Bringing Animals to the Zoo:  
THE COVID-19 EDITION

By Brenda Gunder, RHZ Curator

While 2020 has been a most challenging year for everyone, as RHZ’s Curator, I find myself trying to finish up a few more animal moves before our winter weather arrives. Something that visitors are likely unaware of is that throughout the year animals are coming and going from various AZA-accredited facilities. Due to Covid-19, many of these moves were put on hold from the end of February to the beginning of June. Some facilities postponed completely for 2020.

Fortunately, Rolling Hills Zoo has been able to move forward with 22 animal transfers, with 4 more to go before the end of 2020. These animal moves, both to and from the Zoo, represent animals transferred as recommended by the Species Survival Plans (SSP) and according to RHZ’s Animal Collection Plan. This plan determines what animals we would like to acquire or phase out for the next 3-5 years by reviewing animal aging, enclosure space, conservation, and educational needs. If it’s a new species to the Zoo, like our colobus brothers in 2019, then there is also natural history research, enclosure renovations, quarantine procedures, and staff training that happens before the arrival.

An animal move may only require a drive to a nearby facility to pick up Madagascar hissing cockroaches to add new genetics to our breeding group. Or it may require the coordination of a team of professionals to transport and unload a 4,000 pound rhinoceros from across the country.

Most animal moves begin with a recommendation from AZA’s Species Survival Plans, which oversees the population management of select species within all member institutions. One-third of our moves this year have been recommended by SSPs. Currently RHZ participates in 34 SSP programs, including capybara, chimpanzee, laughing kookaburra, lesser Madagascar tenrec, scimitar-horned oryx, and a southern white rhino - all which arrived in 2020. These recommendations can take up to a year to plan and involve the sharing of animal diet, medical history, approved enrichment, and behavioral training between zoos.

**So how do you move a 4,000 pound rhino?**

In March of 2019, the White Rhinoceros SSP made a recommendation for RHZ to receive a young female named Evey. We began the review process and spoke with her current facility to decide a timeline. We reached out to a professional animal transporter to review schedules and dates and started looking for a transport enclosure crate. To move an animal of this size takes a large, strong enclosure crate, and there are only 6-10 available in the U.S. Fortunately the facilities that own them are willing to share.

In February of 2020, we communicated with all parties to review dates for a spring move before the heat of summer. While animals are generally transported in climate-controlled vehicles, it is best to have them arrive in cooler temperatures as they check out their new home. And then...Covid hit, and the Zoo, like many other businesses, had to close. This also meant that all animal moves were put on hold. When the end of April rolled around I started reviewing whether we could move forward to receive Evey before summer. Under the current circumstances, we determined that waiting until fall would be better for all involved.

In July we started to prepare for a fall arrival. The first step was to arrange for an enclosure crate to be shipped so Evey could be trained to enter the crate voluntarily. This involved three facilities to accomplish. The crate was loaned by one, housed at another, and received by a third. In August, Evey’s medical history was reviewed by the veterinarians and final agreements were shared between RHZ and the sending zoo.

Now to plan the unload! This is a major undertaking which requires a skilled team to assist with unloading. We called Ron Frank at Ferco Rental for their expertise and heavy equipment.

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Bringing Animals to the Zoo continued...

**TIMELINE FOR MOVING EVEY TO RHZ:**

- **March 2019**
  - White rhino SSP recommendations come out

- **April/May 2020**
  - Communicate with holding facility. Review current enclosure.

- **July 2020**
  - Locate crate for shipment. Confirm availability.

- **August 2020**
  - Vet teams communicate & review medical history

- **September 2020**
  - Crate is shipped. Training begins. Enclosure gets upgrade. Review unloading plan.

- **October 2020**
  - Evey arrives at Rolling Hills Zoo!

After some landscaping was adjusted to accommodate the equipment and the crate size, we had a plan for arrival.

Our team met Evey on an early October morning as her crate was unloaded successfully and driven to the Rhino Building. Evey exited her transport enclosure gracefully and has settled in nicely here at RHZ.

While this was one of our larger moves, all go through a similar process and involve communication between multiple facilities and departments. For comparison, in 2016 RHZ completed 35 animal transfers. In 2017 there were 18, and in 2019 a total of 19 species were moved in or out of the Zoo that year. So even through 2020 was a challenge for all, we have maintained our commitment to animal care and wildlife conservation.

