# 2012 Annual Report



Peacocks have roamed our grounds since the Zoo opened 90 years ago in 1922.

# ZOO DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

I started volunteering at the Zoo as an intern while in high school. And since I was hired in 1980, the Zoo has been my only employer. I wouldn't have it any other way.

My memories of the Zoo go back to my childhood, when my parents, Al and Louise, took me and my six siblings here every Sunday after church.

I find it amazing that my connection with the Zoo spans 55 of the Zoo's 90 years.

It is an honor to have served as the Zoo Director since 1983 and to have been here to celebrate the Zoo's 90th birthday with staff, board, volunteers, supporters, and guests. There is no better job in the world than to provide safe, fun, family entertainment that also offers important educational programs and protects wildlife and wild places.

After working here for so many years, it is hard to come up with just a couple memories. However, some do stand out – being present for the Zoo's first Amur tiger birth in 1980; when I was working full time while pursuing my masters in zoology from Southern Connecticut State University; and just four years after becoming Director, the Zoo attained Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation for the first time. I will also never forget watching our old monkey house transformed into our Rainforest Building in 1989. This signaled a new era of growth in the Zoo's history.



I hope that you and your family have your own warm memories of the times you've spent at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo. Together we will continue to expand our animal exhibits, enhance our programming, and strengthen our conservation efforts so that future generations will have fond recollections of their experiences at Connecticut's only zoo.

Sincerely, Gregg Dancho



As part of our 90th birthday celebration, we welcomed Gov. Dannel P. Malloy in June along with State Rep. Auden Grogins and several members of Bridgeport's state delegation and City Council. It was Gov. Malloy's first tour of the state's only zoo since taking office and the first time in two decades a sitting governor has visited us.

# **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD**

For the last several years I have had the privilege and honor to serve as President of the Board of Directors. Our Board is made up of individuals from all walks of life who volunteer their time, talents, and financial support to the Zoo. Our mission is to support the staff in achievement of their goals and those of the Zoo.

I joined the Board of Directors in 1998 - the year after the Connecticut Zoological Society bought the Zoo from the City of Bridgeport. That acquisition allowed the Zoo to act independently and look for support outside of State and City for its funding. Through the efforts of the Board and staff there have been eight major projects completed that represent over \$4 million in renovations and new construction.



The funds generated came from corporations, foundations, and individuals that all invested in the future of the Zoo.

The next phase of our Master Plan is the South American Adventure, a multi-year expansion project that will include new exhibits and species, as well as offer additional educational resources to our great Zoo. We have already established the funds to start these programs but over the next several years we will continue to focus on raising the resources necessary for our continued growth.

The Zoo has been described as a jewel in the City of Bridgeport's crown. Another commitment of the Board, along with the staff, is to be sure this jewel not only shines in Bridgeport but throughout the State - after all we are the only zoo in Connecticut.

I would like to thank the Board members for all their efforts and special thanks to Gregg and our dedicated staff for the great work they do caring for the animals, maintaining the grounds, and developing the engaging educational programs that ensure our guests have a memorable experience every time they visit.

Sincerely, Richard Perusi

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy fed one of our young pronghorn on a visit to the Zoo during our 90th anniversary year.



# 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

P.T. Barnum is attributed with saying, "The noblest art is that of making others happy." Well, the Zoo has been making others happy for 90 years, in part thanks to him.

Zoo legend says that employees of P. T. Barnum's circus, which was headquartered in Bridgeport, used to walk some of their animals through the streets of Bridgeport and in Beardsley Park for exercise. People would gather with their blankets and picnic baskets to watch the "parade" go by.

Inspired by this, Parks Commissioner Wesley F. Hayes suggested the city have a zoo. Others agreed, and Beardsley Park Zoo was established in 1922 with 18 birds (macaws, toucans, canaries, and more) plus circus "retirees" from Barnum, all donated to the cause.

The number and variety of animals cared for at the Zoo, as well as the

exhibits and veterinary care, have changed considerably throughout the years. But one thing has remained consistent – families had the same fun experience in 2012 that they had in 1922. There's just much more to do.

