

ZooNews

The biannual newsletter for Pueblo Zoo supporters

Pueblo Zoological Society



**TALKIN'
TAKIN'**

Photo: Ashley Bowen

Takin calf thrives, thanks to your support.

Amid the pandemic, Tenzin, orphaned weeks after his June birth, became a symbol of hope and resilience. We caught up with Selenia and Jeannette to see how he's doing.

"He's such a big boy now. When we first weaned him he would look for us when we shifted. Now he runs on exhibit and jumps straight to his food," Jeannette shared. "Because of the hand-rearing, he is comfortable with keepers and will allow us to touch him anywhere we need to. He's already able to train more advanced behaviors."

For Selenia, Tenzin is extra special. "I was very excited to be greeted with a baby animal on my first

day of work. When Tashi passed away, I had to learn quickly about neonatal care. I was fortunate to have a great team. The first few days were the toughest. All we could do was take it one day at a time. Then we eventually felt confident that he was gonna make it. We could finally celebrate his existence instead of bracing ourselves for the worst possible outcome. He overcame some tough odds but is thriving now. I think that's something a lot of people can relate to."

Selenia's monthly "birthday" photos have marked Tenzin's growth and allowed all of you to follow along on his journey. Be sure to stop by and say hello on your next visit.



Docent, Joe Duran

Zooming with the Zoo

Donor Support Brings Free Zoo Programs to Hundreds of Learners Amid Pandemic

Click! A timelapse video begins and a tadpole transforms into a frog as a class of kindergarteners stare into their screens. For a brief moment they're still and silent, then "Wait! Wait! Hold on! Are you saying it absorbs its tail?!" a student interjects. Without missing a beat, Pueblo Zoo Education Coordinator Anne Casey ties the unexpected interruption into the lesson. "Yes, that's what makes it an amphibian. Can you show me an A for amphibian?" she says holding up the ASL hand-sign for A. The students all hold up their own As and the class is back on track.

This is literacy and science converging, and it's the continuation of the zoo's founding programs, now operating continuously for nearly 45 years.

"Early in the pandemic, Pueblo Zoo recognized that these kids are still going to school every day and they still need their learning experiences to be really rich. I'm not sure I can even put the impact into words," explains Jessica Ortiz, Curriculum Specialist at Villa Bella Exploratory School. "Kids have a curiosity and propensity toward nature and animals and the zoo is able to cultivate that love."

"Without the zoo, there wouldn't be science for our young learners," adds Mr. Flowers, Kindergarten Teacher at Sunset Park Elementary. "You can hear a pin drop when I bring the skulls out [included in weekly explorer boxes from the zoo]. You can see their minds racing and thinking about what they're learning."

When the docent brings the tiger salamander to the camera for another class, hands shoot up. How do their lungs grow? Do they shed? Do they hatch eggs? Do they eat bugs? Do they have dry skin? Do they have a skeleton? You can actively see the students using the vocabulary they've just learned.

"Our students are majority low income. The zoo brings experiences that these children would never be exposed to. Because of the zoo we can start to close the 30 million word gap between affluent and low-income learners."

