

A publication of the Seneca Park Zoo Society

ZOO NOOZ

SEPTEMBER 2025

FALL FUN AT THE ZOO

Member Appreciation Weekend

Zoo Classes

Family Trek in the Twilight

Cart Tours

Awareness Weekends

and so much more!

Conservation Warrior Dr. Kinari Webb

Cover Photo by
Bryan Watt

 Seneca Park
Zoo

Seneca Park Zoo inspires our community to connect with, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places.

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CONTACT US: HOURS:

General info: 585.336.7200	Nov. 1 – March 31: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. last entry at 3 p.m.
Membership: 585.336.7212	April 1 – Oct. 31: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. last entry at 4 p.m.
Development: 585.336.7205	
Private events: 585.295.7399	Members may always enter at 9:30 a.m.

LETTER FROM

Pamela Reed Sanchez
President and CEO
Seneca Park Zoo Society

On My Mind:
Achieving our
Vision

I write about the Zoo’s mission in this column quite often, in part because it drives everything we do, as a solid mission statement should. It is our purpose, to inspire



I’m also privileged to engage with our Urban Ecologists, who are all City of Rochester youth participating in the workforce development program we started in 2018. These are employees



our community to connect with, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places.

Our vision is equally important. It is our north star for the Zoo we want to be, and the Zoo you deserve: Seneca Park Zoo will be a national leader in education and conservation action for species survival. Each program, each event, each experience we offer or pursue aligns with our vision statement. As a result, your Zoo serves as a leader in innovative and impactful programs that can serve as models for our field. Our teen programs offer a great example.

As I walked around the Zoo this past summer, I spent time with as many of our ZooTeens as possible. Did you know there were more than 130 teenagers who volunteered a big part of their summer vacation to be here at the Zoo, talking with guests of all ages and backgrounds about wildlife? The program is competitive, with interested teens required to submit an essay on why they want to be a ZooTeen. The program has intensive training, as each teen needs to learn how to interact with the public on top of all the facts and games they share with our guests.

whose job is focused on being ambassadors for our urban environment, learning about the living world and then sharing their knowledge with youth at City of Rochester R-Centers, and at our Community CleanUps.

All of these young people astonish me with their poise, their knowledge, and their enthusiasm. When I look at them, I can’t help but think about what their individual futures might be. I am confident their time spent at Seneca Park Zoo will be an integral part of determining what they do and who they become.

Perhaps one day they will be conducting field research in Borneo or Madagascar, or perhaps leading biodiversity assessments in the Genesee River. I believe we are nurturing the next generation of Conservation Warriors and teaching them the power that one person has to fight for healthy ecosystems for us all.

See you at the Zoo,
Pamela Reed Sanchez

Celebrating Champions of Conservation: Seneca Park Zoo's Conservation Warrior Award

By Beth LaPierre, Director of Communications and Engagement



In 2022, Seneca Park Zoo established a powerful new honor for the conservation community: the Conservation Warrior Award. More than a ceremonial honor, this award recognizes global leaders in wildlife conservation—those who have committed their lives to protecting species, preserving ecosystems, and empowering communities.

A Bold Commitment to Conservation

Launched to spotlight individuals making extraordinary contributions to wildlife conservation, the Conservation Warrior Award includes:

- A \$20,000 grant to support ongoing fieldwork and conservation initiatives
- A custom glass sculpture, created by the Corning Museum of Glass, symbolizing resilience, transformation, and hope
- A deepened partnership with the Zoo to expand conservation awareness and action

The award exemplifies Seneca Park Zoo's mission: to inspire our community to connect with, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places. The 2025 Conservation Warrior award recipient is Dr. Kinari Webb.

Dr. Kinari Webb is a physician, environmentalist, and changemaker whose pioneering approach to conservation has redefined how we protect rainforests and support the people who depend on them.

Continued on next page



Healing Rainforests and Communities - One Conversation at a Time

Dr. Kinari Webb's work sits at the powerful intersection of environmental conservation, community health, and social justice. A physician by training and a humanitarian at heart, Webb has spent her career reshaping how the world thinks about saving the planet—not by focusing solely on forests or endangered species, but by starting with people.