To celebrate our anniversary, we offered "90 Days of Summer Fun" from Memorial Day through Labor Day, with reduced admission days, discount Carousel ride days, free admission to the 90th visitor on Fridays and on a guest's birthday, and other fun promotions.

We brought in a special summer exhibit of Galapagos and Aldabra giant tortoises – Professor (416 pounds) and Skipper (537 pounds) – considered among the world's largest, oldest, and rarest tortoises. These gentle giants were a huge hit with our visitors.

We hosted a Regional Great Cake Bake-Off on May 19, 2012, when 700 members joined us for a birthday party and voted for the best-decorated cake, won by Billy's Bakery in Fairfield.

And we welcomed Mayor Bill Finch, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Rep. Auden Grogins, Rep. Toni Walker, Sen. Andres Ayala, and radio personality Jim Buchanan the same day for the reading of a procla-

> mation in recognition of our 90 years of increasing awareness of animals and providing entertainment for all Connecticut residents. And, the City of Bridgeport proclaimed May 19 as Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo Day!

# HERE'S TO THE NEXT 90 YEARS!







# ANIMALS

Visitors come to Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo to see their favorite animals (hello tigers and otters!) but also to learn about new animals and species we haven't shown before.

During 2012 we brought in a pair of Andean condors, a pair of Canada lynx for breeding purposes, and red-rumped Agoutis for the rainforest exhibit.

We added Eastern hellbenders, a type of salamander, to our collection as a conservation program through AZA. These will help our industry colleagues understand husbandry techniques of the animals, as we all share "best practices" to improve the care we provide to our charges.

Zoos don't breed animals without knowing they will have a home, so we don't always have a high birth rate. But we did welcome Broad striped newt, Prairie dog, and Pronghorn offspring.

After exhibiting timber wolves for over 12 years, our last animal of this species passed in 2012. We are changing this exhibit space and bringing in an endangered species, Mexican wolves, with the hope of breeding them for release into their native habitat.

We changed another exhibit area when we sent our Andean bear to another zoo. We have completely transformed this exhibit area, so that we could bring in the endangered Amur leopard, again with the hope of breeding this incredibly rare species.







# **EDUCATION**

A highlight of our busy education program last year was the introduction of "Beeze" (pronounced BeeZee, as in BZ for Beardsley Zoo), a rescued bobcat that now serves as one of our animal ambassadors. Beeze was born in Con-

necticut but became separated from his mother shortly after birth. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection invited us to care for the then three-week old kitten, and he has thrived after receiving socialization training from our staff. Look for Beeze at education programs both at the Zoo and in the community.

We also had success with our 3rd annual Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program. Our students successfully raised 32 brook trout for release back into their

native Pequonnock River waters. Over the course of one year, students work in our Professor Beardsley's Research Station to perform water chemistry tests, watch for water changes, feed the fish, monitor their growth, and adjust water temperatures accordingly. TIC is a conservation program aimed at restoring this species, which, over the past 200 years, has been wiped out from much of their historic, coastal New England range.



Starting in 2012, the Institute of Museum and

Library Services is providing a grant totaling \$78,000 over three years to support our Conservation Discovery Corps (CDC) program for teens.

The CDC is the only project of its kind in Connecticut. As part of the program, students participate in field work currently being conducted by scientists at

related institutions. In 2012, students played an active role in national efforts to reintroduce endangered Karner blue butterflies to their native habitat in central New Hampshire. They raised lupine plants from seeds and transported them to the Concord region. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Biologists then planted them, providing wild forage areas for these rare and beautiful creatures.

We also launched a pioneering biodiversity mapping partnership program with Bridgeport's Interdistrict Discovery Magnet Elementary School. Students and Zoo staff, along with staff from the Peabody Museum in New Haven, conducted a bio-blitz in Bridgeport and were able to document new species not previously located in the area.

# SPECIAL EVENTS

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo presents dozens of family-friendly events throughout the year, including our much-loved Teddy Bear Picnic, Pet Awareness & Adoption Day, and performances by singer and puppeteer Chris Rowlands. Youth learn about zoo careers during our summer Zoo Patrol weekly summer education program, while adults enjoy our Evening Lecture Series on a variety of exciting nature topics. Fans from all over the tri-state region have



gathered to the see the Bard's masterpieces come to life when Connecticut Free Shakespeare has performed at the Zoo.