Ms. Toomey, Kindergarten Teacher at Heritage Elementary

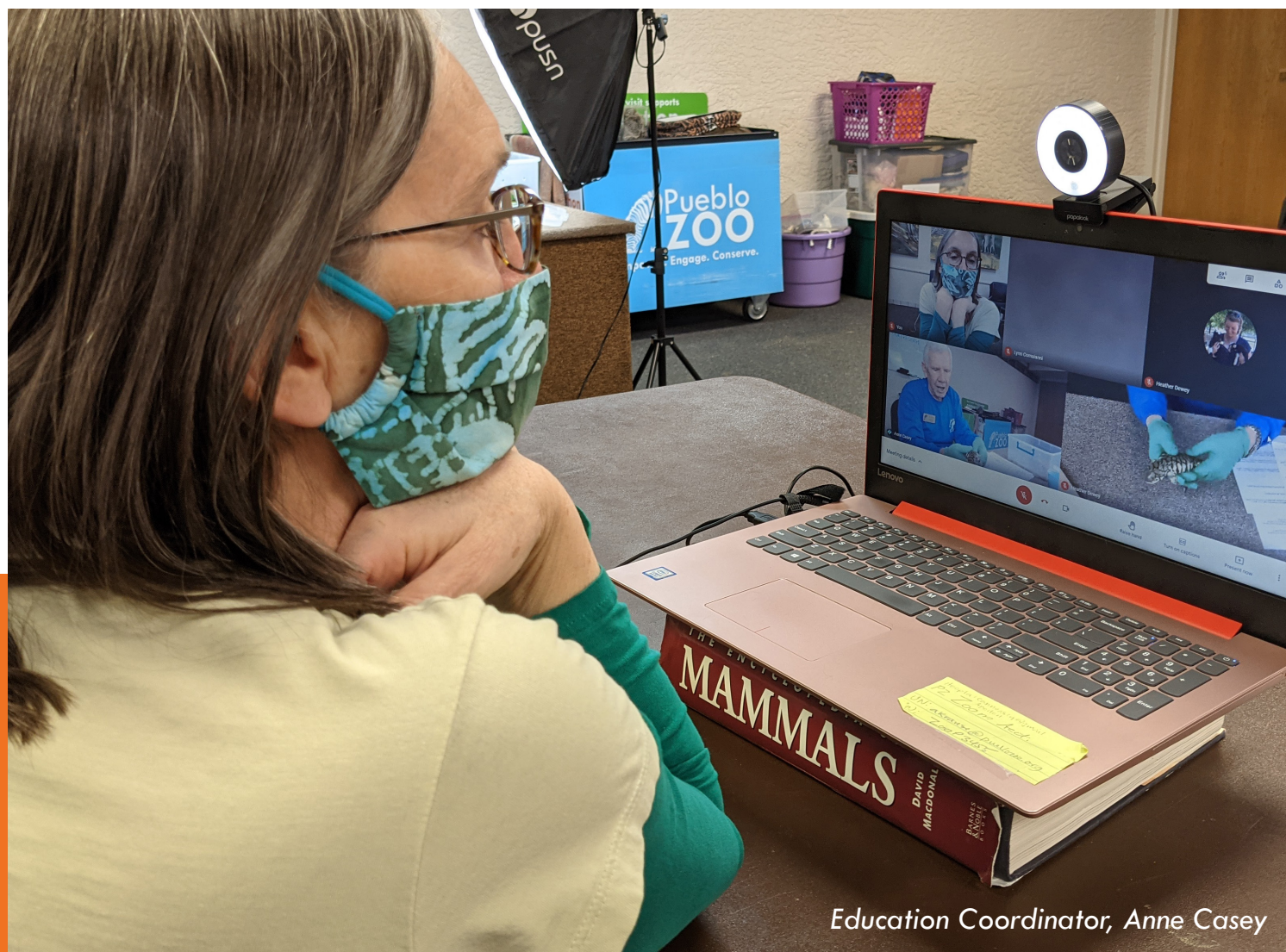
This idea that the zoo builds critical experiences is not unique to kindergarten programs - indeed, it's echoed by teachers at every level. Ms. Vigil, 7th grade science teacher at Liberty Point brought the zoo in to present Wolves of the West, a fact-based program that builds knowledge about wolf biology and ecological importance, while addressing concerns of human-wolf interaction. "When I told my students about the wolf legislation they were really opinionated. So this had a connection to real life, which makes it that much more interesting. When my class came back to school the next week, they were still talking about the zoo program."

