, I would probably say weekly, if not bi weekly. And if you have a resource at your organization that you have created that you want to share with the network, I definitely recommend emailing us and seeing if that's something that we can incorporate, because we'd love to highlight the work that's happening across our network.

And lastly, we have some network of committees. We have six of them. And these are groups that are led by network participants that shape guide investigate network priorities. And you can catch up on these committee updates every month in our empathy matters newsletter, our main one is going to be coming out in about two weeks. And you can also find updates from these committees on the committees page of our website.

Now, if you would like to get involved in the network a little bit more, there's a couple other ways that you can do that. You can serve on one of those committee groups you can talk

Talk with other folks on the discussion board and attend our network events. We do have one learning group on empathy evaluation coming up in May. So if that's something that you're interested in, I definitely recommend checking out our events calendar and registering for that. And then after summer, we'll start those events up again. So if there's something that you want to talk about some work that you are doing at your organization that you would like showcased, let us know and we can work to set up an event after everybody's busy some of the season. Um, now I apologize for my improper time management, in fact that we do not have much time for question and answer at the end of today's event, and that we had to go through those quite quickly. But if you have any questions that you would like to ask for the remaining couple minutes of today's event, feel free to pop them in the chat or raise your hand and we can go ahead and get those started.

And any and all resources and PowerPoints that folks share today will be sent to all registrants afterwards as well.

Okay, well, if nobody has any questions, I'm gonna go ahead and drop our general email as well as my work email in the chat. Feel free to email either one of those either empathy@zoo.org, or emily.bernhart@zoo.org. If you do come across any more questions,

or things that you're curious about in terms of empathy work, or the network, the empathy@zoo.org inbox is monitored by multiple folks here at the zoo. And obviously, mine is not just monitored by me.

So if you have any questions, feel free to send them to either one of those two places. Otherwise, we're going to take all of the resources from today. It's also recording, coalesce them, and send them out to everybody who attended today. And Sarah just dropped that registration link for the empathy evaluation learning group in the chat. If you are interested, I hope to see you there. But if no one has any questions or things you want to chat about. Thank you all for attending today. And we will send all of this out to folks within a week.

Awesome, thanks, y'all. Have a wonderful rest of your day.

