

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



LINCOLN PARK ZOO.
FOR WILDLIFE. FOR ALL.



Achieving With Your Support

In Lincoln Park Zoo’s 157-year history, a few milestones stand above the rest. Thirty years ago, in 1995, we privatized operations under The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, launching a new era of impact in conservation, animal wellbeing, advocacy, and public education. Back then, we were a small Chicago zoo with a bold vision for better animal welfare, a stronger city presence, and global leadership in wildlife conservation. We knew we would need our community’s support—and you responded.

Your generosity over the past three decades has transformed Lincoln Park Zoo into a global leader. Today, we employ more than 40 scientists advancing conservation, animal wellbeing, and population biology, partnering with organizations to save species and wild spaces in 30 countries. Our guest experience makes us the most visited and inclusive cultural organization in Chicago, and our expertise in animal welfare is sought after by partners and policymakers around the world.

With your support, here’s what we’ve accomplished—both over 30 years and in the past year:

- **Animal Welfare Science Program:** Now the largest of its kind in the nation, this program is fueled by ZooMonitor, a Lincoln Park Zoo app and invention used by 1,000+ animal institutions worldwide as of the end of 2024. Our science-driven approach ensures the best possible lives for animals in our care.
- **Project ChimpCARE:** We created the authoritative database on all chimpanzees in the U.S., establishing our leadership in primatology. In 2024, we led a coalition of 115+ institutions to advocate for the Captive Primate Safety Act, now advancing through Congress.
- **African Lion Conservation:** Our partnership in Tanzania to protect lion migratory corridors is paying off—this year, we celebrated the return of male lions to the Ngorongoro Crater in numbers not seen in decades.
- **Alexander Center for Applied Population Biology:** Our scientists have developed tools for wildlife reintroduction, including efforts to help save the Puerto Rican parrot. In 2024, the Alexander Center expanded its impact, protecting red wolves, Hungarian meadow vipers, Hawaiian honeycreepers, and Attwater’s prairie chickens.
- **Population Management Center:** As the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ “match.com for animals,” we make breeding recommendations and lead Species Survival Plans® to responsibly sustain zoo populations. This year, SSPs brought a meerkat mob, a pair of emperor tamarins, and fan-favorite red wolf Poco to Lincoln Park Zoo.
- **Urban Wildlife Institute and Urban Wildlife Information Network:** Together, UWI and UWIN set best practices for city wildlife coexistence and host the world’s largest database on urban species. In 2024, we welcomed our 60th city to the network.

Amid all this, we remain committed to Chicago—free to all, every day. The vision that guided privatization in 1995 asked: What could we achieve together? Your support has answered that question beyond our highest hopes. Thank you for shaping the zoo of the future—one that serves wildlife, nature, and people in Chicago and around the world. We can’t wait to see what we accomplish together next.

Sincerely,



Fran Edwardson
Chair, Board of Trustees



Megan R. Ross, Ph.D.
President & CEO

SAVING WILDLIFE 8



SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES 24



HONOR ROLL 34



Three Decades of ZooLights



1999



2005



2024



2016



2013



“I grew up within walking distance to the zoo and have fond memories being at the zoo with family. When we had children of our own, the zoo became a central part of our lives and every year we kick off the holiday season with ZooLights. There is nothing like the twinkle of lights against the backdrop of the Chicago skyline.”

– Lincoln Park Zoo member Reenie King



2019

Photos by Todd Rosenberg (2013), Julia Fuller (2016), Neal O'Bryan (2019), Kate Scott (King Family).



2019



2023



2024



The zoo celebrated the 30th anniversary of ZooLights with a tree lighting ceremony on November 15, 2024. President and CEO Megan Ross, Ph.D., was joined by families and preschoolers from The Dr. Fisher Early Learning Center as well as U.S. Representative Mike Quigley, Illinois State Representative Margaret Croke, and officials from Exelon and Invesco to lead the countdown.



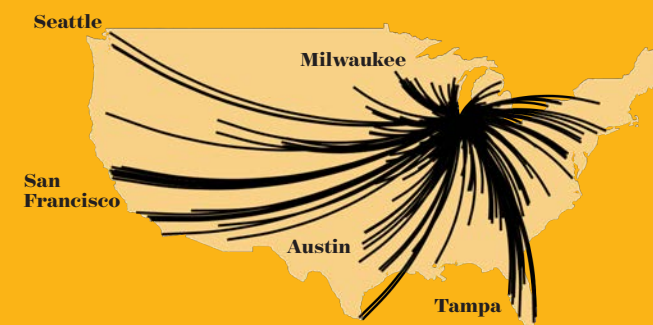
2011

As part of its commitment to community, in 2024 Lincoln Park Zoo offered six free nights of ZooLights, provided hundreds of complimentary tickets to community partners, and hosted Sensory-Friendly ZooLights so guests with disabilities could enjoy a quieter holiday experience.

Over the last
30 years of
ZooLights

7.5 MILLION
visitors

597
ZIP codes
represented



342,000
carousel rides

COUNTLESS
treasured
memories made

*Photos by Todd Rosenberg
(2011), Neal O'Bryan (2019), Lisa
Miller (2023), Meg Hein (2024),
Christopher Bijalba (2024)*

SAVING WILDLIFE



African lion
Photo by Hana Johnstone

Stewards for Animals

Lincoln Park Zoo has long advocated for animals, and this past year was no exception. The zoo is using decades of scientific research to advance legislation that will benefit wildlife and wild places.



Malott Family R.O.A.R. Corps students create artwork; the zoo's Guest Engagement team supports the Captive Primate Safety Act. Bottom right photo by Joe Frumkin



THE CAPTIVE PRIMATE SAFETY ACT

Lincoln Park Zoo has been a leader in a national effort to urge the passage of the Captive Primate Safety Act, which would end the private ownership of primates as pets in the U.S. While the CPSA was originally introduced in 2005, the 2024 HBO Max documentary *Chimp Crazy* created an opportunity to build greater public support and momentum for the bill.

Lincoln Park Zoo led the charge within the Association of Zoos and Aquariums community and rallied more than 116 wildlife organizations to endorse the bill's passage. The zoo secured two features in *The New York Times* sharing the story of Eli and Susie, chimpanzees rescued by the zoo from the entertainment industry. Since 2020, they have resided in a private habitat with their own chimp troop behind the scenes at Lincoln Park Zoo. The zoo's efforts helped increase congressional sponsors of the bill from 22 to 55. In 2025, the CPSA was reintroduced in the new Congress and is one step closer to becoming law.

PRIMATES IN THE PRESS

The New York Times

In 2024, Lincoln Park Zoo's leadership was covered in two print articles published by *The New York Times*, engaging a broad audience in support of the Captive Primate Safety Act.

NBC Nightly News: Kids Edition

Zoo scientists shared primates' intelligence and their relationship to humans, conveying what makes them unsuitable as pets.

