



HENRY VILAS ZOO®
A Part of You



2020 Executive Summary

Overview

2020 marked the first year Henry Vilas Zoo assumed the leadership for fundraising efforts for the zoo. This meant a re-building of member and donor lists, as well as the strengthening and development of relationships. In addition, due to COVID-19, the zoo needed to formally close from mid-March through mid-June, resulting in a loss of revenue from concessions, the gift shop, special events, and onsite donations visitors make while visiting. Educational programs also were paused during this time. Despite the year's challenges, the zoo had a strong year in terms of attendance and donations as well as adapting multiple programs and events to be virtual, and/or to follow CDC and Dane County Public Health guidelines.

The marketing and public relations strategies implemented during 2020 were not only designed to keep Henry Vilas Zoo visible and vital to its publics during a most challenging and unusual time in our history, but also to begin to lay the ground work for ongoing, expanded, and comprehensive long term development and fundraising opportunities.

The following is a summary of 2020 highlights for Henry Vilas Zoo.



Onsite Giving

The zoo branded the light-up kiosk and other donation boxes throughout the zoo, which helped to attract the attention of visitors and encouraged them to use the boxes for their donations. In addition, per guest onsite donations were 50% higher from June-December than before the zoo closed.

Total Giving For 2020 = \$448,066.14

Despite all the challenges of 2020 and nearly four months of closure, the zoo generated \$448,066.14 in cash donations

Madison Community Foundation

Through the Madison Community Foundation, the zoo ended 2020 with more than \$9.5 million total in restricted funds, unrestricted funds and the endowment fund.



Educational Programming

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the zoo made swift adjustments in educational programs in order to meet some of the new needs in the community spawned by the pandemic. In fall of 2020, the Madison Metropolitan School District made the decision to start the school year with all Virtual Learning.

We entered a partnership with Bayview Community Center in order to assist families and students that needed childcare and support with Virtual Learning, Henry Vilas Zoo hosted “Zoo School”: **Two groups of 10 elementary age students on grounds at the zoo**

This Zoo School program included virtual school support, science-based inquiry activities, zoo tours, animal encounters, keeper chats, quiet and group reading, nature exploration and games, all while following COVID-19 recommendations ensuring a fun, safe and supportive experience.

Zoo School



Other Highlights:

- Addition of a full-time Education Specialist
- Certified a Sensory Inclusive facility through KultureCity
- Virtual Conservation Awareness Days and Wisconsin Science Festival
- Party for the Planet virtual programming underwritten by grant funding
- Empathy training for teachers, students, docents underwritten by grant funding
- 557,000 individuals connected with programs online during the zoo's closure
- 1,585 guests participated in adapted onsite programs, following all public health guidelines \$100,000 in revenue generated
- Volunteers conducted 4,237 hours of service
- Arboretum partnership

Acquisitions and Upgrades

Animals

The zoo acquired 153 animals in 2020, including bass, bluegills, Von der Decken's Hornbills and a colony of bats. In addition, the zoo was able to successfully secure and transition the loan of a young Polar Bear named Bo (short for Borealis), who joined the zoo in November 2020. Henry Vilas Zoo is one of just a handful of zoos in the country who have even one polar bear. The zoo now has two on exhibit.

Exhibits

Several updates and upgrades were made in 2020 with various exhibits:

- New Herpetarium roof
- New Green Barn roof
- New one-way entrance and exit upgraded improvements
- New Zoo Lights vendor and program



Sustainability

- 2020 Capital Improvement projects
 - New Herpetarium roof and insulation
 - New Green Barn Roof (planned)
- During our closure for COVID-19 (Spring 2020) we began to collect baseline data on operational waste and recycling
- Conducted a zoo wide energy audit of all buildings with MGE in September 2020
- Named as 2020 Climate Champions for its staff's commuting practices
- Continued to actively improve ongrounds pollinator habitat and education through additional pollinator gardens and signage
- Zoo became a member in the local sustainability organization, Sustain Dane
- Certified as WI Salt Wise site for our commitment to reducing chloride use and runoff

