



2020

Annual Report

Cleveland Zoological
Society

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MANAGEMENT TEAM

Rachael Fuller, Director of Marketing & Events
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A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

It's an understatement to say 2020 was a year like no other. For Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Cleveland Zoological Society, last year brought unprecedented operational and financial challenges as well as a great concern for our employees' health and welfare, and that of the animals at the Zoo. The Zoo was closed for three months, yet the daily care of animals could not stop. The Zoo staff faced furloughs and remote work, but facilities, veterinary and animal care team members were considered essential workers who came in everyday to maintain the highest standards of animal care and welfare.

Zoo Society staff worked mostly from home, with the Member and Donor Services team remaining in the office after the Zoo reopening to accommodate daily member visitors and Advancement team needs. Fundraising strategy pivoted away from traditional in-person opportunities to emails, phone calls, distanced visits and Zoom. The Zoo Society's Advancement team made more than 2,450 phone calls in 2020 to thank new and loyal donors.

The significant decline in membership and event revenue left the Zoo Society risking an operational shortfall during the first half of 2020. The Zoo Society was awarded an early Payroll Protection Program loan to keep the staff whole. While operational funding was down, fundraising remained strong.

Due to the support of several generous individual and corporate donors, as well as giving to The Pride annual giving program and The RainForest keepsake campaign, the Zoo Society ended the year with more than \$1.1 million in annual operational support. This is a sign that last year our closest donors and friends knew it was time to help the nonprofit Zoo Society cover operational costs so the staff could focus on raising funding for the Zoo in this unprecedented crisis.

The Zoo Society Board of Directors provided substantial financial and advisory support to Zoo Society staff and Zoo leaders during the difficult year. All Board and committee meetings were held virtually. Several committees took on expanded duties to help with financial projections, government advocacy and fundraising. Directors advocated for federal and state funding relief for the Zoo by calling and writing local political representatives. At its December annual organizational meeting, the Board of Directors welcomed a class of seven new Directors – who were met with and onboarded virtually – and elected Christine Myeroff as President Elect. Christine Myeroff and Board President Mike Vaughn will work together in early 2021 to begin the leadership transition as well as guide the Zoo Society through the next year of COVID-19 recovery.

Zoo guests feeding the giraffe on the Ben Gogolick Giraffe Encounter.



Fundraising Highlights & Challenges

RECORD HIGH FOR ANIMAL CARE

A public campaign as well as individual outreach to friends and foundations yielded more than \$700,000 in support of the Zoo's Animal Care budget. This is an extraordinary success and more than five times what is typically raised annually. This funding paid for animal food, veterinary supplies, medicines, animal habitat enrichment and more, and was vital to ensuring our animals were not negatively impacted by the operational closure and interruptions.



Some of this animal care funding was raised from our first public campaign for program support - Feed the Zoo. More than 500 people donated after hearing about the Zoo's needs through email marketing, social media, Facebook videos, media, and word of mouth. The Feed the Zoo campaign was not only important for the dollars raised, but for the new friends earned. Hundreds of first-time donors gave at dollar amounts from \$10 to \$100,000, and 25 new donors joined The Pride.

Unique events emerged in the year of Covid-19, including the chance for donors to watch the new RainForest dome being lifted to the roof.



Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund trackers continued to work in alternating teams to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Photo courtesy DFGF.

CONSERVATION WORK CONTINUED

Despite the extreme financial challenges of 2020, including a more than 50% decrease in conservation funding through membership and general visitation, the Zoo remained committed to its work with conservation partners around the world. In 2020, the Zoo provided \$573,000 to conservation partners. The global Coronavirus pandemic raised new awareness surrounding the harmful environmental impacts and global health implications related to

illegal wildlife trade, habitat loss and wildlife use. Several of the Zoo's conservation partners, as well as the Association of Zoos & Aquariums Board of Directors and Dr. Chris Kuhar, Zoo Executive Director, worked to raise awareness of the importance of species preservation and reducing human wildlife conflict worldwide.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS INTERRUPTED

Field trips, school programs and spring and summer day camps were put on hold for a year as COVID-19 interrupted all educational programming nationwide. The Zoo's education team continued working with schools virtually, especially during the fall 2020 school calendar. The team developed virtual "field trips," private golf cart tours and a series of free virtual keeper talks on Facebook that helped connect the community to the Zoo during closure. The Zoo Society provided \$250,000 in support of educational programs.





Committed to Capital Improvements

DANIEL MALTZ RHINO RESERVE

A true highlight of the year was the much-anticipated opening of the expanded rhino yard. The Daniel Maltz Rhino Reserve opened in June, while the Zoo was still closed to guests, with a virtual ribbon cutting that was streamed live on Facebook and various media outlets. More than 25 generous Zoo Society donors helped fully fund this habitat, which more than doubled the space for the Zoo's rhino herd.

In honor of a gift from Daniel Maltz, the habitat is named for him. Equally generous support from The Walter E. and Jean C. Kalberer Foundation funded the Walter Kalberer Bull Barn and Jean Kalberer Rhino Yard. The \$2.6 million expansion includes a new indoor barn, a heated shade structure and misting areas, and a larger and fully accessible viewing area for guests.

“The Daniel Maltz Rhino Reserve is a significant enhancement to our Zoo, providing more space and complexity for our herd of critically-endangered Eastern black rhinos and more compelling ways for our guests to connect with wildlife.”

