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Pueblo Zoological Society



# ZooNews

The biannual newsletter for Pueblo Zoo supporters

**TRAIN  
LEARN  
GROW**



Photo: Meiyer Torrisi

*The maned wolf looks like a fox, is called a wolf, and is closely related to neither.*

## Your donations deepen connections and improve care through training

You've surely heard the phrase, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." And, if you have your own dogs, you've probably thought about this yourself. But if that dog happens to live at the zoo, there is likely a keeper who believes that with proper planning and perseverance, any dog can learn any trick.

Enter Keeper Hollie, who doesn't seem to have "no" or "can't" in her vocabulary. In 2019, she took over training for Cayenne, our 10-year-old maned wolf. Four years prior, Cayenne had developed a wealth of trained behaviors that paid off when she suffered a snake bite. Her training meant keepers and vet staff were able to easily identify the issue and treat it topically. No repeated anesthetization needed! But, without a dedicated trainer like Hollie, Cayenne lost those behaviors.

As her new keeper, Hollie first worked with Cayenne to build trust. Then, drawing on typical maned wolf behavior and Cayenne's personal history, Hollie developed a new training plan. This plan put hand injections as a #1 goal. To keep Cayenne comfortable as she ages, she is now seen more regularly by our veterinary team. Hand injections make this quick and easy for Cayenne.

Today, Hollie has formed a critical bond with Cayenne through training - training made possible by generous donors. Hopefully, Cayenne will never suffer a snake bite again, but if she does, Hollie knows that Cayenne has all the training she will need. To read more about Hollie and Cayenne, check out page four of this ZooNews!

# TRAINING



## 101 with Vet Tech, Kim Pranger

**Education:** B.A. in Biology, University of Colorado / Graduate coursework in biology, University of Wyoming / A.A.S. in Veterinary Technology Bel-Rea Institute of Veterinary Technology

**Years of experience:** 30 years (20 years with Pueblo Zoo)

**Certifications/Associations:** Certified Veterinary Technician (CVT) (member), Colorado Association of Certified Veterinary Technicians (CACVT)

**What animals are you responsible for training at the zoo?** I train the ring-tailed lemurs, gibbons, Hunter (an African painted dog), Gomez (our male cockatoo), and new animals that arrive at the zoo and go through quarantine. I am also a secondary trainer for Barney, our sun bear, and Mashavu, our female adult African lion.

**Why is training important?** Training is a positive form of enrichment. Our zoo animals are willing participants in their training. If they don't want to train, we don't force them! Training also strengthens the bond between keeper and animal and ultimately results in better care. We know the animal better, can pick up on health and behavioral changes, and can sedate animals with less stress and injuries.

**How is training wild animals similar to training domestic ones?** It all comes down to motivation. You have to figure out what drives the animal to participate

and offer behaviors. Wild animals and domestic ones are the same. They don't want to work for free! Certain animals are motivated by favorite foods or treats, while others want attention and praise.

**What positive reinforcements do you use in your training?** I use a clicker with many animals. The animals learn that when they hear a click, they get a treat. It's an efficient way to say "Good Job." The animal learns to work for a click, knowing that a reward will follow. Gomez the cockatoo isn't interested in the clicker. He is more motivated by attention and head scratches! Primates, on the other hand, are often big fans of raisins, carrots, and broccoli.



*Gomez the cockatoo, training to be weighed on the scale in exchange for head scratches.*

**Which animal is the most challenging to train?** Our female gibbon, Suzy, is the most challenging. She has decided that some behaviors are not worth the reward. For example, after receiving a real injection in her hip, she has refused to offer the hip injection behavior that she previously did very well. We have reverted back

