

## ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY REPORT

### 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

I am happy to report that the first half of the year saw record attendance and set the tone for a truly stellar summer. Zoo memberships hit an all time high of almost 1,900 households. This number is double the level of just five years ago. A number of factors contributed to this, including heightened awareness of the exceptional value that a Zoo membership affords, better advertising and more special promotions, and, in particular, increased appreciation for the PlayZoo playground that came online last year.

The record breaking didn't stop there, however. We saw a sharp increase in the number of corporate picnics that included the return of virtually all of our existing corporate clients as well as a number of new additions.

The American Cancer Society selected the Zoo campus as the venue for Relay for Life this past June. Thousands of cancer survivors and their friends and family found our serene lakeside setting to be a fitting forum for this important community fundraiser.

New life was breathed into Zoo Debut, thanks to the tireless efforts of the Zoo Debut committee. This year's "anything goes" 70s format helped spur attendance--double that of last year.

This year's installment of Brewfest, the ninth annual and the second at the Zoo, was the best in the event's history, according to its organizers. This event is yet another example of your Zoo partnering with area nonprofits and, in doing so, raising the Zoo's profile throughout the Midwest and cultivating a large number of potential future guests and supporters.

Conservation and animal care continue to be at the core of what we do, and this year was no different. Prominent among these initiatives was the creation of the Racine Zoological Society's Amphibian Rescue Center for the dusky gopher frog, the most imperiled amphibian in the US. The frogs were just some of the newest residents at your Zoo. Other new additions included a female wallaroo, and creating potential breeding pairs of emperor tamarins and African penguins. Keep your fingers crossed and stay tuned for the pitter patter of very little feet down the road.

The number of opportunities for our members and guests to safely interact with our animal collection continues to make us a leader amongst our peers nationally. Animal encounters, including giraffe feeding and the Norco Aviary, realized another record year. The latest addition to the lineup was camel rides. This extra special attraction was so popular that we will almost certainly be offering it again soon.

This year was another busy one for the Conservation Education Department. The Department presented over 220 animal programs and classes, which reached about 25,000 people of all ages.

Thanks to generous support from The Shaw Foundation, Col. L.C. Christensen Foundation Inc., Stuckeman Charitable Trust, and The Racine Rotary Foundation, funding was obtained for our

Wildlife Explorers programs through the 2012-2013 school year. This program reaches every third grader in the Racine Unified School District, and provides them with an enriching wildlife experience that meets their school's science curriculum standards.

Our education animal ambassadors helped us spread the message of wildlife conservation at a multitude of popular programs including birthday parties, Zoo Snooze camping sleepovers, holiday events, and Behind-the-scenes Safaris. The Conservation Education Department coordinated nine Zoo Snoozes and 46 Birthday Parties through October 2012. We also provided free educational information and activities at 12 community outreach events and holiday festivities.

Summer camps continue to be another exciting educational opportunity for area youngsters. A total of 189 campers, ranging in age from 3 to 12, attended 14 different full-day and half-day camps at the Zoo. Thanks to generous donations from the families of some of our past camp participants, Camperships were awarded to eight children, which allowed them to take part in a Zoo Camp experience that would have otherwise been cost-prohibitive.

New this fall, the Parents and Polliwogs weekly story-time program has proven to be very popular. This program introduces young Zoo guests to the world of wild animals with engaging stories and crafts. Our newest offering, Critter Classes, that allow children to meet some of our animal ambassadors, commenced just last month.

New education animal ambassadors that joined us in 2012 were Ed the emperor scorpion, three baby American alligators, and two African black millipedes. They have proven to be great assets to our already diverse animal collection.

Respectfully submitted,

Jay R. Christie

President and CEO