Chicago Tribune

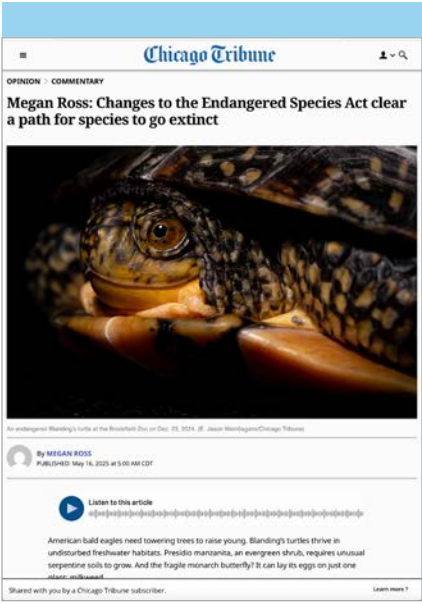
Dr. Megan Ross authored an op-ed in the *Chicago Tribune* urging people to support the Captive Primate Safety Act.

Viral Social Media Posts

Due to his background as a pet and performer and lack of appropriate socialization prior to his arrival at the zoo, chimpanzee Eli often needs reassurance. A clip of troopmate Magadi comforting him with a hug amassed more than 8.3 million views on the zoo's Instagram.

“The zoo’s task is a deeply paradoxical one, with humans responsible for erasing years of human influence. Helping the animals heal often means keeping them at a distance and ignoring their entreaties. It means declining Susie’s requests for conflict mediation and refusing to engage when Zachary blows kisses. As Ms. Leahy put it: ‘That push and pull between what they understand a relationship with a human being is and us wanting to encourage them to become chimpanzees again—or for the first time, in some sense—means sort of systematically pulling away from our relationship with them.’”





PROTECTING THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

In early 2025, the federal administration proposed changing the definition of “harm” in the Endangered Species Act to remove habitat modifications. The change would unravel decades of progress, accelerate biodiversity collapse, and strip future generations of the wild places and wildlife we all cherish.

Chicago-area nature advocates, including Lincoln Park Zoo, Shedd Aquarium, Brookfield Zoo Chicago, The Morton Arboretum, and Chicago Botanic Garden co-signed an op-ed in the *Chicago Tribune*, authored by Dr. Megan Ross, imploring the public to submit a comment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opposing this definition change, which would impact more than 1,600 species.

Lincoln Park Zoo also engaged zoo visitors on grounds, distributed action alerts to its email audience, and armed zoo staff and volunteers with information about the impacts of the proposed change. Altogether, 357,682 comments were submitted to lawmakers.



Lincoln Park Zoo currently cares for dozens of trafficked animals behind the scenes while criminal cases are pursued.
Photo by Sean Raju

ADDRESSING ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Wildlife trafficking is decimating endangered species. This multibillion-dollar transnational criminal activity is ranked as the fourth most profitable behind only the drug trade, arms trade, and human trafficking. Wildlife trafficking undermines conservation efforts, fuels corruption, and destabilizes communities that depend on wildlife for ecotourism.

The United States is one of the largest consumers of wildlife and wild products. In the past 25 years, Lincoln Park Zoo has provided care to more than 300 illegally trafficked animals confiscated at O'Hare International Airport.

In 2025, Lincoln Park Zoo became a member of the Wildlife Confiscations Network, which aims to mitigate animal trafficking and supports law enforcement by providing a coordinated care system for seized wildlife.

Lincoln Park Zoo also works with Monitor Conservation Research Society to provide data-backed impacts on wildlife populations. This helps inform stricter laws that protect species and lead to harsher punishments for wildlife traffickers.



Red wolf
Photo by Hana Johnstone

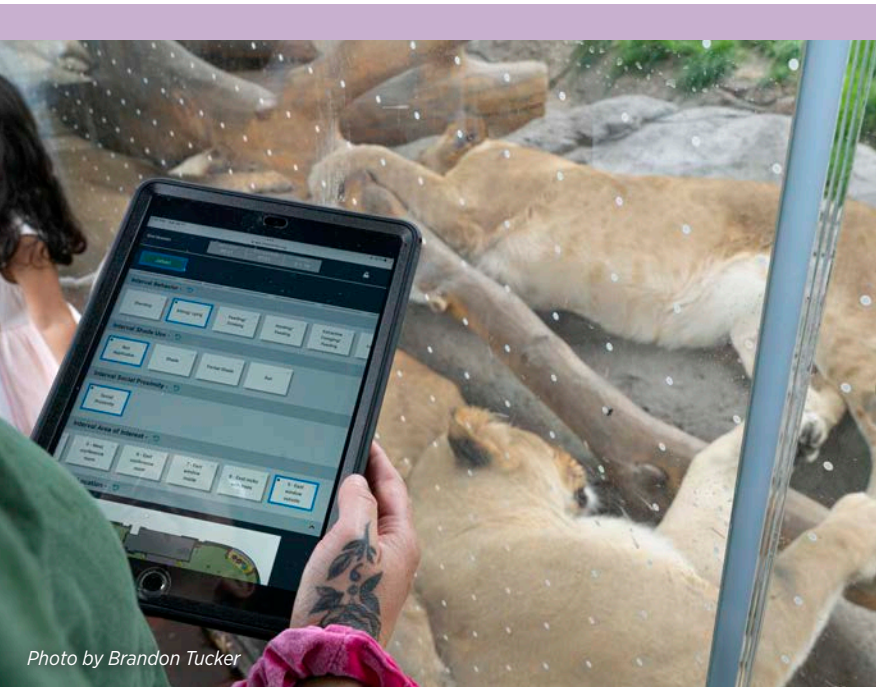
The Importance of Wellbeing



The Association of Zoos and Aquariums defines animal wellbeing as “a state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.” Lincoln Park Zoo is a leader when it comes to applying and evaluating strategies that support animal happiness.