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**Who’s New at the Zoo**

**Samantha Howell-Barie**
Cat Keeper

Born in southern Florida and growing up in northern Arizona, Samantha has lived in six states including Kansas. Prior to RHZ, she worked at Lehigh Valley Zoo in Schnecksville, PA. With 10 years of experience as a volunteer, intern and employee, she has worked at several zoos, exotic animal sanctuaries, and other animal facilities.

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**Rebecca McElroy**
Relief Keeper

Rebecca grew up in Lawrence, KS, but for the last four years has been a Relief Keeper and Lead Keeper at Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City, KS. She’s currently learning each keeper area of the Zoo.

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**Farewell to Bob Jenkins**

After serving as the Executive Director of Rolling Hills Zoo for the past eight years, Robert Jenkins retired on October 31, 2020, having spent 52 years working in zoos and aquariums across the United States.

Bob began his zoo and aquarium career in 1970 as an animal care specialist at Sea World of Ohio. Prior to moving to Salina, he served as the Director of Operations and Husbandry, as well as the Director of External Affairs, at the San Francisco Zoo.

On October 29, 2012, Bob became Rolling Hills Zoo’s Executive Director. He arrived at a time that the Zoo was undergoing a major transition. The Zoo’s founder and primary benefactor, Charlie Walker, had passed away unexpectedly six months earlier. While the staff was still reeling from the loss, Bob took the helm and began to transition the zoo into its next season.

Bringing extensive knowledge of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to RHZ, Bob led the Zoo through its 2015 AZA accreditation. He also prepared the Zoo for its 2020 AZA accreditation which was then tabled until 2021 due to COVID-19. During his eight years at RHZ, Bob served on the AZA Trends Committee and was a part of the AZA Accreditation Inspection team for several years.

No matter the occasion, Bob could be counted on to arrive in costume! Working a dunk tank at Wet and Wild? His attire was a vintage blue and white striped swimsuit. Employee Christmas parties meant a colorful Christmas sweater. And at most ZooLalas, Bob could be counted on to dress according to the year’s theme.

Bob has spent a lifetime caring for and protecting animals, regardless of the roles he has held. As he retires, we wish he and his wife, Priscilla, all the best as they embark on their next adventures. Thank you, Bob, for your eight years of service to Rolling Hills Zoo.
In the spring of 2010 RHZ’s Green Team constructed a Green Playhouse using an eco-friendly theme as a way to promote conservation while also creating a fun activity area for children. In building the playhouse they used reclaimed lumber, energy efficient windows and repurposed building supplies. While encouraging a child’s imaginative play, the Green Playhouse also incorporated conservation messaging for all who visited. Due to the success of the Green Playhouse, plans soon began for a Nature Playground that would surround the playhouse area. The playground included a crawl tunnel, dig pit, climbing log, step path, white cedar play structure, rainmaker, wash station and water fountain. In the Fall of 2012 the Nature Playground was opened to children and their families.

Since then thousands of children have climbed, crawled, dug, balanced, slid and played in the Nature Playground and Green Playhouse, and have experienced the joy that comes from playing in the natural world.

This year Rolling Hills Zoo would like to make some upgrades and additions to the Nature Playground, making it even more interactive and fun for all ages. Based on the amount of funding raised, the team is looking to add elements that would include sliding, balancing, climbing, brachiating, and swinging with play features that would encourage discovery and exploration of the senses.

Our Nature Playground Renovation additions could include:
- A play/climbing structure for children ages 2 - 12 years old
- A living willow playhouse, which would be a great place for children to connect with nature while watching the structure grow and change.
- A play/climbing structure for children ages 6 months - 5 years old
- A winding path through the trees with individual interactive stations placed along the path.

These new additions would be added to the Nature Playground in lieu of hosting a traveling exhibit in 2021. But, this is only possible with funding support from our Zoo friends and sponsors.

If you would like to be a part of making the Nature Playground Renovation possible for the children who visit the Zoo, please make your check out to “Rolling Hills Zoo,” and send to 625 N. Hedville Road, Salina KS 67401, or contact Linda Henderson at linda@rollinghillszoo.org, or by calling 785-827-9488 x131.

With your support, the children who visit RHZ will be able to enjoy, explore and discover the many benefits nature play provides to growing bodies and minds.

The 2021 Zoo Teen application deadline is quickly approaching for Rolling Hills Zoo’s 2021 Zoo Teen Ambassadors. All Zoo Teen applications are due to RHZ’s Volunteer Coordinator, Theresa Cannefax by Friday February 5, 2021.