— Dr. Chris Kuhar, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Executive Director

Daniel Maltz Rhino Reserve Ribbon Cutting



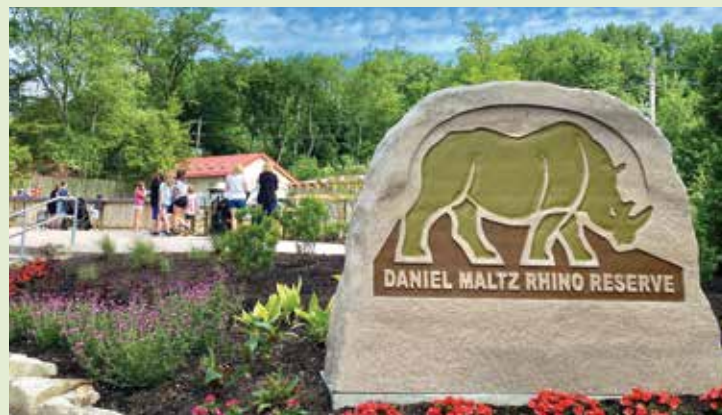
REIMAGINING THE RAINFOREST

While The RainForest was closed to visitors for 10 months in 2020, work took place to replace the iconic dome and also improve some indoor spaces.

The project included building the dome caging in the parking lot, then hoisting it to the top of the roof with the largest crane in Ohio. Donors to The Pride were invited to watch the historic construction. The dome caging is steel and aluminum, but the panels in between each polygon are ETFE (Ethylene tetrafluoroethylene), a sand-based plastic material. This innovative material allows in natural UV light, which is better for animals and plants. The new dome also allowed for improved vertical climbing space for the orangutans.

Pieces of the original acrylic RainForest roof were available for a donation to the Zoo Society's ZooFund. More than 380 donors gave to receive this unique keepsake, raising \$140,000 in operating support.

The dome is just the beginning of work to reimagine the 28-year-old RainForest building. Zoo and Zoo Society leaders and donors worked throughout the year on future plans for a larger renovation to the building. In December, the state of Ohio allocated \$800,000 for continued work on The RainForest project.



Members & Events

MEMBERSHIP

Typically the Zoo Society's largest single revenue line, membership took the biggest hit due to the three-month Zoo closure and the continuing COVID-19 environment. Membership revenue was \$2.1 million, down 40% from 2019. Memberships were extended to cover the length of the Zoo closure. To keep members engaged at home when they could not visit the Zoo, the Zoo Society launched a digital and expanded *Z Magazine*, a monthly ZooNews 2.0 video series and digital kids' content. PNC's generous sponsorship of the program allowed member activities and communications to continue. The membership program funds Zoo and Zoo Society operations, as well as the Zoo's Future for Wildlife programs; \$5 of each membership goes directly to conservation, totaling \$93,000 in 2020.



A NEW LOOK FOR EVENTS

All of the Zoo Society's in person events were canceled or reimaged into virtual gatherings in order to meet COVID-19 safety protocols and to best serve our donors and members. Several event sponsors graciously redirected their support to the Zoo Society for general operations for the year, including KeyBank and the Steffee Family.

In November, the Zoo Society hosted a virtual Leadership Breakfast presented by Covia. Ticket packages were sold, some including a take-home breakfast, and viewers tuned in to see live presentations by Dr. Chris Kuhar, Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Executive Director, and Sarah Crupi, Cleveland Zoological Society Executive Director.

State of the Zoo Leadership Breakfast presented by Covia



To keep our donors engaged when they could not come to the Zoo, a ZooZoom series was launched in April. ZooZooms virtually brought donors "behind the scenes" to see new animals, new habitats and more during the Zoo closure and throughout 2020.

In mid-May 2020, before opening for guests, the Zoo created a drive-through experience called Cruise the Zoo, which allowed guests to drive their cars through the Zoo on a one-way path. This limited-time event was the first time in history guests were able to drive in the Zoo, and it provided much needed revenue and attendance during the three-month closure. "Cruise" dates for the popular Asian Lantern Festival were also added, and the Zoo adapted its traditional Halloween event to a COVID-19 family friendly trick-or-treat festival. The return of Wild Winter Lights proved popular, as well. All of the Zoo's special events were held with reduced capacity and safety protocols.



Cruise the Zoo presented by Dollar Bank

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2020 BY THE NUMBERS

\$8.1M

Total Cleveland Zoological Society revenue

\$2.1M

Total membership revenue

\$16.9M

Value of Board-designated and donor-designated investments

100%

The Daniel Maltz Rhino Reserve opened in June 2020 with a ribbon cutting that was streamed live on Facebook and various media outlets.



The new habitat is **100%** funded through philanthropy. More than **\$2.6M** was raised from generous individuals and foundations.

500+

Individuals who gave to Feed the Zoo campaign to raise money for animal food, enrichment, veterinary supplies and more.

DISTRIBUTIONS TO OR ON BEHALF OF CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO

- **\$3M** for operating and program support
- **\$4.2** for capital projects

\$375,000

Record high raised for Conservation, including **\$5** from each membership.



2,450

Phone calls made to donors. During a year when we could not gather together, phone and video calls let us keep in touch.

\$700K

Record high raised for Animal Care, including our Feed the Zoo campaign launched during the Zoo closure.

100%

Giving from the Zoo Society's Board of Directors in 2020 in support of a variety of fundraising initiatives including conservation, animal care and operating support.



ZooZoom events for donors, giving virtual "behind the scenes" access to habitats and animal keepers, even during the three-month Zoo closure

Want more details?

Visit [ClevelandZooSociety.org/who-we-are](https://www.ClevelandZooSociety.org/who-we-are) for our full audit and 990, as well as past issues of our Annual Report.



Cleveland Zoological Society

CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO

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[ClevelandZooSociety.org](https://www.ClevelandZooSociety.org)

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Cleveland Zoological Society is the nonprofit advocate and partner of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. We are an independent 501(c)3.

Photos courtesy of Kyle Lanzer, Dale McDonald, and Gina Wilkolak.