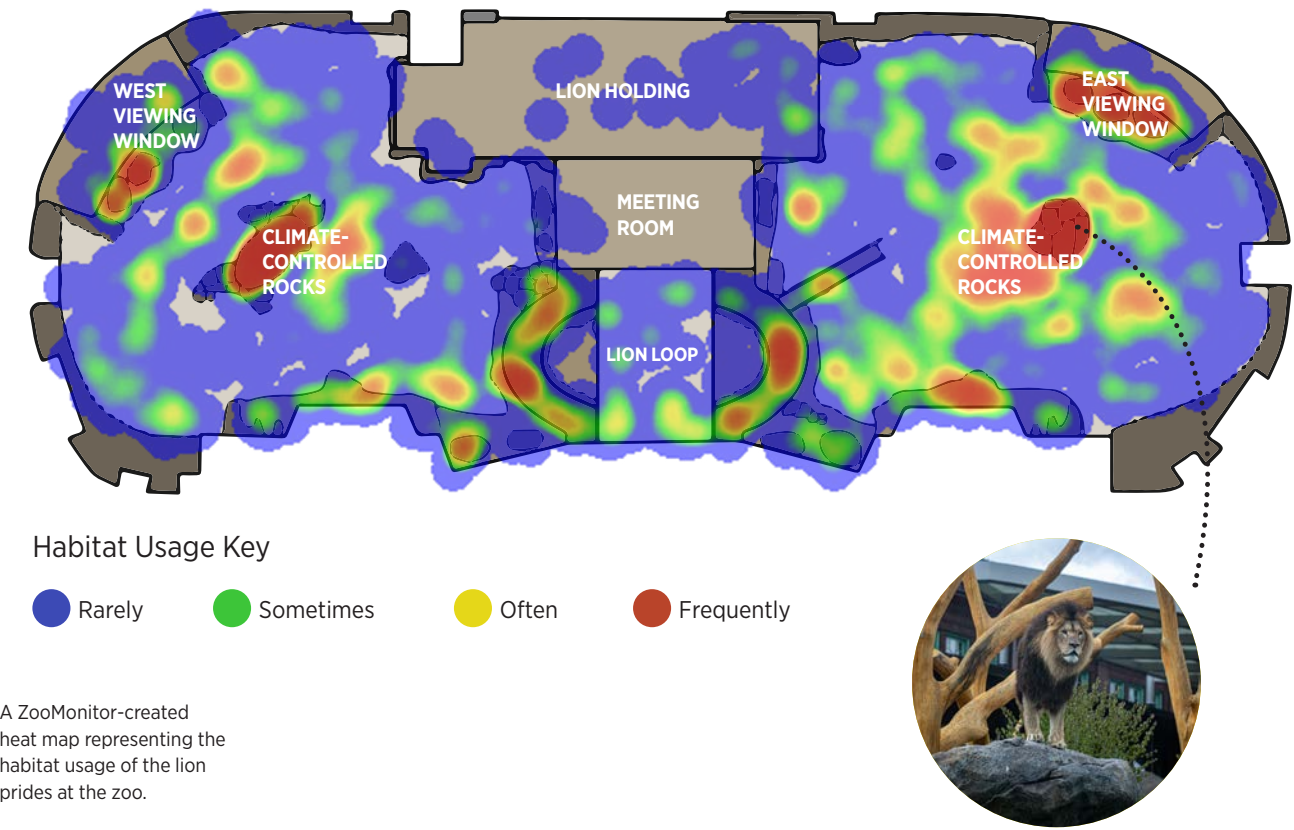
CHOICE AND CONTROL

Lincoln Park Zoo uses science to help animals thrive. Zoo researchers ask questions about the physical and social lives of animals—large and small, from mammals to reptiles—and provide them with choices that help caretakers address their needs and preferences. Offering options also gives the animals as much control as possible over their own environments. Zoo staff evaluate and then share knowledge and tools with peer institutions around the world, making the zoo a leader in researching and implementing practical strategies that support animal wellbeing.



MEASURING HAPPINESS

One way the zoo works to maximize animal wellbeing is through ZooMonitor, a Lincoln Park Zoo-created app that runs on smartphones and tablets and can be used by anyone with a bit of training. ZooMonitor helps researchers record animal behavior, like where animals spend time in their habitats and how often they are feeding and foraging. Since its debut in 2016, ZooMonitor has seen more than 1,600 registrations from 78 countries and is cited in more than 100 publications.

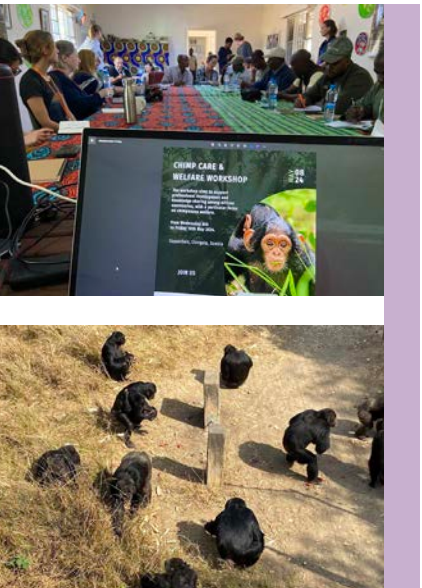


ALL TOGETHER NOW

Lincoln Park Zoo is constantly improving ZooMonitor. A recently added community feature allows institutions to collaborate with one another. It has led to the publication of several journal articles evaluating the feeding behavior and habits of giraffes living at 18 AZA-accredited institutions—the largest studies of their kind. Earlier this year, the zoo announced that ZooMonitor would now be free for any organization to use. More than 1,600 zoos and sanctuaries in 78 countries have registered to use this Lincoln Park Zoo-created app. Previously, it had been offered for free to accredited institutions, but now any organization around the world with animals in their care can benefit from this robust, standardized tool.

ADVANCING CHIMPANZEE WELFARE

Zoo scientists unveiled the ChimpCARE Tool in 2024 to help organizations evaluate chimpanzee care and make recommendations to improve welfare through objective measurements and up-to-date science. Designed over five years with help from the zoo and sanctuary community, the ChimpCARE Tool assesses nutrition, enrichment, habitats, social structures, and safety. In its first year, the web-based resource was accessed by 164 users from around the world. In 2024, zoo experts traveled to Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage Trust in Chingola, Zambia. There they met with keepers from seven African countries, along with the U.S. and France, to exchange ideas and provide training on the tool.



Primatologists and keepers from across the globe joined together for the Pan African Sanctuary Association workshop in Zambia. Photos courtesy of Chimfunshi



Susie
Photo by Christopher Bijalba



Conserving Wildlife, Nature, and Communities

Lincoln Park Zoo is committed to saving species wherever they live, and our researchers are making an impact from the forests and savannas of Africa to the streets of Chicago.



Photo by KopeLion

THE IMPACT OF KOPELION

Lincoln Park Zoo’s reach extends far beyond the borders of Chicago, thanks to partners like KopeLion. Recent studies conducted in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, co-authored by zoo scientists and the KopeLion team, are highlighting how African lions adapt to survive in shared landscapes. Their research also confirms that conservation efforts to promote coexistence between humans and lions are having a positive impact on the long-term chances of these wild cats. The leadership of Ilchokuti—Maasai “lion guardians”—is helping to make travel into and out of the Ngorongoro Crater easier and safer for lions, helping them find mates with a range of genetic traits and contributing to the health of the species.