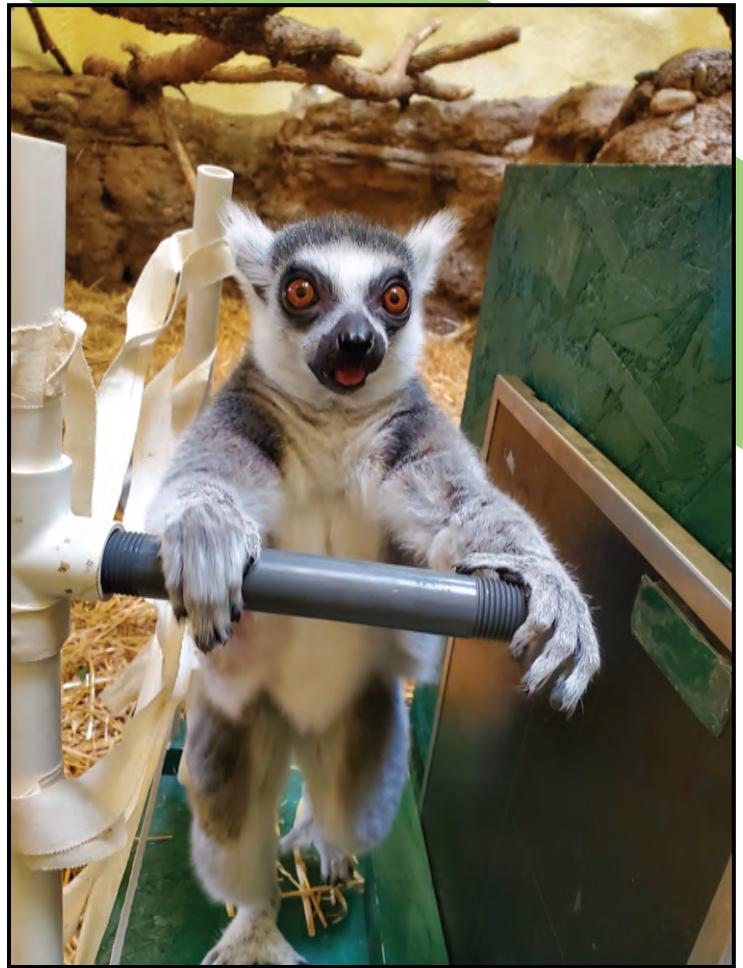
to the initial training steps and tried different types of rewards, but she is too smart and doesn't cooperate!

**Are there animals that are untrainable?** Animals that are stressed will not train well. They need to have a certain level of comfort. I have never tried to train in invertebrate and imagine that would really be a challenge. Yet, I heard Karen Pryor (author of "Don't Shoot the Dog" and an expert on clicker training) talk about teaching a hermit crab to ring a bell, so it's certainly possible!

“It all comes down to motivation. You have to figure out what drives the animal to participate and offer behaviors.”

**How long does it normally take to achieve a desired result?** There are no typical time frames. Every animal is an individual with their own ways of learning. I've seen primates and canines figure out how to touch a target in just a few training sessions. Yet, I was training both a turaco (bird) and a primate how to touch a target and the turaco picked this up much faster than the primate. That surprised me. It's a good reminder that any preconceived notions you bring to the training can sometimes affect the outcome for the animal. They are all unique and different and learn in different ways, just like people!

**What have you learned about yourself from training wild animals?** It's a challenge to figure out what will work best for each animal. I relate to our female gibbon, Suzy, quite a bit. We both want to have a pleasant/non-stressful human-animal bond. However, we don't work for free and get frustrated if asked to do more than we feel is worth the reward! I've also learned that you have to be careful or the animal may train



*Shasta, our ring-tailed lemur, trained to hold still while Kim takes an x-ray.*

you instead. For example, many years ago our sun bear, Solar Sue, did an excellent hip presentation and allowed a hip injection. However, she decided that she would only offer that behavior if she could have whipped cream squirted in her mouth!

**What training story are you most proud of?** I am proud of our ring-tailed lemurs. They are all learning to hold a bar and position themselves on a platform with an x-ray plate to their side. With this behavior, we can take radiographs while they are awake. The funny part about this behavior is they continue to stand there holding the same position even after I say, "Good job, we're done!" This makes for great photos!

### How your donations make training happen

\$15

Allows a keeper to RESEARCH new approaches and an animal's history to improve training.

\$50

Provides the FAVORITE TREATS used as positive reinforcement for 15 animals.

\$75

Funds six months of TRAINING sessions for an animal.

\$100

Provides EXPERT CONSULTATION from our staff veterinarian for 12 animals.

# What's your favorite animal?

Keeper,  
Bethany Morlind



**Igloo, the porcupine**, is my favorite animal to work with. She is an incredible little gal who is full of personality and is always motivated to participate in training. Not only is she adorable and curious, but Igloo is also a quick study! Porcupines are a great group to work with as they are personable, quirky, surprisingly active, and mischievous (in the best way). I'm so lucky to get to work with the four that I do!

Keeper,  
Brianna Ford



I love working with **our sheep, Georgia and Carolina!** They are quite shy so it's been very rewarding to build trust with them. In a couple of months I've watched them go from being wary of me to being excited to see me! Through training I plan to get them more accustomed to human touch so that things like hoof trims or veterinary exams are a little easier on them. These fluffy little beauties tug on my heart strings!

Keeper,  
Brittany Merlo



**Thelma, the otter**, is one of my favorite animals to work with. She's very sweet and always seems happy to see me and our guests. I could watch her swim and show off all day! Being very smart, she always impresses me during our trainings and we have built enough trust between us to perform hand injections. My heart is always so happy to see her in the morning!

**What's your favorite animal?** When you send in your donation card, include a picture of you with your favorite animal and we'll feature you in our monthly eNews!



