

Memorandum

To: Dane County Board
CC: Department of Administration
From: Ronda Schwetz
Date: 9/11/2017
Re: Henry Vilas Zoo - Equity and Inclusion work plan

We are happy to share the work we are doing to address equity at Henry Vilas Zoo.

We are fortunate to have a public private partnership with the friends of the zoo and are working with them to ensure that both organizations are prioritizing racial equity throughout our organization. In 2018 we are working on several initiatives outlined below.

We are looking for way to increase our offerings to our visitors by having multilingual signage, recruiting multilingual staff and volunteers. We are also working with non-profits that work with underserved communities to host job fairs and expand our educational offerings. We are fortunate that the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has a diversity group that we work with to identify opportunities and adopt best practices to create an inclusive environment in our profession.

Attached you will find our draft Equity and Inclusion work plan which further details our work.

Report to the board:

Racial Equity:

What has been your greatest success and your greatest challenge in 2017 in achieving/advancing the goals, objectives, and strategies of your department's equity plan?

Greatest Success: we have been able to increase number of diversity applicants for the zoo keeper position and were successful in hiring a minority candidate and three women in 2017. We also have worked with the Friends of the Zoo staff to help staffing in their operations by hosting job fairs for diverse communities.

Greatest Challenge: the zoo industry as a whole has a large percentage of female candidates but traditionally not many diversity candidates. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) recognizes this disparity and developed a diversity committee to look at this issue.

If you have not yet completed your plan, what support do you require to complete the plan by the end of 2018?

The zoo's plan is in final draft form and we just need to add in measurements from the Friends of the Zoo operations.

Finally, indicate any specific approaches or initiatives in your 2018 budget request to promote an equitable and just county.

We will continue to add in signage in other languages than English as we have been doing for the last few years. We are developing intern and newer keeper opportunities to attract diversity candidates at a young age and expose them to the zoo keeping career. We continue to be free and are looking at ways to help measure and increase diverse visitors to the zoo as well as in our outreach programs.

Sincerely,



Ronda Schwetz
Executive Zoo Director
Henry Vilas Zoo