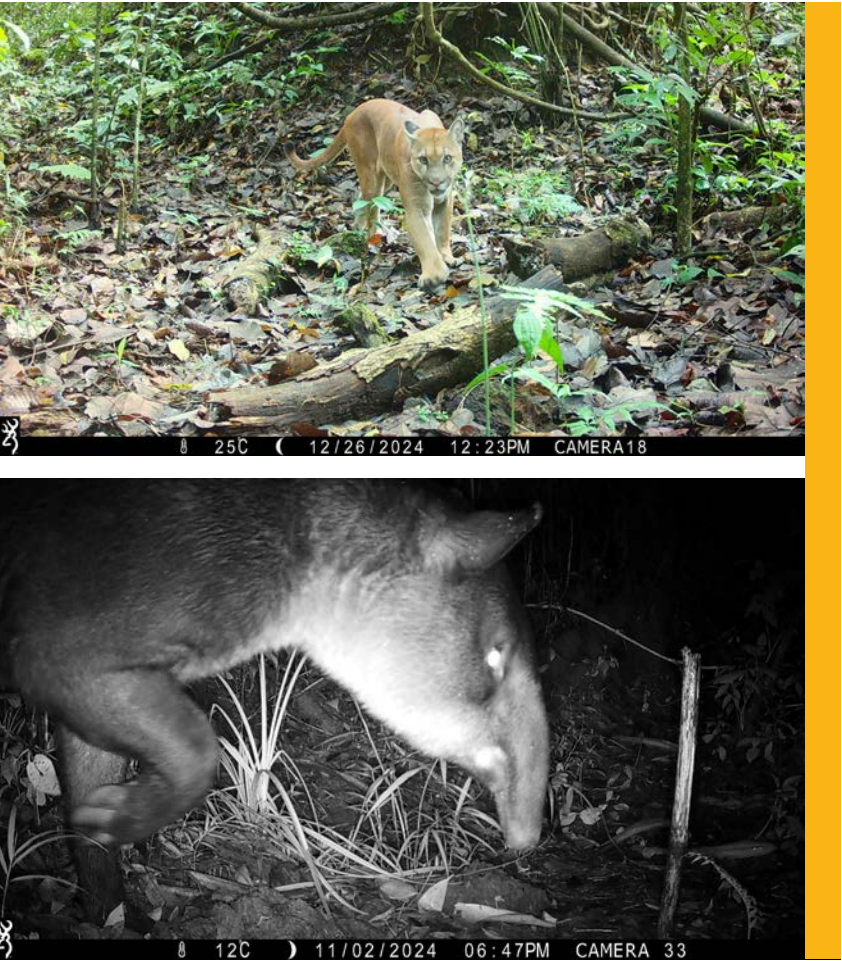
URBAN WILDLIFE AROUND THE WORLD

Through biodiversity monitoring and community partnerships, the zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute collects data designed to help people and animals coexist in modern cities. UWI collaborates with universities, research labs, and nongovernmental institutions as part of the zoo’s Urban Wildlife Information Network, which in 2024 expanded to 60 partners in 10 countries on four continents. In the last year, UWIN welcomed new collaborators from Campobasso, Italy; Bushbrickridge, South Africa; Savannah, Georgia; and San Diego, California. In September 2025, UWIN partners convened at Lincoln Park Zoo for the Connectivity in Conservation symposium.



EXPANSION IN SOUTH AMERICA

The more UWIN partners the zoo recruits around the globe, the clearer the picture of urban wildlife becomes. Recent additions to the network, like Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico—countries with high levels of biodiversity—are critical to deepening our understanding of the prevalence and diversity of urban-dwelling species. In 2024, Lincoln Park Zoo scientists offered workshops to UWIN partner Ecotono Laboratory in Bariloche, Argentina, helping them with analysis and field work techniques and developing opportunities for multi-city collaboration.



UWIN motion-sensing cameras in Costa Rica spotted cougars and tapirs.

CITY CONNECTIONS

Urban wildlife species may differ around the world, but many of the challenges to human-animal coexistence remain similar. Urban Wildlife Institute scientists are working to better understand the relationship between city development and ecosystems through programs like the Chicago Rat Project, focusing on conflict and public health risks, and the Chicago Garden Wildlife Project, designed to beautify and benefit neighborhoods by helping local gardeners attract the wildlife they want while avoiding the animals they don’t.

Lincoln Park Zoo’s urban wildlife initiatives represent the largest and longest-running study of urban wildlife in the world.



River otter spotted in Chicago on UWI field cameras, keeper Brittany Childs conducting beaver fieldwork, a Bat Tracker volunteer gathering bat echolocation data using ultrasonic microphones.

2024 URBAN WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

- A UWI multiyear study discovered that gentrified parts of a city have more species diversity—a finding that has implications for the accessibility of restorative natural surroundings to marginalized communities in cities.
- The Bat Tracker program, which monitors bat activity in Chicago, expanded its scope to increase sampling, track bat population trends, and learn more about habitat that can best support the eight species of bats that live in the region.
- A North American river otter was spotted on local motion-activated wildlife cameras for the first time by UWI scientists. Otters returning to the region is a promising sign that area ecosystems are providing safe spaces for wildlife.
- In fall 2024, keeper Brittany Childs traveled to the Pacific Northwest through an opportunity provided by the Feay Field Research Travel Fund Grant to learn about beaver management and participate in field work that helps foster coexistence between humans and these industrious rodents.
- Beavers have again been spotted at the zoo’s Nature Boardwalk!

Urbs in Horto

The City of Chicago’s motto is *urbs in horto*, which translates to “city in a garden.” Lincoln Park Zoo is a garden in the heart of the city.



HORTICULTURE HONORS

In 2024, Lincoln Park Zoo received Level III accreditation from the ArbNet Arboretum Accreditation Program. The zoo was also accredited as a botanic garden by Botanic Gardens Conservation International, a designation that recognizes the zoo’s commitment to plant conservation and sustainability. Both accreditations are pioneering achievements for the zoo’s science-based Horticulture program, which offers world-class care for many gardens and more than 655 plant species on the zoo’s 49-acre campus.

THE ZOO BLOOMS

In 2024, the zoo introduced What’s In Bloom, a cart stationed near Searle Visitor Center to help guests discover which flowers are at peak bloom throughout the year.

Each July and August, the zoo grounds become gloriously dramatic and colorful thanks to the country’s only accredited perennial herbaceous hibiscus collection.

Last fall, the Horticulture team planted a tree sapling from the cuttings of the storied bur oak that—until April 2023—presided for 170 years on the South Lawn. The legacy tree now stands near the original bur oak site and is expected to grow 8–12 inches annually.



The What’s in Bloom cart can be found next to Searle Visitor Center daily. Photo by Christopher Bijalba



Controlled burn at Nature Boardwalk.
Photo by Christopher Bijalba

BOARDWALK BUSINESS

The greenery at Lincoln Park Zoo includes around 400 species of native, invasive, and ornamental plants across the 14 acres of Nature Boardwalk. A recent Floristic Quality Assessment documented the fact that 78% of species in this prairie ecosystem are native. This is good news, as it indicates that species richness is increasing as a result of thoughtful management by zoo staff. In 2024, the Horticulture department began using controlled prairie burns as a way of naturally managing the renewal process for the grassland ecosystem.

GARDENS FOR ANIMALS

Zoo guests, human and pollinator alike, can benefit from Lincoln Park Zoo’s lush foliage. Zoo animals also benefit from the expertise of zoo horticulturists.

