Internationally, and in our own backyard, we play a key role in species survival.
Spring has always been my favorite season, as it brings with it the promise of renewal and rebirth. The world around us becomes more vibrant: more color, more warmth, and more sounds! Do you hear the buzzing of insects emerging? The song of more birds returning to our region? The laughter of children able to play outside in the neighborhood again? The Zoo, too, becomes more vibrant as school groups flock to campus. Earth Day is celebrated, special fundraising events bring thousands of adults to the Zoo, and our summer camps begin to fill to capacity. One thing we all can agree on at this time of year: it’s time to get outside! And our Zoo is offering plenty of options for families, kids, and adults, as you can see from the event calendar in this issue of ZooNotes.

Of special note are opportunities to help us clean up our region through our Spring Into Action programs (p. 7-8), and to explore spring’s flora and fauna by participating in the City Nature Challenge.

Research shows that when guests perceive animals as “sad” or “stressed,” they focus solely on empathizing with the animal in front of them, and cannot be moved to think about the issues facing the same species in nature. Naturalistic habitats, such as our new snow leopard and red panda habitats and the expansive Animals of the Savanna addition, provide signals to our guests that the animals are behaving naturally and receiving optimal care.

We look forward to seeing you this spring, as we all begin venturing outside our homes to explore again. When you visit, you’ll be sure to notice the expansive space where the Zoo’s Main Building was located. While its removal was bittersweet, we now have the ability to plan for the transformation of the Zoo into new habitats ensuring the highest animal welfare and optimal guest experiences. As planning progresses, we will be sure to share the highlights with you.

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Happy spring.

As an institution accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Seneca Park Zoo operates based on three core principles: animal welfare, safety, and guest engagement. And as one of the longest accredited facilities in the U.S., animal welfare is our greatest priority at Seneca Park Zoo.

What is animal welfare exactly? Animal welfare refers to an animal’s collective physical, mental, and emotional state over a period of time, and is measured on a continuum from good to poor. An animal is defined as having “good welfare” when it is healthy, well-nourished, and safe, has opportunities to thrive and express species-specific behaviors, and is able to make choices with its environment. Therefore, Seneca Park Zoo’s welfare program is based on three inter-related components: physical health, behavioral integrity, and psychological well-being.

Ensuring Physical Health

Promoting normal biologic functioning through the provision of exemplary veterinary care provides the basic ingredients each animal needs to thrive. Dr. Louis DiVincenti, the Zoo’s Assistant Director of Animal Care & Conservation and full-time Attending Veterinarian, oversees the Animal Health team which includes two licensed veterinary technicians. Dr. Louis has designed and implemented a preventive medicine program aimed at prevention and early detection of diseases through regular physical examinations, vaccinations, and routine diagnostic testing. Each animal at the Zoo has a customized veterinary care plan based on its species, age, sex, breeding status, disease state, and many other factors. The Zoo's Animal Hospital is equipped with a treatment room, surgery suite, and state-of-the-art medical equipment including diagnostic modalities such as digital radiology that allow the vast majority of the Zoo's routine veterinary care as well as emergencies to be handled on-site. Additionally, Dr. Louis makes a lot of house calls! Because we care for wild animals, care that we can provide without removing them from their home reduces their stress. Other animals, like our four African elephants are simply too large to move to the hospital, so Dr. Louis has to bring veterinary care to them.

For the elephants, proper foot care is critical to good health and welfare. Keepers inspect and trim the elephants’ nails and paws daily to ensure they’re in good shape, and Dr. Louis regularly visits the elephants to do foot radiographs, or digital x-rays, to check for signs of foot injuries and foot disease. Additionally, annual physical exams, vaccinations, and laboratory testing allow us to comprehensively monitor the elephants’ health.
Habitats themselves can allow animals to engage in self-care behaviors on their own to promote their welfare. Elephants and rhinos in nature utilize wallows and pools to clean off excess dirt and mud. Including those features in our Zoo habitats promotes their species-typical maintenance behaviors.

In the natural range, elephants spend 40-75% of their time foraging for food. This benchmark helps us design an enrichment program to encourage their natural behaviors. Our elephant habitat is equipped with a variety of different elevated hay feeders that require the elephants to walk around the habitat to find food and then to use their long trunks with the prehensile tips, and their cognitive abilities, to obtain it. Additionally, we utilize an automatic hay feeder that distributes food on a timer throughout the times when care staff are not present in an effort to increase feeding time.

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Physical health and behavioral integrity provide animals with the opportunity to experience overall well-being, or, what some animal welfare scientists refer to as “a life worth living.” In other words, our goal isn’t merely to eliminate negative states like disease, pain, and distress, but, more importantly, to promote a positive welfare state.