"For my low-income students, they often don't leave their neighborhoods and venture out. These programs give them an opportunity to see past their backdoor." With tears welling up, Ms. Vigil continued, "Us teachers, we spend our last dimes for our students. With the pandemic, it's super painful to have to teach like this. It's hard. That the zoo was there to help my kids gave me a little spark

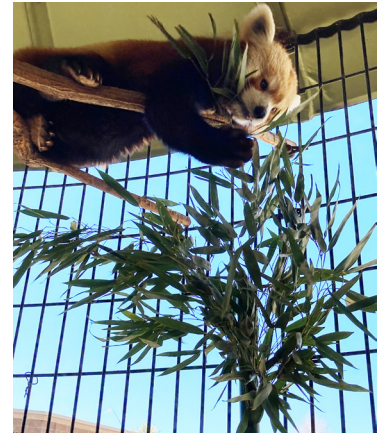
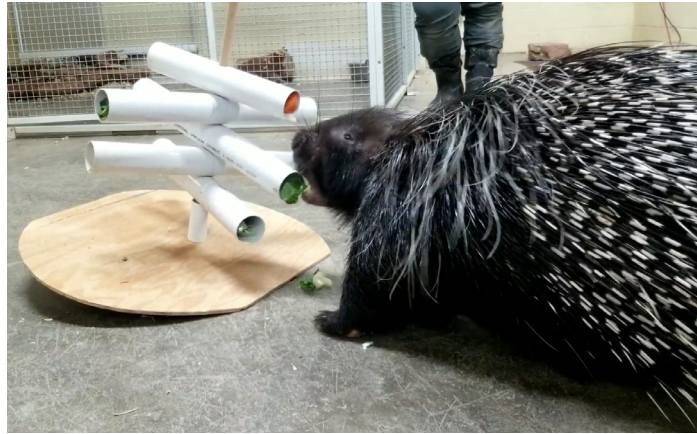
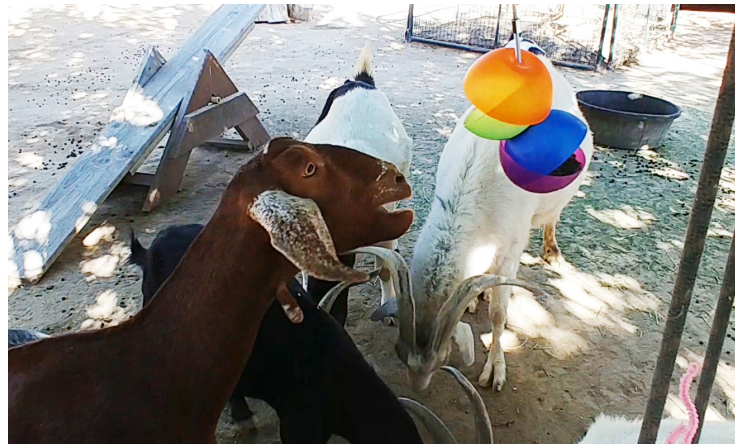
to keep pushing. You want to do the best for your kids. Someone coming along and saying I can help and this is free - It doesn't happen all the time and it means the world."

As the cameras turn off for the day, Heather Dewey, Pueblo Zoo Education Director, sums it up saying, "It's been a privilege to be able to pivot and continue to fill the very real gaps in science education here in Pueblo. By building connections to animals, we're working to achieve our conservation mission. That work is more important than ever, and it's donor contributions that make it possible."

This investment in the Pueblo Educational Community was made possible by Federal CARES Act grants stewarded by the City of Pueblo. "The City and County of Pueblo have been very supportive through COVID in helping us ensure that our animals are safe and cared for and that we are able to continue to serve our community," says Executive Director, Abbie Krause.



Education Coordinator, Anne Casey



Lead Keeper Hollie David, set up a monthly enrichment challenge to encourage the building of new interaction items for the animals and to incentivize keepers by having a little more ownership and input into their care.