At Regenstein African Journey, live ficus trees throughout the building—including Alii fig and fiddle leaf fig trees—provide “browse,” or natural plant materials, for zoo residents. Browse gardens throughout the zoo produce woody and leafy nutrition, an important part of animal diets during the growing season. Staff at Regenstein Center for African Apes also tend an herb and flower garden for the chimpanzees and western lowland gorillas (pictured right).



Photo by Diane Mohr

Perennial Herbaceous Hibiscus

AT LINCOLN PARK ZOO



Artwork by Shane Tolentino

1. *Hibiscus grandiflorus* ‘Moy Grande’ – Moy Grande hardy hibiscus
2. *Hibiscus* ‘Lord Baltimore’ – Lord Baltimore hardy hibiscus
3. *Hibiscus* ‘Peppermint Flare’ – Peppermint Flare hardy hibiscus
4. *Hibiscus* ‘Pink Teacups’ – Pink Teacups hardy hibiscus
5. *Hibiscus* ‘Spinderella’ – Spinderella hardy hibiscus
6. *Hibiscus* ‘Strawberry Swirl’ – Strawberry swirl hardy hibiscus
7. *Hibiscus* ‘Summer Carnival’ – Summer Carnival hardy hibiscus
8. *Hibiscus* ‘Yopinot’ *SPLASH™ pinot grigio* – *SPLASH™* Pinot Grigio hardy hibiscus
9. *Hibiscus* ‘Mars Madness’ – Mars Madness hardy hibiscus
10. *Hibiscus moscheutos* ‘Pink Clouds’ – Pink Clouds hardy hibiscus
11. *Hibiscus* ‘4389’ *SUMMER SPICE® CORDON BLEU™* – *SUMMER SPICE® CORDON BLEU™* hardy hibiscus
12. *Hibiscus* ‘Red Flyer’ – Red Flyer hardy hibiscus

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES



For Wildlife. For All.

Lincoln Park Zoo continues to innovate in the field of accessibility, offering new programs, listening to communities, and making sure the zoo is a place where everyone can learn, enjoy, and connect with nature.



Photo by Christopher Bijalba

VITAL SIGNS

Lincoln Park Zoo recently finished the installation of inclusive signage to help every guest engage in the full zoo experience. Three animal signs, designed with the input of people with disabilities, feature tactile elements, video, and auditory descriptions that can be used by anyone with special needs. Guests can interact with a harbor seal sign at Kovler Seal Pool, a giraffe sign at Regenstein African Journey, and a western lowland gorilla sign at Regenstein Center for African Apes.



Photo by Christopher Bijalba

ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

The zoo continues to showcase why it was honored by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts for its accessibility work. In 2024, zoo educators completed the first year of the Sharing Wellness and Nature program, which gave people living with dementia and their care partners close-up access to animal care. The program included enrichment sessions with meerkats and a bug toss to feathered friends in McCormick Bird House.

In 2024, the zoo once again hosted two special events. DreamNight was an evening specifically curated for children with chronic or terminal illnesses and their families. Chicago HOPES for Kids provided families from homeless and domestic violence shelters across the city with a safe, private evening at the zoo.

At Spring Egg-Stravaganza, a beeping egg hunt option provided a fun alternative for guests who are blind or have low vision (pictured below). Throughout the summer, American Sign Language interpreters at animal chats ensured that guest engagement programs were more accessible to visitors. The zoo also partnered with the Chicago Hearing Society to create ASL names for giraffes Finely and Rae.



Photo by Shane Tolentino

“For the past 25 years, we’ve proudly supported Lincoln Park Zoo’s accessibility and inclusion programs because we believe in creating spaces where everyone can feel connected, seen, and joyful.

Through programs like Memory Enrichment, sensory-friendly events, and a focus on physical accessibility—like smooth pathways and universally designed interpretive signs—the zoo has created a space where everyone belongs. That’s why we continue to give—because the impact of inclusion lasts a lifetime.”

—John Hart and Carol Prins



ASL interpretation.
Photo courtesy of Columbia College

Chicago Proud ★★★★★

The best things about Chicago will always be the people and the culture. Lincoln Park Zoo is proud to partner with local small businesses, communities, nonprofits, artists, cultural institutions, and sports teams.



OPEN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Artecito, the co-created program between OPEN and Lincoln Park Zoo, continues to provide free, bilingual, nature-inspired workshops.



BACKLOT COFFEE

For Earth Week 2025, these local coffee shops donated \$2 from every bag of Flying Squirrel coffee to support the zoo's Urban Wildlife Institute.

CHICAGO FIRE FC

Maybe they should stick to soccer... the city's Major League Soccer team joined Lincoln Park Zoo in a social media challenge which tested their animal drawing skills.



Photo by Brenda Rivera

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

The zoo partnered with the Chicago Public Library for its 2025 Summer Activity Guide, offered education courses and credits to librarians, hosted Destination Discovery Story Times, and more.



FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Lincoln Park Zoo provided boomer balls, or enrichment items, previously used by zoo lions to the Field Museum's *Cats: Predators to Pets* special exhibition to highlight the strength and size of lions' teeth and nails.

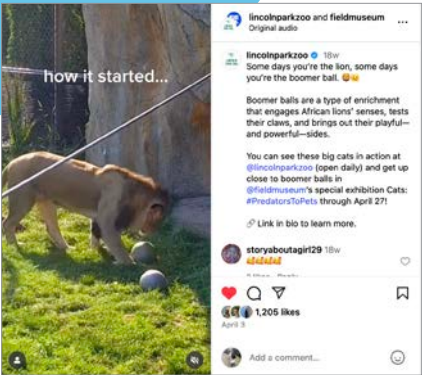


Photo by Cait Mobley

AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS

Nature Buds is a new, co-created program with After School Matters, teaching Chicago teens the benefits of play and having them facilitate hands-on nature play experiences at the zoo throughout the summer.



Photo by Lisa Miller

CHICAGO STARS FC

Chicago's National Women's Soccer League team led Run for the Zoo 2024 participants in stretches before the 5K/10K event and joined Fall Fest for family-friendly activities and giveaways.



VANILLE PÂTISSERIE

The zoo partnered with local businesses, like Vanille, to provide discounts to Lincoln Park Zoo members.

Welcome, New Trustees!