The greatest opportunity for us to promote psychological well-being is to encourage each animal to participate in its day-to-day management, which is exactly the goal of the Zoo’s Behavioral Management Committee. The Committee provides zookeepers with the tools necessary to use positive reinforcement training to give animals the opportunity to choose to engage in behaviors that promote their overall care such as shifting between different areas of the habitat for cleaning, standing on a scale to be weighed, presenting different body parts to allow close observation and even hand injection for vaccinations or anesthetization, when necessary, moving different body parts, and performing other behaviors that allow assessment of mobility and more complicated medical behaviors like voluntary blood draw or drops in the eyes.

Additionally, social interaction is a critically important component of psychological well-being for social species like elephants. That’s why we brought Moki and Chana to the Zoo four years ago to join Genny C and Lilac – to create a social structure more reflective of elephants in the natural range in which groups of female elephants live together.

Enrichment also promotes psychological well-being through mental stimulation. Our Zoo guests can play a key role in enrichment. For example, California sea lion Mary Lou is extremely observant and is often found interacting with staff and guests through the glass in the Rocky Coast Gallery. It’s not unusual for her to play with guests, following children running back and forth or toy cars, keys, and balls moving in front of the window.

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Encouraging Behavioral Integrity

Using environmental enrichment, animal care staff strives to create physical environments and implement husbandry practices that increase an animal’s choices and encourage species-appropriate behaviors. Examples of enrichment include offering new food items in complicated ways such as puzzle feeders, providing objects to manipulate, and applying novel scents or spices throughout the habitat for them to investigate.

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Advancing animal welfare through research & transparency

Knowing what animals want and need is an especially challenging part of promoting their welfare. Because we strive to use science, not opinions or emotions, to drive animal care decisions, zoos have a responsibility to gain a greater understanding of the well-being of the animals in their care by advancing animal welfare science. Your Zoo participates in a variety of animal welfare-oriented research projects. For example, Seneca Park Zoo contributed to the IMLS Elephant Welfare Initiative, the most comprehensive and collaborative study on zoo animal welfare ever performed. The project provided new, evidence-based information that we can use to improve the welfare of our elephants. For example, this study demonstrated that it is not
When visiting Seneca Park Zoo, you can rest assured that every decision we make – from the food the animals eat, to the enrichment they receive, and the veterinary care provided – is driven by the best welfare for each animal.

Dr. Louis DiVincenti, Assistant Zoo Director – Animal Care and Conservation, is one of only three boarded animal welfare veterinarians working in AZA-accredited zoos. There are approximately 50 veterinarians boarded in animal welfare, and Dr. Louis is currently the only veterinarian boarded in animal welfare in New York State.

Dr. Louis is also a member of the AZA’s Animal Welfare Committee, which seeks to promote good welfare for animals in AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums by helping members identify and apply best practices in animal welfare and by promoting advances in animal welfare science.

It’s (finally) Spring! Get out and appreciate nature!

After the long, cold winter we’ve had in our area, nothing will be more energizing than a beautiful spring day in nature! Your Zoo is offering many ways to do just that!

Seneca Park Zoo is joining with 120 other AZA-accredited zoos around the country to create Spring Into Action, a series of events to get families out into nature, contributing to citizen science, helping with cleanups and many other ways to nurture wild places near our homes. Together with partners throughout our community, there are many easy ways you and your family can get involved.

Many thanks to our partners who are joining us in this challenge:

City Nature Challenge: April 26-29

Help Rochester compete with over 150 cities all around the world to make the most observations of nature over a four-day period! The City Nature Challenge is April 26-29. All you have to do is:

1. Download iNaturalist app on your phone and create an account
2. Take photos of wild animals and plants in our area
3. Upload the photos to iNaturalist
4. Learn more as your finds get identified!

Take photos in your back yard, on a hike or around town! Or join a group with Seneca Park Zoo and our partners. Get instructions, tips, and information about meet-up sites at senecaparkzoo.org/challenge.
Gear up for summer with merchandise and food!

A busy summer season at Seneca Park Zoo is upon us, so we've stocked the shelves in the ZooShop with more unique merchandise and developed delicious new menu items for our restaurants and the Savanna Outpost.

The latest addition in the ZooShop, a S.T.E.A.M. wall (Science, Tech, Engineering, Art, Math), has gifts for children and teachers that are both educational and environmentally-friendly. Items kids and adults can enjoy together include a solar toy robot, windmill generator, ant farm, culinary herb garden kit, solar system planetarium, and much more.