Her journey began in the early 1990s when, as a young undergraduate, she traveled to Borneo to study orangutans in Gunung Palung National Park. What she found was not just a lush tropical rainforest teeming with life, but also a region under siege. Illegal logging was rampant, driven not by greed but desperation. She saw villagers forced to cut down trees simply to pay for medicine, childbirth services, or to treat infections that, in another country, would have been easily preventable. That realization would change the course of her life.

Webb saw clearly what many conservation models overlooked: the health of ecosystems is intimately tied to the health of the people who live within them. If conservation efforts ignore human suffering, they are doomed to fail. But if local communities are treated as partners—given access to healthcare, dignified livelihoods, and a voice in their own future—then they can become the fiercest protectors of the natural world.

Determined to create a new path, Webb returned to the U.S. and enrolled in medical school at Yale. She later completed a residency in family medicine, with the conviction that her healing skills would be used not just in clinics but as tools of ecological transformation. In 2005, she returned to Indonesia and founded Health In Harmony, an organization grounded in the radical idea that environmental protection must begin with meeting human needs.

Her flagship project, Alam Sehat Lestari (ASRI), was launched near Gunung Palung. There, Webb and a dedicated team of local and international health professionals began providing high-quality medical care at dramatically reduced costs to communities that committed to ending illegal logging. In these villages, families who pledged to protect the forest received discounts of up to 70% on medical visits and prescriptions. If they could not pay with money, they could pay with seedlings for reforestation, labor, or manure. Patients were treated not just as recipients of care, but as active participants in restoring the health of both their communities and their forests.

In parallel, based on requests from the communities, the ASRI program offered training in organic farming and other sustainable livelihoods to reduce villagers' dependency on timber for income. They established reforestation nurseries, empowered "forest guardians" from the local population, and launched youth education programs to build the next generation of environmental stewards. Over time, ASRI became a community hub—not just a clinic but a movement.



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**CONSERVATION
WARRIOR**
DR. KINARI WEBB 2025



The results were extraordinary. In ten years, illegal logging dropped by 90% across participating communities. Incomes grew. Infant mortality fell by 67%. Some diseases like malaria were eradicated in ASRI's direct service area, and there were across the board improvements in health. Compared to other national parks in Indonesia, there was a 70% decline in the loss of old growth forests, saving an estimated \$65 million worth of stored carbon. Meanwhile, satellite imagery revealed that the surrounding rainforest—once heavily degraded—was regenerating. Over 52,000 acres of secondary forest began to regrow, carbon stocks increased, and habitats for endangered species such as orangutans, hornbills, and sun bears were preserved.

This success is rooted in a philosophy Webb calls Radical Listening. It's a practice that may sound simple, but in global conservation circles, it's revolutionary. Before launching any program, Health In Harmony conducts months of deep community engagement—asking questions, not offering answers. Staff hold hundreds of hours of open dialogue with local residents, listening to their lived experiences and asking what they need to thrive. Rather than assuming what's best for a forest or a community, Webb insists that the people closest to the problem are also closest to the solution.

"Too often," Webb explains, "well-intentioned aid or conservation efforts are designed from the outside and imposed on communities without their input. Radical Listening flips that script. It starts by honoring the knowledge and agency of local people."

That same approach now informs Health In Harmony's expanding global footprint. The organization has since launched community-driven conservation programs in Madagascar, where deforestation is threatening some of the planet's most unique biodiversity, and in the Brazilian Amazon,

where indigenous and forest-dwelling communities are facing immense pressure from extractive industries. In each of these locations, the work begins with listening—and evolves into partnerships that unite healthcare, livelihoods, education, and ecosystem restoration.

Webb's influence reaches far beyond the rainforests. She's a sought-after speaker, author, and thought leader in the movement toward regenerative development. Her memoir, *Guardians of the Trees: A Journey of Hope Through Healing the Planet*, blends personal narrative with scientific insight to tell the story of how communities can heal both themselves and the Earth. The book is equal parts adventure story, medical drama, and blueprint for global change.

She has also co-authored *The Art of Radical Listening*, a toolkit for policymakers, NGOs, and development professionals who want to integrate community wisdom into their work. Her ideas have been featured at international forums including COP climate summits, and she continues to advocate for systemic changes in how conservation and global health programs are funded, evaluated, and sustained.