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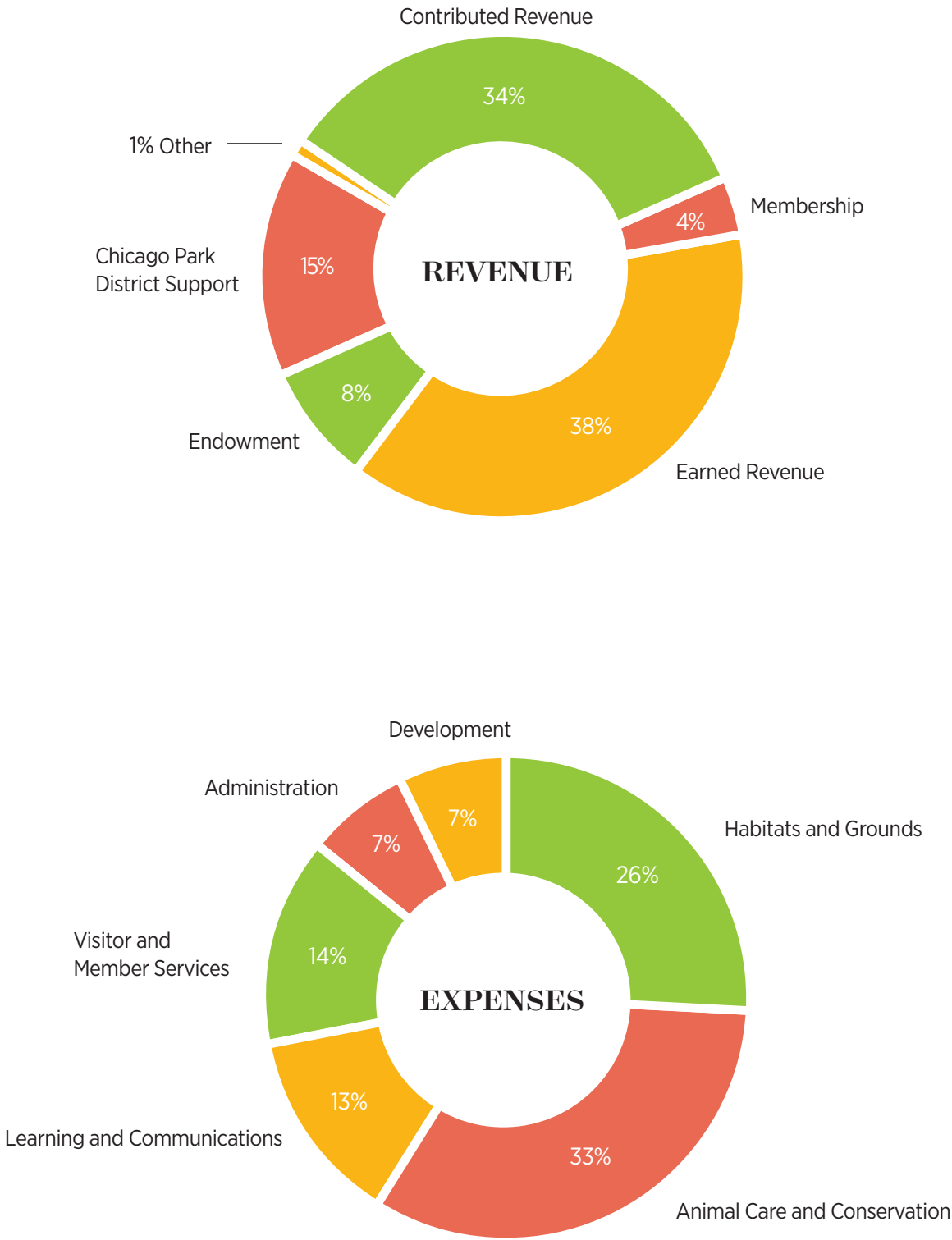
CHRISTINE TIERNEY



Chilean flamingo chick
Photo by Christopher Bijalba

Financials

FY25 Operating Results (audited)



The Lincoln Park Zoological Society Statements of Financial Position March 31, 2025 and 2024 (audited).

ASSETS	FY 2025	FY 2024
Assets		
Cash	3,836,199	6,413,948
Investments	216,184,499	213,842,238
Investments - Other	19,264,576	31,360,673
Receivables		
Pledges and grants, net	8,465,068	8,566,014
Other	947,486	640,052
Other Assets	788,533	541,266
Property and Equipment, net	4,482,109	3,500,840
Total Assets	253,968,470	264,865,031

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	3,134,008	5,245,465
Annuities Payable	798,644	666,056
Deferred Revenue	881,759	903,571
Accrued Expenses	2,536,429	2,385,220
Bonds Payable, Net of Issuance Costs	49,832,487	70,354,000
Total Liabilities	57,183,327	79,554,312
Net Assets		
Donor Restrictions		
Without Restrictions	98,628,954	88,537,849
With Restrictions	98,156,189	96,772,870
Total Net Assets	196,785,143	185,310,719
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	253,968,470	264,865,031



Photo by Christopher Bijalba

HONOR ROLL



Thank You!

Lincoln Park Zoo is grateful to the following donors for their leadership and generous support between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025.

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The Conservators' Council is Lincoln Park Zoo's premier philanthropy circle. These individuals and families provide unrestricted, annual support for zoo operations and we acknowledge their generosity with gratitude.

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Emily and John Alexander
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\$25,000 to \$49,999

Geoffrey A. Anderson
Susan Keiffer and Charles Barone
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ZOO BALL

On July 12, 2024, more than 600 guests attended Zoo Ball: Wild Everest. Co-chaired by Jennifer Statler and Jessica Therivel, the event was inspired by the snowy peaks of the Himalayas and highlighted Lincoln Park Zoo's work in Asia. The gala evening, hosted by the Women's Board, raised \$1.7 million to support the zoo's admission-free promise and initiatives in wildlife conservation and public learning.



Photo by Kyle Flubacker

*Deceased

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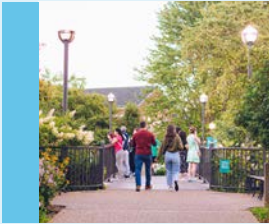


Photo by Kate Scott

CONSERVATORS' COUNCIL
In 2024, Conservators' Council donors enjoyed several opportunities to engage in small groups with Dr. Megan Ross. During Coffee and Conversation, donors sat down for an informal discussion about the zoo's future plans. The Morning Rounds series featured guided tours of Dr. Ross' favorite areas of the zoo.



Photo by Kyle Flubacker

CHAIR’S DINNER

The zoo’s Annual Chair’s Dinner took place on September 26, 2024, and was hosted by Board Chair Fran Edwardson. The event featured a panel discussion on animal welfare, led by Director of the zoo’s Animal Welfare Science Program Dr. Katie Cronin, Illinois State Director Marc Ayers of Humane World for Animals, and Director of Behavior, Research and Education Amy Fultz of Chimp Haven, Inc. The dinner was attended by 120 Trustees and donors.

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CUMULATIVE GIVING

The following donors made gifts to all areas of the zoo’s mission, including special programs, capital projects, and events between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025.

\$1,000,000 and above

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*Deceased

ANNUAL MEETING

On June 20, 2024, the zoo’s generous donor community celebrated the accomplishments of the previous year at the 65th Annual Meeting. Various zoo programs were spotlighted at interactive stations along Main Mall, and donors talked with the zoo’s experts in accessibility, horticulture, veterinary care, conservation, research, and marketing and communications. An after-party celebrating the Auxiliary Board’s 40th anniversary capped off the night!