Other new items include stylish t-shirts and hooded sweatshirts made from 6 ½ plastic bottles, as well as handcrafted, recycled ‘poo’ notebooks made from animal poo!

Additions to the café menus include new gluten free and vegetarian options, offering guests a wider selection of meals to enjoy during their trip to the Zoo.

Eagle's Landing Café has added beef and chicken nachos (GF) and tacos to their menu, while the Crater Canteen will be serving up new specialty sandwiches, a fresh berry salad (GF + V), and a ‘Big Boy’ grilled cheese. This new take on a classic sandwich includes three cheeses (provolone, swiss and cheddar) with bacon and tomato jam on sourdough bread. Specialty sandwiches at the Crater Canteen include a crispy chicken BLT, buffalo chicken sandwich, rodeo cheese burger, and a maple grilled chicken sandwich with sliced apples and raspberry maple mayo. Both restaurants will also be carrying loaded fries topped with nacho cheese and bacon.

Savanna Outpost shoppers will notice a variety of wraps, salads, sandwiches, and snackables – all of which will change throughout the summer. The SunButter and jelly sandwich is also a favorite among guests, especially those with a peanut allergy.

ZOOPicsROC Photo Contest

New this year, we're introducing ZOOPicsROC photo contests to encourage the Zoo community to share their love of the Zoo! On your next visit, capture an image that you think fully expresses the theme “Signs of Spring at the Zoo”, and enter it into our digital photo contest for a chance to win.

Details
• Theme: ‘Signs of Spring at the Zoo’
• Timeframe: April 1, 2019 through May 31, 2019
• How to enter: Upload your photo via the form at senecaparkzoo.org/photocontest
• Share your photo on social media by tagging @SenecaParkZoo #senecaparkzoo

Submissions will be posted to an album on the Zoo's Facebook page for people to “like” their favorite photo. The photo with the most Facebook “likes” after one week will be the winner!

The winning photograph will be announced on our social media channels, and the winner will receive a one-month extension on their membership!

For complete photo contest rules and details, visit senecaparkzoo.org/photocontest

Our next photo contest theme will be announced in the June/July issue of ZooNooz.
Save the Dates
Watch our website for details on these upcoming events!
June 8
Poo at the Zoo
June 15
Animal Super Powers
July 19
ZooBrew
Must be 21+ to attend.

Elesa Kim
2019 June- July

Sign up now for Summer ZooCamp!
With exciting new habitats and animals, there has never been a better time to be at Seneca Park Zoo. Camps are offered for ages pre-school to 12. There are options for half-day camp, and before care and after care at an additional fee. Register today for full descriptions and to register, visit senecaparkzoo.org/summercamp

Zoobilation
Now in its 30th year, Seneca Park Zoo Society's annual gala, Zoobilation is an unforgettable event. This year's theme of "Generations of Wild" will celebrate the legacy of conservation at your Zoo. This fundraising gala features delicious food, an open bar, silent and live auctions, animal experiences, and more. Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Bank of America.

Time
5:30 - 10 p.m.
Tickets
Get tickets at senecaparkzoo.org/zoobilation

JUNE 1
ZooBrew
Drink beer and save elephants at the first ZooBrew of the season! Animal experiences, live music, wine and beer, and tasty food offerings for purchase make a great Friday evening. Add an elephant barn tour for $25 and get an extra special opportunity to learn more about the care of our African elephants. Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Lake Beverage.

Time
5:30 - 9 p.m.
Gates close at 8 p.m.
Cost
$8 in advance
$10 at the Front Gate.
Tickets
Get tickets at senecaparkzoo.org/zoobrew

May 24
International Otter Day
Learn all about otters with keeper chats, enrichment and training demonstrations, biofacts, and an opportunity to win a painting by an otter or an exclusive behind-the-scenes otter meet and greet with the Zoo's otters!

Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/conservationdays

May 26
World Sea Lion Day
Get to know the Zoo's sea lions through keeper chats, training demos, and more!

Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/conservationdays

New this year, we are offering two sessions tailored specifically to children with special needs that benefit from extra support.

For campers 5-12, two of our camps have an option to add an extra hour of sessions led by trained staff on behaviors for children with special needs. These camps are designed to be more inclusive and supportive, and are designed to create an environment that is welcoming, low-stress, and accommodating to the specific needs and abilities of the camper.

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New at camp this year!

Your Zoo offers specifically-designed programs for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America. Workshops help scout groups complete the required criteria to earn badges related to animals, nature and conservation.

Check out our website at senecaparkzoo.org/scouts to see a complete list of events and to register. For more information or to register for events, please call 585.336.7213.