Dr. Kinari Webb's legacy is one of profound, hopeful transformation. She challenges the assumption that environmental protection must come at the expense of human development. Instead, she shows that the two can—and must—go hand in hand. In her model, rainforests are preserved not through policing but through compassion. Ecosystems are protected not by shutting people out but by welcoming them in as equal partners.

As climate change, biodiversity loss, and public health crises continue to converge, Webb's work offers a vital roadmap for a more just and resilient world. Her message is clear: we cannot heal the planet without healing the people who live on it. And the first step in doing so is simple, yet powerful—listen.

Her memoir, *Guardians of the Trees: A Journey of Hope Through Healing the Planet*, blends personal narrative with scientific insight to tell the story of how communities can heal both themselves and the Earth.





Donate today to protect nature and wildlife!

Your gift to the Seneca Park Zoo Society's Year-End Appeal directly supports conservation and education programs.

Without donors like you, we would not be able to provide inspiring onsite and offsite programs like KinderZoo, the Nature Cart, ZooMobiles, ZooTeens, Community Cleanups, and Nature Hikes. These programs connect people to wildlife, providing once-in-a-lifetime interactions that can influence people to act on behalf of animals and nature for years to come.

In gratitude for your gift of \$100 or more, you will receive a special thank you gift - a custom Zoo Supporter magnet, so you can proudly display your support.

Donating today is easy! We have ***included an envelope for you to mail in your check***, or you can donate online at **senecaparkzoo.org/give**.

Thank you for supporting us and being an advocate for wildlife and wild places.

**DONATE
TODAY!**



Learn more
senecaparkzoo.org/give

CALENDAR

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

▶ MEMBER BRING A GUEST WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 20 & 21

Share your love of the Zoo by bringing a friend. This weekend, you can bring one additional guest per membership. If your guest joins as a member during their visit, we will add one extra month to both of your memberships!

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org



▶ THANKSGIVING WEEKEND MEMBER APPRECIATION

NOVEMBER 28, 29, & 30

Gather your friends and family and walk off those Thanksgiving calories with a trip to the Zoo! On November 28, 29, and 30, Zoo members can bring up to TWO guests per membership.

And on Saturday, November 29, you can put those calories right back on with FREE cider and donuts for members and their guests available at the pavilion. You can also meet some of our Naturalists and ZooMobile ambassador animals!

Dates: November 28, 29, & 30

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org



► SHARE THE WONDER OF WILDLIFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

A Zoo membership is a meaningful, eco-friendly gift that lasts all year long.

Buy a gift membership in November or December, and your recipient will enjoy access throughout 2026—plus receive a FREE Seneca Park Zoo tote with your purchase!

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/zoogift



► COMMEMORATIVE, ENGRAVED ZOO BRICKS

SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

Create a lasting memory by purchasing a brick for a loved one this holiday season. (Order by 12/17/25 to ensure your certificate with your custom inscription is received by the holidays!)

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/brick



EDUCATION

► KINDERZOO

SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS

KinderZoo is a program for preschoolers and their grown-ups to play, discover, and learn in a fun, interactive way. Each class will include the opportunity to meet an ambassador animal up-close and learn all about them! Limited slots available.

Ages: 18 months – 3 years & 3 - 5 years

Dates: See website to check availability & register

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/kinderzoo



► WILDLIFE ACTION CREW

SEPT. 17 & 24/OCT. 1, 8, 15 & 22/NOV. 5, 12, 19
DEC. 3, 10, 17

Lemurs & Deforestation

September 17 & 24, October 1, 8, 15, 22

Snowy Owls & Climate Change

November 5, 12, 19, December 3, 10, 17

Wildlife Action Crew is a 6-class series for teenagers interested in animals and conservation. Teens conduct a conservation case study, learning about and discussing a conservation issue, and working in groups to create campaigns to promote their message.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/wildlife-action-crew



► ZOO CAREERS WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 2 - MEMBERS ONLY EVENT

Have you ever wondered about working at a Zoo? Most people think of zoo keepers taking care of the animals, but there are many different types of jobs that need to get done. Join us as we explore the different types of jobs you can have at the Zoo and meet some animals in the classroom too!

Ages: 10 and up with an adult

Time: 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/zoocareersworkshop



► GROUP TREK IN THE TWILIGHT

OCTOBER 10/NOVEMBER 7/UPON REQUEST

Calling all scout leaders and youth groups! Trek in the Twilight starts by fueling up with some dinner and then the evening is filled with activities, an up-close animal experience, and a guided Zoo tour.