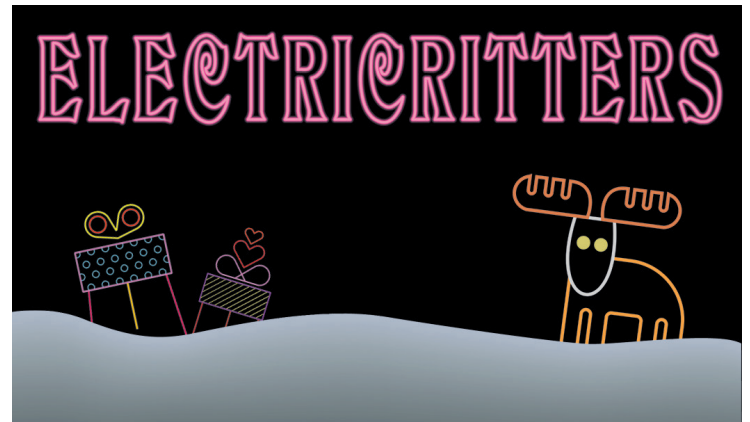
Each month Hollie announces a general direction for the challenge, such as making an item for any animal in a specific section, a recycling themed enrichment, or a timed challenge where each participant gets the same supplies and a certain amount of time to create unique enrichments.

The next time you visit the zoo, see if you can spot these unique and engaging items, and if you see a keeper, ask them about it! Keepers love to talk about their work and the animals they care for.



ENRICHMENT

SOLD-OUT EVENTS SUSTAIN SUPPORT FOR ANIMALS



With capacity limited to just 200 individuals at any time during ZooBoo and 75 during ElectriCrittters, zoo staff, sponsors, and volunteers came together to continue to bring ZooBoo and ElectriCrittters to the Pueblo community. And you showed up! Nearly every time slot was sold out, and the events raised nearly as much as in pre-pandemic years. We are grateful for your support and the support of our sponsors.

SPONSORS

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MGA Home Healthcare
Minnequa Works Credit Union
PCHC
State Farm
Team Select Home Care
Smile Doctors
Emily and Derek Vidmar



☐ GET A HAIRCUT

☒ SIGN UP FOR
ZOO CAMP

June 7- July 30, 2021

For those entering 1st-8th grades
Scholarships are available!

pueblozoo.org/camps

OUR MISSION

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

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



Photo: Brie Ford



Letter from the Director

Whether we want to admit it or accept it, we all need a little support sometimes. Tenzin needed that help from his keepers to survive. The Zoo needs that help from funders big and small to help us do what we do for the community and our animals. That need has been even more acute during the pandemic. Among other funders, the City and County of Pueblo have been very supportive through COVID in helping us ensure that our animals are safe and cared for and that we are able to continue to serve our community. The City of Pueblo helped the zoo by allocating Federal CARES Act funds which in turn helped us support teachers and kids both today and into the future. And goodness knows our education ecosystem can use that boost, that “spark to keep pushing” as one of the teachers put it. Then, even through modest attendance and sales, we were able to keep our commitment to our conservation mission and honor at least part of our pledges to our conservation partners thanks to you. They were thrilled. The pandemic has severely impacted their funding, stalling conservation efforts even as threats to wildlife increase.

Perhaps this pandemic has taught us a few things - to know it's ok to ask for the help we need, to accept it more readily with grace when it does come and then turn around and see who we can help in turn. Because, truly, we all need a little help from our friends sometimes. Thank you, friends, for your “spark” and helping us to keep pushing.

- Abbie Krause, Executive Director

Upcoming Events

May 1: Summer hours begin ☀️

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

May 1 - September 30: Member Mornings

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00am

May 9-10: Mother's Day Weekend

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

May 22: NEW Summer Concert Series (1)

Bring a blanket and listen to great local music! 4-7pm

June 18: Zoofari

Pueblo Zoo's Annual Auction

June 20-21: Father's Day Weekend

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

July 24: NEW Summer Concert Series (2)

Bring a blanket and listen to great local music! 4-7pm

July 31: Dollar Day 💵

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

September 12-18: Senior Discovery Days

Honoring senior citizens 65+ with free admission!

July 24: NEW Summer Concert Series (3)

Bring a blanket and listen to great local music! 4-7pm

September 18: Red Panda Conservation Day 🐼

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

For more information on upcoming events, go to:
www.pueblozoo.org/events