Photo by Lisa Miller

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Megan Ross, Ph.D., received her doctorate in 2001 from Georgia Institute of Technology. In March 2025, she was part of an inaugural class of the university’s alumni honored at the opening of *Pathway of Progress*, an installation at the university celebrating the accomplishments of the women of Georgia Tech.

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Key:
*Deceased
+New Member (since April 1, 2024)

Anonymous (109)
Anonymous New Member (36)
Farida Ahmed, M.D.



ZOO-OLOGIE

The Auxiliary Board’s annual fundraiser, Zoo-ologie, took place on April 26, 2024. Co-chaired by Amber Wasner, Raymond Garcia, and Megan Wiegand, the event engaged more than 390 young philanthropists, who enjoyed dining, dancing, and learning about the zoo’s animal care and enrichment programs.

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HERITAGE SOCIETY

More than 120 Heritage Society members gathered at Café Brauer on May 22, 2024, for the Annual Heritage Society Luncheon, which featured a keynote presentation by Senior Manager of Zoo Archives Adrienne Horrigan on the zoo’s 157-year history.



Photo by Kate Scott

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Lincoln Park Zoo is grateful to the following donors who made gifts in memory of friends and loved ones:

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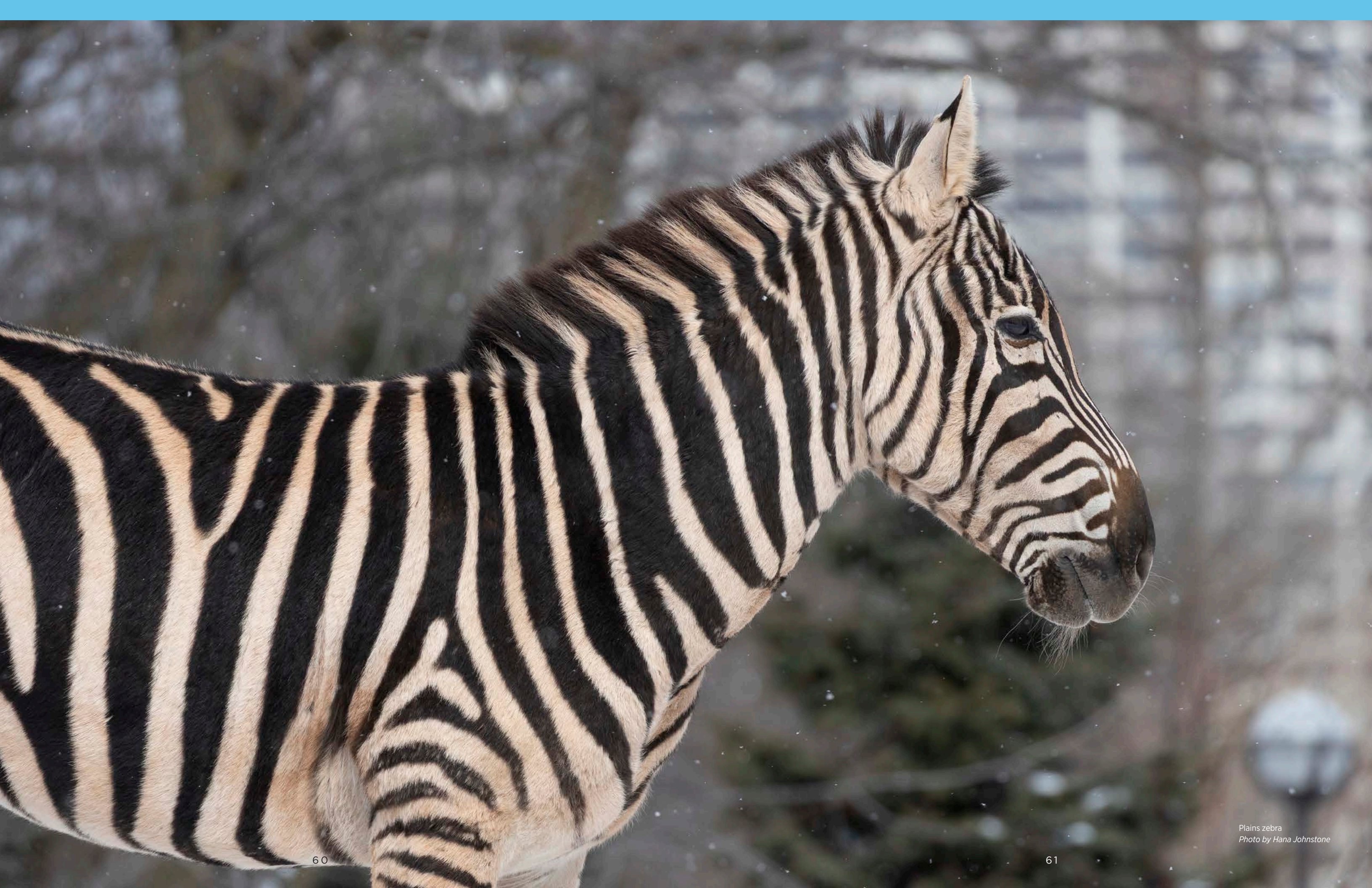
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IN MEMORIAM

We remember with fondness the following zoo donors, leaders, and friends who have passed away since April 1, 2024.

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In Memoriam



DIANE P. BEEMER

Diane Beemer and her husband Michael have generously supported Lincoln Park Zoo for 35 years, funding a dedicated garden at Regenstein Macaque Forest and other capital projects. In fact, Diane’s deep love for animals touched every part of her life: She enjoyed family visits to the zoo with her children, worked hands-on as a veterinary technician, and took part in dressage. Her adventures around the world—including two African safaris and trips to the Galapagos, New Zealand, and Australia—were always rooted in a profound respect for wildlife. Diane’s kindness, compassion, and generous spirit continue to inspire all who knew her.



JOE DOHERTY

Joe Doherty and his wife, Gretchen Hoffmann, have supported Lincoln Park Zoo with generosity and dedication for 45 years. Joe earned degrees from Franklin and Marshall College and Harvard University before embarking on a distinguished career in finance that carried him from Chicago to Basel, Switzerland, and on to London. A founding figure of the Chicago Board Options Exchange, he was admired for his visionary leadership. Though he retired in 2002, Joe remained deeply committed to causes close to his heart, including Lincoln Park Zoo. He is lovingly remembered by Gretchen, his family, and the many lives he touched.



DAVID GRAINGER

David W. Grainger was a remarkable philanthropist who, with his wife Juli, gave generously to many Chicago institutions. The Grainger Foundation helped launch the Urban Wildlife Information Network and has continued to support the program’s expansion through the Grainger Urban Ecology Endowment. Mr. Grainger leaves an exceptional legacy in Chicago and beyond. Lincoln Park Zoo honors his memory.



NANCIE MISHLOVE

Nancie Mishlove, a friend of the zoo for nearly 40 years, was a longtime executive with Playboy Enterprises. She and her late husband Stuart were regular attendees of Zoo Ball and made a generous gift to support the construction of the zoo’s Robert and Mayari Pritzker Penguin Cove. Nancie’s favorite zoo animals were the big cats.