Time: 5:45 - 9:30 p.m.

Register: senecaparkzoo.org/trek



▶ FAMILY TREK IN THE TWILIGHT

NOVEMBER 22

Bring your family to our after-hours Trek in the Twilight! We start by fueling up with some dinner, and then the evening is filled with activities, an up-close animal experience, and a guided Zoo tour.

Time: 5:45 - 9:30 p.m.

Register: senecaparkzoo.org/trek



▶ GIRL SCOUT & CUB SCOUT WORKSHOPS

OCTOBER 4/NOVEMBER 9/UPON REQUEST

We offer an array of workshops for girl scouts and cub scouts. During a workshop scouts will earn badge requirements while exploring the Zoo and meeting ambassador animals in our classroom.

Dates: October 4, November 9 and upon request

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/scouts



Erick Machajewski

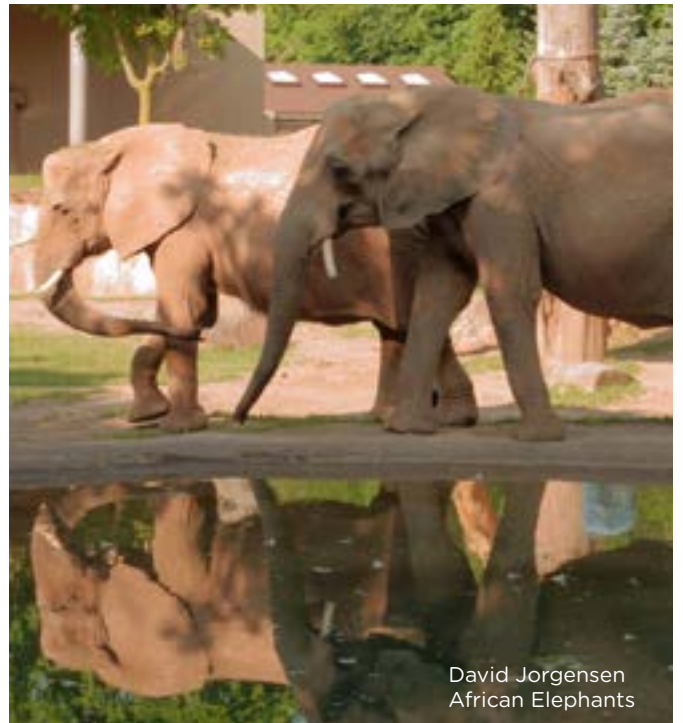
▶ SCOUTS BSA MERIT BADGE WORKSHOP: MAMMAL STUDY

NOVEMBER 8

During this workshop, scouts will investigate what makes mammals unique as they observe the many mammals that live in Seneca Park Zoo. We will classify mammals, study the history of a local mammal, and trace mammals through food chains. Scouts will also develop a plan for a project that affects mammals in their backyard. This workshop is taught by a certified merit badge counselor.

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/scouts



David Jorgensen
African Elephants

► VIRTUAL SCOUTS BSA MERIT BADGE WORKSHOP: MAMMAL STUDY

OCTOBER 11

During this workshop, scouts will investigate what makes mammals unique as they observe the many mammals that live in Seneca Park Zoo. We will classify mammals, study the history of a local mammal, and trace mammals through food chains. Scouts will also develop a plan for a project that affects mammals in their backyard. This workshop is taught by a certified merit badge counselor.

Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/scouts



Kristen Matteo
Southern White Rhino

► DAY-OFF ZOOCAMP

OCTOBER 13/NOVEMBER 11

School is out, so come to the Zoo instead! Join us for Day Off ZooCamp as we go on a safari to find out about all the African animals in the Zoo. It's like Summer ZooCamp in a single day!

Date: October 13 & November 11

Ages: 5-9

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/zoocamp



► BOOK & BEAST

**OCT. 8, 22/NOV. 5, 19/DEC. 3, 17, 31
EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY STARTING
OCTOBER 8TH AT 11AM**

Join us for the return of Book & Beast! Every other Wednesday this fall we will be reading a story together and meeting an ambassador animal up close. No registration necessary, just show up at 11am. Free with Zoo admission!