We also bring new events to the Zoo, usually during the summer, and the Rainforest Reptile Show was a big hit in 2012.

The Zoo celebrated four major fundraising events in 2012. We added a little "wild" to Valentine's Day with our new event, Wild at Heart, at which 175 guests enjoyed amazing food and great entertainment. The event was a great success and netted the Zoo nearly \$13,000.

More than 950 of our beloved supporters roamed the Zoo during our largest fundraiser, the Wild Wine, Beer & Food Safari. Everyone enjoyed wine, beer, and food from around the world and close to home. Their generosity helped us raise more than \$72,000.



As the weather cooled down and summer vacation ended, we tee'd off in October for our annual golf tournament. Ninety-two golfers enjoy a competitive day on the links and helped us raise more than \$41,000.

Finally, our Scarecrow Competition kicked in to full swing. Nineteen schools created 54 scarecrows that decorated Zoo grounds, but it wouldn't have been possible without our 36 sponsors who brought in more than \$11,000.

We hold events all year round, including fall and winter. Subscribe to our free monthly e-newsletter at beardsleyzoo.org or follow us on Facebook to stay in the know about upcoming events.



While most of our events are for families, our annual "Wild at Heart" Valentine's Day celebration is a treat for adults. This festive cocktail party features fabulous food (chocolate fondue, of course) and beverages, animal encounters, entertainment, and a silent auction with something for everyone.

# DONORS

The Connecticut Zoological Society gratefully acknowledges the support that we received from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012. Every effort was made to include all supporters who gave gifts of \$100 or more. We sincerely apologize if we have inadvertently omitted your name or organization. If you note an omission, please contact us at jsummers@beardsleyzoo.org or 203-394-6573.

# \$50,000-\$100,000

Diageo North America Foundation

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A \$55,000 donation from Diageo North America kicked off the Zoo's new Pampas Plains South American Adventure exhibit, which will feature Chacoan peccaries, Greater rhea, and Giant anteaters. To help prepare for the new exhibit, more than 100 Diageo employees spent May 24 working on 11 projects, including construction, painting and gardening.

AGE



# \$1,000-4,999

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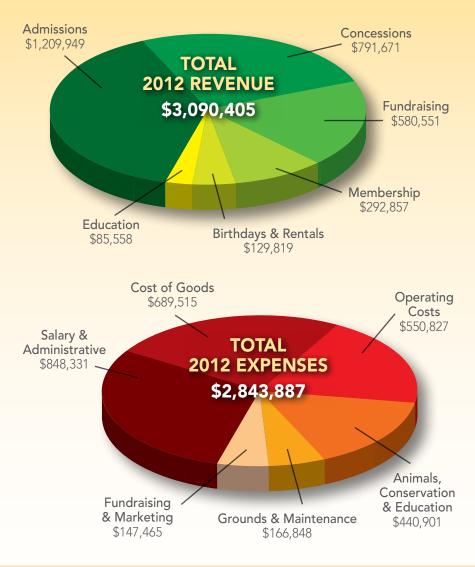
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# **2012 FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Fifteen years ago, ownership for the Zoo was transferred from the City of Bridgeport to the Connecticut Zoological Society, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Since that time, Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo has taken the steps necessary to keep us Connecticut's premier family destination and one of the state's top tourist attractions, welcoming 280,000 guests annually.



Every dollar spent at the Zoo goes directly back into making the Zoo a better place. The quality of care we provide our animals remains our priority as does the quality of our guests' experience. Thank you for your support!

# LOOKING FORWARD TO 2013

Here are some of the exciting things happening at the Zoo in 2013...

#### Amur Leopard Exhibit

In 2013, the Zoo will welcome a rare Amur leopard. Amur Leopards are the world's most endangered big cats with only 30-40 left in the wild and only 176 in captivity worldwide. Sofiya is five years old and will reside in a new exhibit that is being constructed where the Andean Bear exhibit was located, next to the current lynx exhibit. The new exhibit will feature rock outcroppings, which will enable Sofiya to explore her exhibit not only on the ground level but from as high as 10 feet off the ground, allowing her to see her surroundings from a different perspective.