The Zoo Teen ambassadors are a collaborative group of teens that together through Zoo events, guest interactions and educational programs promote, educate and inspire conservation and animal welfare for all ages who visit Rolling Hills Zoo.

This great teenage experience includes animal showings, touch carts, meet-n-greets at the Zoo, conservation messaging, and assisting with Zoo To You programs, Summer Camps and Zoo guest education.

Following the interview process, the 2021 Zoo Teen ambassadors will be notified of acceptance by Friday, February 19, 2021. A mandatory group meeting will follow on Sunday, February 28, 2021 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The first volunteer opportunities for Zoo Teens will be during Spring Break: GO WILD! March 13 – 21, 2021.

For more information or for a Zoo Teen Application go to rollinghillszoo.org/volunteer, or email school.groups@rollinghillszoo.org
EVEY JOINS THE RHZ FAMILY
Evey, a female southern white rhino, is the newest addition to the Rhino Barn at Rolling Hills Zoo (RHZ) after making the move from The Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio. Her move came on a breeding recommendation by the Species Survival Plan (SSP)*.

Born at The Wilds, Evey was named for her birth date—December 31st. She turned 14 at the end of this year. While her parents have moved to other zoos as part of the SSP, Evey remained as part of a 15-member white rhino herd. This herd is managed as one large social group, and the only rhinos that were not born there are two adult breeding males.

Evey has successfully given birth to three offspring: Jaycambo, a male born in 2011; Agnes, a female born in 2014; and Gordon, a male born in 2017. Evey has been a great mother to all three. While Jaycambo is no longer at The Wilds, Agnes and Gordon have remained as part of the herd.

Currently trained for voluntary blood draws only, the RHZ keepers will begin working with Evey so she can participate in her own healthcare as do her counterparts, Uzazi and Joya, RHZ’s white and greater one-horned rhinos. The keepers also look forward to introducing her to Uzazi once she has settled into her new home.

ORYX ARE PART OF THE SSP BREEDING PROGRAM
Two new female scimitar-horned oryx, Seska and Lucy, have joined the RHZ family as part of the Scimitar-horned Oryx Species Survival Plan (SSP)*.

Born in March 2019 and raised at the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center near Glen Rose, Texas, these young oryx came to RHZ on a breeding recommendation by the SSP. They are at the Zoo’s oryx exhibit, while the Zoo’s current male, Nas, has been moved to the pasture.

The Zoo’s other male oryx, Tootles, was transferred to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center where he will breed with the female oryx there.

“We have always held surplus males or older non-breeding pairs at Rolling Hills Zoo, so these females will be the first of four breeding females to join the herd,” shared Brenda Gunter, RHZ Curator. “With only 214 animals in the SSP oryx population, we are one of only 18 AZA facilities to hold this endangered species and the only zoo in Kansas.”

SISTER CAPYBARA REUNITED
A new female capybara, Iris, will be joining her sister, Azaela, at the capybara exhibit at RHZ. Both were born on September 28, 2019, at the Sedgwick County Zoo, but Azaela made the move to RHZ in June 2020. The keepers are looking forward to reuniting these sister capybaras.

GREEN & BLACK DART FROGS
Ten new green and black dart frogs are moving into their exhibit in the Reptile Building. Tiny yet toxic, these colorful amphibians literally are what they eat. Their skin absorbs the toxins from ants and other insects they prey upon in the wild, and the toxins in the skin of a poison dart frog can be poisonous and even fatal to humans. These cute-but-deadly amphibians inhabit the Pacific coast of Central and South America.

BT WILL BE MISSED BY HIS RHZ FAMILY
The Rolling Hills Zoo family grieved the recent loss of Btuanya, the Zoo’s male giraffe, otherwise known as Bt. At 18 years old, Bt was being treated for severe tendinopathy, which can happen to all giraffes, and it was progressively getting worse, reducing his mobility and putting him at risk of serious injury during a fall. While not entered into lightly, due to his rapidly declining health and advanced age, it was decided that humanely euthanizing him was the kindest option.

Bt’s severe tendinopathy of the forelimbs was diagnosed via x-rays. This condition happens over time and can be associated with hoof overgrowth. The RHZ staff worked very hard over the last few years doing hoof trimming using specialized training techniques. By doing so, it helped avoid having to anesthetize Bt, something that carries a high risk of mortality in giraffes. He also received anti-inflammatory/pain medications, physical therapy, laser therapy, ice therapy, and supportive wraps.