Mark your calendars for what’s next at your Zoo.

Calendar of Events
Zoobilation
May 26
26
24
May
June 8
Poo at the Zoo
June 15
Animal Super Powers
July 19
ZooBrew
Calendar of events
Mark your calendars for what’s next at your Zoo.
Join us for Cinco de Rhino Craft Beer and Cider Celebration, a 21+ event in support of rhino conservation. Tastings will be offered by more than a dozen craft breweries and cideries, along with light appetizers, live music, and unique animal experiences. New this year, we will be offering designated driver tickets and a limited number of VIP tickets. Thank you to our presenting sponsor Xceed Financial Credit Union.

Must be 21+ to attend.

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
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<th>Tickets</th>
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<td>Saturday, May 4</td>
<td>5:30 – 9 p.m.</td>
<td>senecaparkzoo.org/cinco</td>
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Cost

- $35 in advance
- $40 at front gate
- $75 VIP ticket
- $10 designated driver ticket

Cinco de Rhino Craft Beer & Cider Celebration

Calendar of events

Mark your calendars for what's next at your Zoo.

5
May

18
Annual Meeting

5
May

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Cinco de Rhino Craft Beer & Cider Celebration

Calendar of events

Mark your calendars for what's next at your Zoo.

5
May

18
Annual Meeting

5
May
KinderZoo

KinderZoo is a program for preschoolers and their grown-ups to play, discover, and learn in a fun, interactive way. Join us as we explore different animals and habitats, using games, biofacts, and engaging, age-appropriate activities. Each class will also include the opportunity to meet an ambassador animal up-close and learn all about them!

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<td>April 5, 7, 9, 27</td>
<td>10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>18 months – 3 years old</td>
<td>$5 for Zoo members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>3-5 years old</td>
<td>$7 for non-members</td>
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Registration
For details and to register, visit senecaparkzoo.org/kinderzoo

Summer Hours
Beginning April 1, the Zoo will observe summer hours. The front gate will open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and guests may stay on grounds until 5 p.m. As always, our members are welcome to enter at 9:30 a.m. every day!

Family Sleepover at the Zoo
Pack your overnight gear and join us for a family-oriented sleepover in the Rocky Coasts Gallery. Experience a night-time guided tour to see the Zoo in a whole new way and meet several program animals up close. The evening includes a pizza dinner, snack, and activities. A continental breakfast will be offered as you watch the sea lions and polar bear go through their morning routines.

Date  Time
April 6  6:15 p.m. – 9 a.m.

Cost
$60 for members
$70 for non-members (per adult & child pair)
One additional person: $30 ($35 for non-members)

Registration
senecaparkzoo.org/sleepover

Earth Day
Celebrate Earth Day at your Zoo, with practical ideas about changes you can make in your life to live more sustainably! Thanks to our sponsor Diamond Packaging.

Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/conservationdays

Focus on:
ZooParent
Dave and Jen Canning have participated in the ZooParent Animal Enrichment program for a decade. We recently talked with them about what the program means to them and their family.

Addie’s ten years of ZooParenting.
How did you get involved in the ZooParent program?
Our first ZooParent purchase was in 2009 for our daughter Addie’s fifth birthday. Our son Zach became a ZooParent on his fourth birthday in 2011. Addie had (and still has) a stuffed otter named Pete that was her favorite lovey and went everywhere with her. We knew Addie would be so proud to be the parent of an otter!

Why did you choose to stay involved with ZooParent?
On Addie’s first visit to the Zoo as a ZooParent, she made sure to attend the otter enrichment program, so she could tell the docent that it was HER otter. The ownership and engagement that the ZooParent Program promoted in our children not only increased their interest in specific animals but also increased the enjoyment and excitement of our zoo visits. Receiving a ZooParent certificate has become a birthday tradition at our house.

Receiving a gift on their birthday that is really a gift to others has taught our children about philanthropy beginning at an early age. We feel that gifts of ZooParent adoptions have led to the kids requesting donations for nonprofit organizations in lieu of presents from their friends at birthday parties. They have also learned to be excited about receiving experiences instead of material things. ZooParent support helps keep the animals at the Zoo healthy and strong by providing enrichment items that encourage mental and physical stimulation. You can learn about the program at senecaparkzoo.org/zooparent.

“Being a ZooParent is a unique gift for children and adults alike. It not only teaches young kids that it is fun to give and receive gifts but also provides financial support to this Rochester gem which teaches us to take care of all of Earth’s creatures. Additionally, it’s a great way to join the Seneca Park Zoo family.”

– Dave and Jen Canning

The Canning family today.
Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.