#### **Pampas Plains**

Construction has begun on the Pampas Plain project; phase one, of the four phase South American Adventure. Through a new portal at the Maned Wolf exhibit guests will begin their adventure on a raised boardwalk over a bridge that will guide guests onto viewing areas that will provide views into three new spaces that will exhibit Giant Anteaters, Chacoan Peccaries and Rheas. Construction will continue through 2013 and 2014 and the exhibit will be scheduled to open the end of 2014.

# "Green" Rainforest Roof

In 2013, the Zoo will install a new green roof over the Rainforest building thanks to support from local businesses through the Neighborhood Assistance Act and bonding from the City of Bridgeport. Adding a green roof to the top of the rainforest building provides a serene natural habitat while saving energy and avoiding storm water runoff. The Zoo's new roof will reduce the urban heat island effect, reduce storm water runoff quality, helping to keep the sewers from overflowing into local waterways, add extra thermal and sound insulation, helping to create a better environment inside the building, and increase aesthetics and extend the life of the roof, reducing the need for replacement down the road.

# **MEMBERSHIP**

Our Zoo family grew to include 2,744 members in 2012, thanks in part to a mild winter that brought us a great boost in membership early in the year. We increased our Director's Circle memberships by 38% and our President's Circle memberships by 33%. Total membership revenue was \$292,857.



Your membership dollars support our mission of conservation, education, research, and family recreation and provide benefits including unlimited free admission to our Zoo; free/discounted admission to more than 150 reciprocal zoos; discounts in our Gift shops and on programs; invitations to members-only events; a VIP line at the front gate; and much more.

Purchase or renew your membership at beardsleyzoo.org or at our front gate.

# GOLD SOCIETY

Sharon and Ken Stemme

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The Board presents our annual **"Wild Wine, Beer & Food Safari"** to a sold-out crowd each June. Guests enjoy delectable fare from local restaurants and caterers, musical entertainment, and a fabulous silent auction

#### STAFF

Staff with 10 or more years of service noted.

**Zoo Director** Gregg Dancho (32 years)

**Deputy Director** Don Goff (18 years)

Associate Curators Robert Thomas (27 years) Jeanne Yuckienuz (30 years)

Zookeepers Bethany Baldwin Christopher Barker Lindsay Carubia Tracey Kosa (22 years) Elyse Pasquale Linda Tomas (27 years) Kimberly Van Wormer John Warner (12 years) Martyna Zmijewska

Vet Tech Jenny Gordon (10 years)

**Director of Education** Jim Knox (14 years) **Education** Christine Clark (15 years) Michelle Gaudreau (12 years) Margaret Sackrider Jacqueline Westlein

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**Director of Development** Jessica Summers

Associate Director of Development Emily Bobowick

**Membership Manager** Amanda Bolanos

Volunteer Coordinator Tracy Benham (13 years)

**Group Sales** Carrie Saunders

Visitor Services Denice Green (21 years)

Front Gate Supervisor Jill Koos (17 years)



# **STAFF** (continued)

Rentals/Events Coordinator Lindsay Isner

**Greenhouseman** Gary Jessop (10 years)

**Concessions Manager** Rosemary Ryan\* (23 years)

Cafe Manager Peter Gordon

# Administration

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**Gift Shop** Tracey Broadnax Jessica Peterson

**Carousel** Richard Sullivan\*

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Bret Cannone (12 years) Timothy Fennell David Mahoney George Watts (13 years)

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# Consultants

Robin F. DeMattia Consulting, Inc. (14 years)

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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**Editor** Robin F. DeMattia

**Design & Photography** Shannon Calvert hireimagination.com

# **\*IN MEMORIAM**

We lost two beloved members of our Zoo family last year.

Rose Ryan had been our Gift Shop Manager since 1989, overseeing the expansion of this important Zoo operation from the small space in the center of our Greenhouse to the construction of our log cabin retail store and specialty shop in the Carousel.

Rich Sullivan had operated our Carousel since 2004 and brought smiles to the faces of tens of thousands of visitors.

We hope you had a chance to meet these special members of our staff who loved their jobs and the Zoo so very much.







**Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo** 1875 Noble Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06610

# 203-394-6565

beardsleyzoo.org facebook.com/connecticutsbeardsleyzoo