Born at the Utah Hogle Zoo on September 25, 2002, Bt came to RHZ in May 2004 at the age of 1½ years old to be part of a bachelor group. Joining him were young males, Jumbe and Peperuka. Peperuka and Jumbe both left RHZ in 2011.
As the last of the three males, BT welcomed Zuri and Billie, two females who came to RHZ on a breeding recommendation by the SSP*.

“My greatest memories are the ones where Sara, I and BT would train together,” recalled Brooke Rose, RHZ Hoofstock Keeper. “We all worked hard trying to shape these behaviors, and BT was always ready to train and always willing to please. He always looked just as pleased and happy to accomplish a behavior as we were. When we were working on training with his back foot and we had finally got BT to place his foot on the mat, I gave him what we call a ‘jackpot’, a bunch of biscuits at one time. He then proceeded to pick his foot up and down on the mat repeatedly with his head held high. It was like he was saying, ‘Oh look at me! Look at how handsome and smart I am!’ He could always be counted on to make me smile and laugh. His goofy face, begging for more biscuits.”

TWISTER, RING-TAILED LEMUR

Twister, a ring-tailed lemur, described by his keepers as sweet, handsome and silly passed away this fall at RHZ. Born at RHZ on April 5, 2001. Twister loved to spend time with his best bro, Harry, and together they loved to come up with new ways to get into trouble and make their keepers smile. His favorite treats included stuffed pinecones, raisins, applesauce, bananas and grapes. He also loved trying to join his keepers on the boat as they traveled to and from Lemur Island. Twister will be missed by his zoo family.

*The Species Survival Plan (SSP) is a collaborative effort among the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), of which Rolling Hills Zoo is an accredited member.

Save the Date for

greater salina community foundation
10th Anniversary

2021 MATCH MADNESS

Plans are underway for the 10th Anniversary of this year’s Greater Salina Community Foundation’s Match Madness, and with your support Rolling Hills Zoo could be a major player in this year’s event as together we build the Zoo’s endowment.

Slated for THURSDAY, MARCH 25th, this year’s event will be a 24 hour extravaganza of online generosity from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Like last year, during this special day of giving you will be able to make a gift to Rolling Hills Zoo’s endowment that will be matched up to 50% by the Greater Salina Community Foundation (up to $2,000 per person per organization) from a matching pool of $200,000. What a great way to make your donations increase in value while also securing the future of the Zoo!

To qualify for the matching funds, your donation must be made online at matchmadnessgscf.org on March 25th before 11:59 p.m. that day, dropped off at the GSCF on March 25th, or if mailed in - it must be postmarked by March 25, 2021.

But there is more! Rolling Hills Zoo will be vying for bonus dollars during the virtual free-throw contest held the day of Match Madness and sponsored by BE Wealth. Plus, three additional bonus prizes will be awarded to the top three organizations with the most donors: First Place - $750; Second place - $500; and Third Place - $250.

So mark your calendars now for our tip-off on March 25th where you will play a key role in all of the game day excitement.
Surprise Your Valentine with a Wild at Heart Package!

Wild at Heart Packages can be delivered for FREE within Salina on February 12th, or you may choose to ship a WAH package(s) to your out-of-town sweetheart (additional s&h charges apply). Deadline for in-town delivery is February 9th. Deadline for out-of-town shipped Wild at Heart packages is February 4th.

You Pick the Adopted Animal:

$30 Wild at Heart Package
Includes a Gift Bag Filled With:
- Stuffed Plush of Adopted Animal
- Forest-Friendly Russell Stover Candy
- Framed Certificate of Adoption
- Glossy Photo of Animal
- Animal Fact Sheet

$45 Upgraded WAH Package
Includes a Gift Bag Filled With:
- LARGE Stuffed Plush of Adopted Animal
- LARGE Forest-Friendly Russell Stover Candy
- Framed Certificate of Adoption
- Glossy Photo of Animal
- Animal Fact Sheet

Ordering is Easy! Go to rollinghillszoo.org, click on Info & Events, then click on Wild at Heart, and place your ORDER ONLINE! Questions? Call 785.827.9488 ext. 114.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY
"Break" for Conservation

Give your staff a "Break" this Administrative Professionals Day with a special "Break Tray" of your choice while supporting wildlife conservation.