Ages: all

Date: Oct. 8, 22, Nov. 5, 19, Dec. 3, 17, 31

Every other Wednesday starting October 8th at 11am



Wayne Smith
Dumeril's Ground Boa

CONSERVATION

► RISE & SHINE CART TOURS

SEPTEMBER 7, 13, 14, 27

**HOLIDAY MAGIC TOURS: NOVEMBER 28,
29, 30/DECEMBER 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30**

Come wake up with the Zoo for a guided golf cart tour and experience the Zoo, as the animals are starting their day. This tour is 90-minutes long, and you'll learn about the animals that call the Seneca Park Zoo home.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/riseandshine



► PACHYDERM WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 20 & 21

Join us for Pachyderm Weekend at Seneca Park Zoo on September 20-21 and celebrate Earth's giants—elephants and rhinos! Enjoy special keeper chats, interactive experiences, and memorable moments highlighting the conservation of these incredible species.

Dates: September 20-21

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/pachyderm



► COLD ASIA WEEKEND

OCTOBER 4 & 5

Discover the wonders of Asia's cold-climate wildlife during a special weekend dedicated to some of the Zoo's most fascinating residents. Learn how snow leopards and red pandas survive and thrive in their chilly mountain habitats, with insights from our expert naturalists. It's a wild, wintry journey perfect for curious minds of all ages—don't miss this chance to connect with nature and experience Cold Asia!

Dates: October 4 & 5

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/coldasia2025



► NOON YEARS EVE

DECEMBER 31

Celebrate the New Year at Seneca Park Zoo with a unique and family-friendly event designed for those who want to enjoy the festivities without staying up late. Join us as we count down to noon with ball drops at two special locations in the Zoo: the snow leopard habitat and the elephant habitat! Pick your favorite spot and welcome the New Year in with wildlife! Don't miss the chance to start the year on a high note, surrounded by nature and community. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/noonyearseve

► ROC THE RIVERWAY COMMUNITY CLEANUP

SEPTEMBER 27

Join like-minded neighbors to help clean up our local green spaces. You'll be amazed at the impact a focused group can make in just a couple hours. Help us make Rochester a cleaner, greener city! Please dress for the weather and bring water to stay hydrated. Tools, bags, and gloves will be provided, and all ages are welcome to attend.

Location: Seth Green Park

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/event/rocriverwaycleanup



EVENTS

► ZOOBREW

SEPTEMBER 5

Spend an evening outdoors at the Seneca Park Zoo with a drink in hand at ZooBrew! Enjoy great live music, delicious food and drink, and animal experiences at this afterhours event exclusively for adults 21+. Our September music line up features the Monica Hall Band, SHADES, and the Neil Van Dorn Band.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/zoobrew



► WINE FOR WILDLIFE

SEPTEMBER 26

Join us for a night of fun and flavor, where exceptional wines meet environmental stewardship to support Seneca Park Zoo!

Sip sustainable, regional and international vintages, savor small bites, meet animal ambassadors, chat with wine professionals, enjoy live music, and gain a deeper understanding of how wine can contribute to a healthier ecosystem.

Date: September 26

Time: 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/wineforwildlife



► SPOOKTACULAR!

OCTOBER 17, 18, 25, 26

Join us for Spooktacular and explore the Zoo after-hours in your wildest costume, discover spooky surprises and animal ambassadors, grab a treat, enjoy Halloween crafts and story-time, and get up close with some of our favorite crawly creatures.

Dates: October 17, 18, 25, 26

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/spooktacular



► FOREVER WILD SOCIETY

Create your Zoo legacy by joining the Forever Wild Society

Members of the Forever Wild Society ensure the future of education and conservation programs at Seneca Park Zoo through planned giving.

To direct your planned gift to impact the future of Seneca Park Zoo's education and conservation programs, you simply need to notify the Seneca Park Zoo Society that you have included a deferred gift of \$2,000 or more in your estate planning.

Learn more: senecaparkzoo.org/donate/forever-wild-society



A publication of the Seneca Park Zoo Society

ZOONOOZ

SEPTEMBER 2025



Wayne Smith
North American River Otter

Seneca Park Zoo Society

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senecaparkzoo.org



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When you're finished, please share it with a friend.

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Beth LaPierre, Director of Communications and Engagement

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.

senecaparkzoo.org | 585.336.7200 | The Zoo is open 362 days a year.



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