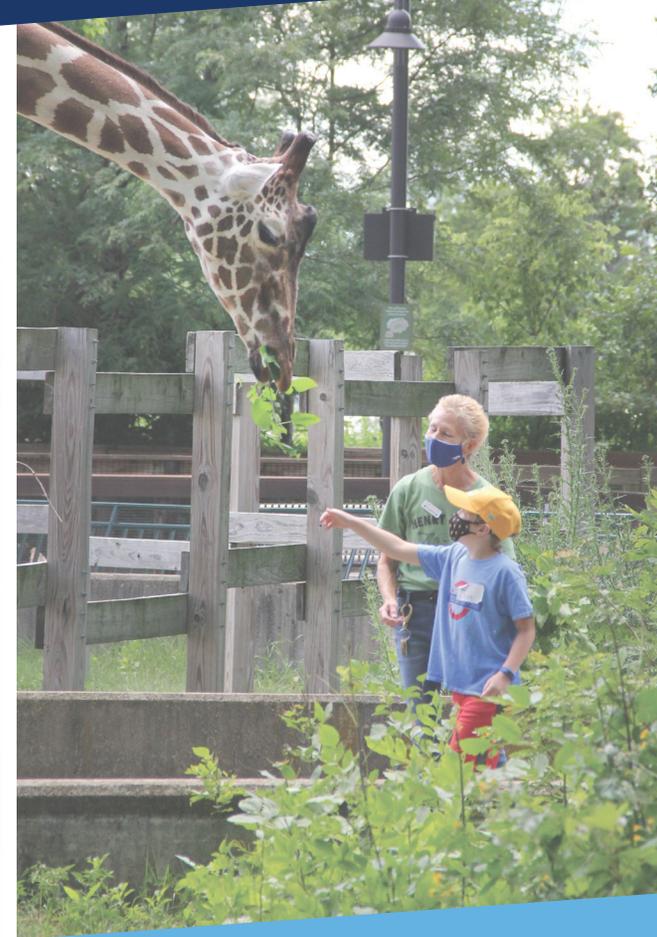
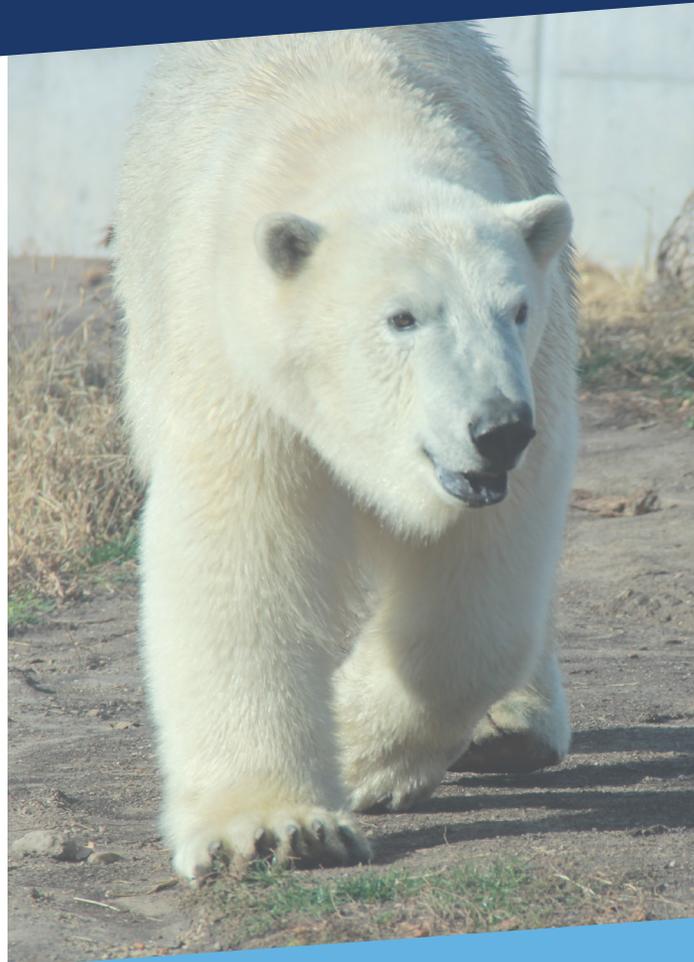
Climate Champion





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