Keeper, Hollie David

**Cayenne, our maned wolf**, is not only beautiful, but also very smart. She is one of the animals I train, so I spend a lot of time with her and she makes me look good! Her favorite training behavior with me is stationing. Stationing involves Cayenne standing on a green bucket lid and earning a treat for staying there. Cayenne has a unique gait, which all maned wolves display, where both legs on each side of their body move at the same time. She also exhibits a vocalization, unique to maned wolves, called a 'roar-bark' that she uses to communicate over long distances.



# Beloved Community Traditions Support Animal Care, Education

**ZooBoo and ElectriCritters events provide critical funds.** As visitation slows and temperatures drop, ZooBoo and ElectriCritters, two beloved community traditions, help to sustain the work of the zoo. Together, these events fully fund January and February's animal care staff expenses. Gifts from donors help to cover additional food, veterinary, and programming costs. We owe a special thanks to our event sponsors, and we hope you will drop by their businesses and let them know we sent you!



## ZooBoo Sponsors

The Shandy Clinic  
R Buck Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.  
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Academy Kids Dental & Vision  
Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar  
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Black Hills Energy  
Chick-fil-A Pueblo  
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RMSE  
Smile Doctors Braces  
Talecris Plasma Resources  
TTS Photography  
West Mountain Dental



## ElectriCritters Sponsors

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KOAA 5  
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The Pueblo Chieftain  
Solar Roast Coffee  
Thatcher Avenue Storage  
Missionside  
Beverly Brill  
Parkview Medical Center  
PCC Skills USA Welding Club

## ZOO CAMPS

Pueblo Zoo Camp is the wildest way to spend the summer! Kids will enjoy a full range of Pueblo Zoo Camp activities, and learn about our new animals, find out about local critters in the wild, and explore our Plant. Grow. Fly. garden.

1st - 8th grade camps run from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

[www.pueblozoo.org/camp](http://www.pueblozoo.org/camp)



**Get up close  
and personal!**

## OUR MISSION

To empower people to engage in conservation of animals and their natural habitat

ACCREDITED BY THE  
**ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS**

# Letter

from the Director

My initial letter to you was a perfectly lovely piece about how important training is and how I relate to our keepers as I “train” my 10-year-old son (sometimes with Cheetos as a motivator) because I want what’s best for him. But, our world has changed completely since I penned that letter, and the novel coronavirus now sweeps the world forcing us all to re-examine how to live our lives through this storm and beyond. What has not changed, is our love and dedication to our animals. Though we have closed our gates as of March 17, our animals still need food, medical care, cleaning and enrichment on a daily basis. Our staff is working harder than ever to meet their needs as we take precautions against illness. As a small non-profit, we have a very lean staff that delivers big results and happiness to our community. To help protect and support them, we are dividing into teams to minimize cross exposure should anyone become sick. Without our volunteers, our staff is picking up the valuable duties volunteers provide. We are committed to providing stability, support and safety to our staff and animals in these uncertain times as they continue to go above and beyond.

Another thing we know has not changed is your care of and dedication to the zoo and our animals. **This crisis will have a significant financial impact on the zoo’s future.** Right now, we are focusing on getting through each day and your help is needed more than ever. If you are able to donate in this time of need, you will be contributing to both the daily survival of the zoo, as well as its continued future. We hope that we will be able to welcome you through our gates again very soon. In the meantime, stay in touch through social media. Be well, be safe, do your part.



With much gratitude and wishes for good health,  
- Abbie Krause, Executive Director

## Upcoming Events

Please check our website for up-to-date information on any postponements due to COVID-19.

### May 1: Summer hours begin ☀️

Open Daily, 9:00am-5:00pm

### May 1 - September 30: Member Mornings

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00am

### May 3: ‘Watching Wolves’ talk & book signing 🐺

Meet author Rick McIntyre, author of “The Rise of Wolf 8” and “Unlikely Hero.” CSU-Pueblo Occhiato Ballroom, 6:00pm-7:30pm. VIP event starts at 4:00pm. For more info, contact Abbie at [akrause@pueblozoo.org](mailto:akrause@pueblozoo.org).

### May 9-10: Mother’s Day Weekend

Moms and grandmas get in free with purchase of child admission.

### June 19: Zoofari

An evening of casual elegance, animal encounters, tours, and auctions. Find out more at [www.pueblozoo.org/zoofari](http://www.pueblozoo.org/zoofari)

### June 20-21: Father’s Day Weekend

Dads and grandpas get in free with purchase of child admission.

### July 25: Dollar Day 💵

Sponsored by The Shandy Clinic, 9:00am-1:00pm

### August 1-2: Overnight with the Animals

Camp outside and enjoy activities right next to your favorite zoo exhibits!

### September 6-12: Senior Discovery Days

Honoring senior citizens 65 and older with free admission!

### September 19: Red Panda Conservation Day 🐼

Learn about red pandas and how you can join the campaign to raise awareness about saving their habitats.

### October 3: AAZK Art Show

Join us in viewing a gallery of art by local artisans, displayed among the animals, for the animals. 9:00am-5:00pm