HOWARD MORGAN

Howard Morgan left an indelible mark on Lincoln Park Zoo. Joining the Board of Trustees in 1984, he served in a variety of leadership roles including Board Chair from 1988–1991. Howard served as an Honorary Chair of the campaign to establish the Dr. Lester E. Fisher Director of Veterinary Medicine Endowment and helped guide the Board through privatization in 1995. He was a steadfast advocate for the zoo and is much missed.



ROBERT STANEK, PH.D.

Robert “Bob” Stanek and his wife, zoo volunteer Mary Stanek, have supported Lincoln Park Zoo for more than 30 years as donors and members of the Heritage Society. A Chicago native, Bob earned a doctorate in physics from the University of Illinois at Chicago before going on to a long and successful career as a high-energy physicist at Argonne National Laboratory. A lifelong learner, Bob was fascinated by how things work from an early age and maintained his curiosity for the natural world throughout his life.



JOYCE HEIDEMANN

Joyce Heidemann was a native Chicagoan and longtime zoo donor and Heritage Society member. She loved visiting the zoo, especially the penguins. Following a successful career in the insurance industry, Joyce spent her retirement doing the things she loved most—playing bridge and cribbage and enjoying a round of golf.



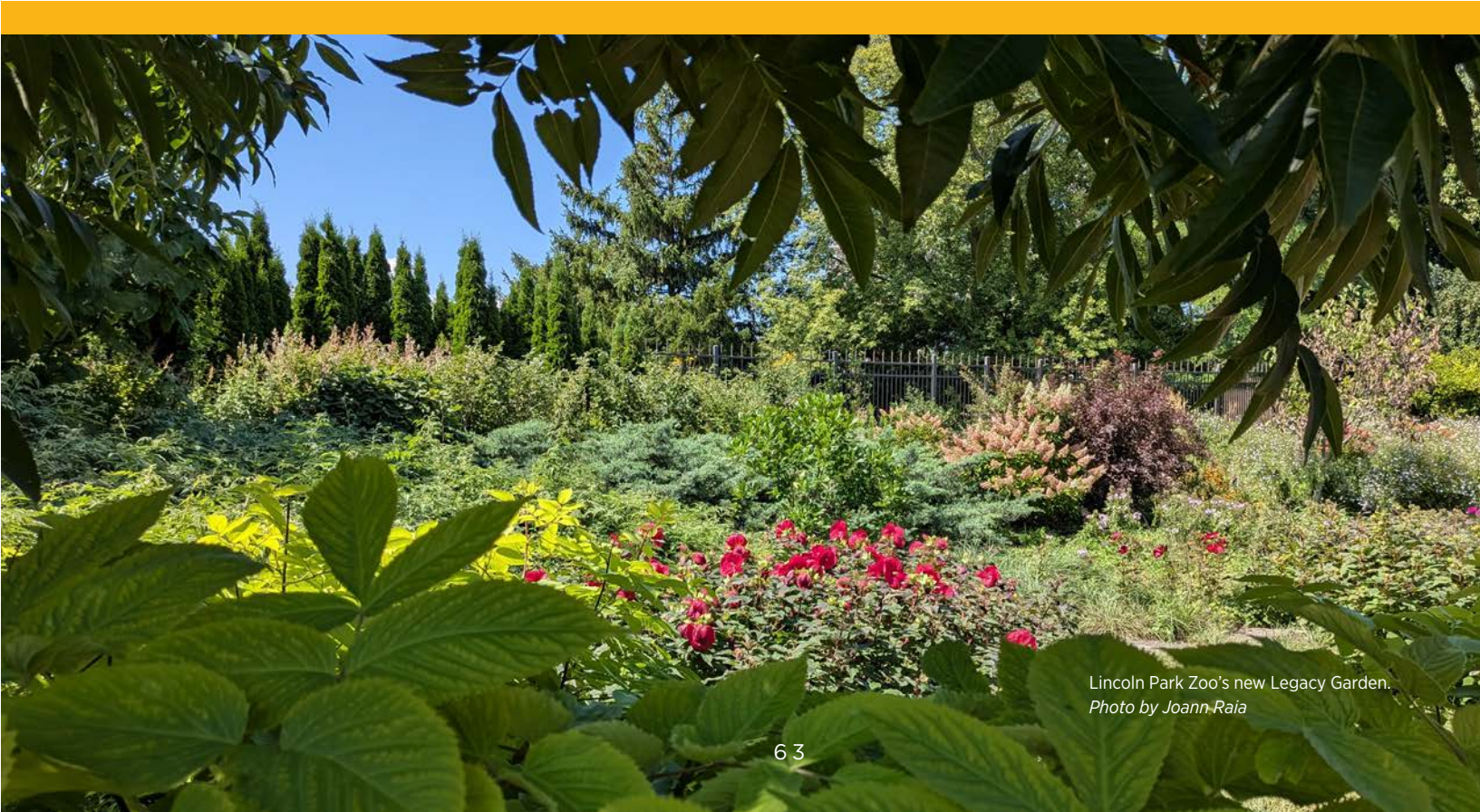
NANCY JOYCE

Nancy Joyce, a proud Northwestern University graduate, was a real estate broker known for her encyclopedic knowledge of Chicago’s architectural history. Passionate and outspoken, Nancy was also an adventurous equestrian. Her love of horses began in her childhood, when she first learned to ride horses in the park near Lincoln Park Zoo. As an adult, she often returned to the zoo to visit the zebras—her favorites—at a place she cherished all her life.



HARRY LEINENWEBER

Harry Leinenweber, U.S. District Court judge and spouse of zoo Trustee and former Board Chair Lynn Morley Martin, is remembered fondly by Lincoln Park Zoo. A lifelong Chicagoan, Harry was revered in the courtroom as fair, honest, and kind, and was beloved by his family and friends.



Lincoln Park Zoo’s new Legacy Garden.
Photo by Joann Raia

In Memoriam



REMEMBERING ROXY PEPPER

Lincoln Park Zoo mourns the loss of Roxelyn “Roxy” Pepper, a member of the zoo community for 92 years. Roxy cherished her visits to the zoo as a young girl and maintained a lifelong connection with many animals in the zoo’s care, especially the lions.

In 2019, Roxy and her late husband, Richard Pepper, made a historic gift to help restore Kovler Lion House and create Pepper Family Wildlife Center, a modern new home for African lions. Roxy and her family helped open the renovated historic landmark and state-of-the-art habitat in 2021 and were among the first to welcome lion cubs Pilipili and his brothers when they arrived in 2022 and 2023. She was our biggest champion and a dear friend, and we celebrate her legacy and spirit.

Please join us in celebrating Roxy’s memory. We honor her extraordinary legacy and miss her dearly.



Red panda
Photo by Christopher Bijlba



Nature Boardwalk
Photo by Kyle Flubacker



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