With your "Break" purchase your office will also receive your choice of an Animal Adoption - choose between a tiger, rhino or giraffe! AND wait, there's MORE! Based on your package selection, each honoree will also receive a gift bag of Forest-Friendly creamy chocolate truffles.

On Wednesday, April 21st, between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m., Rolling Hills Zoo staff will personally deliver a special Break Tray to your office!

Your order must be received by April 15th. Limited Availability - we expect to sell out, so order early! Your purchase will go directly to the care of our animals at Rolling Hills Zoo.

Choose From These Following Yummy Selections:

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<tr>
<th>Assorted Cookie Tray</th>
<th>Dessert Platter</th>
<th>Brunch Platter</th>
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<td>Including chocolate chip, white chocolate macadamia nut, and sugar cookies.</td>
<td>Including petits fours, mini cheesecakes, and mini fruit tarts.</td>
<td>Including mini bagels &amp; cream cheese, donuts, and muffins.</td>
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<td>Up to 4 Guests $24</td>
<td>Up to 4 Guests $30</td>
<td>Up to 4 Guests $36</td>
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<td>Up to 8 Guests $48</td>
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Choose One of the Following for Your Animal Adoption:
Your office will receive a framed certificate of adoption, with a glossy photo included.
SPRING BREAK: GO WILD
March 13-21, 2021
EVERY DAY, ALL DAY:
- Keeper Encounters Throughout the Day
- Live Animal Encounters
- Tram Rides ($3)
- Kid’s Country
- Feed Stations ($)
- Daily Restaurant Specials
- Gift Shop Specials ($)

All activities subject to change without notice.

EXCHANGE BANK presents...
ZOOORIFIC SATURDAY, MARCH 27th
EGGSTRAVAGANZA!

1/2-PRICE ADMISSION ALL DAY FOR CHILDREN 12 & UNDER
Back by popular demand is our all-day Zoo Egg Hunt in the Bunny Patch where kids will hunt for eggs on their own time with plenty of photo opps.

Activities from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Egg Hunt at the Bunny Patch - Children 12 & under will receive an egg carton to fill with candy and toy filled eggs hidden in the patch. (One visit to the Bunny Patch, 12 egg limit per child)
- Golden Egg Hunt with THREE Golden Eggs hidden in the Zoo. Each golden egg has a $100 RHZ Gift Shop gift card. (Will be found within viewing & reaching distance of walking paths.)
- Keeper Encounters Throughout the Day
- Live Animal Encounters
- Photos with the Easter Bunny from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on the Overlook Patio (Bring your own camera OR purchase an RHZ framed photo for $8)
- Sno Cones & Cotton Candy ($) from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on the Overlook Patio
- Overlook Restaurant Lunch Special ($)
**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

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<th>JAN 1</th>
<th>New Year’s Day</th>
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<td>JAN 5</td>
<td>Toddler Tuesday</td>
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<td>JAN 23</td>
<td>RHZ Job Fair</td>
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<td>Wild at Heart Deliveries</td>
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<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
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<td>Toddler Tuesday</td>
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<td>MAR 13-21</td>
<td>Spring Break: GO WILD!</td>
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<td>MAR 14</td>
<td>Peak Season Hours Begin: 9 a.m - 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>MAR 25</td>
<td>Match Madness</td>
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<td>MAR 27</td>
<td>ZOOific EGGStravaganza</td>
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<td>Easter</td>
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<td>APR 6</td>
<td>Toddler Tuesday</td>
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<td>APR 21</td>
<td>Administrative Professionals Day 'Break' for Conservation Deliveries</td>
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**Annual Report Now Available**

In effort to conserve our natural resources, Rolling Hills Zoo’s 2019 Annual Report is now available online at www.rollinghillszoo.org/about-us, or you can request a printed version by emailing kathy@rollinghillszoo.org with the subject line 'Annual Report Request'. Please include your name and mailing address with your email so a printed version can be mailed to you.

**Toddler Tuesday**

**Toddler Tuesday is the 1st Tuesday of Each Month!**

- **January 5th**
- **February 2nd**
- **March 2nd**
- **April 6th**

Toddlers will enjoy a special story, learn more about the animal featured in the story, create a fun craft, and enjoy playtime! **This event is included with paid admission. Members get in FREE!**

Sponsored by American State Bank & Trust Company