

To: Board of Management

From: Senior Director, Marketing, Communications & Partnerships

Subject: **VOLUNTEER SERVICES REPORT 2018**

Date: 2019-01-23

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to review and update the Board of Management on the activities of the Volunteer Services Unit for the year 2018. The volunteer team consists of Year-Round Volunteers, Summer Volunteers, Volunteer Hosts, Wildlife Health Centre Volunteers, and Zoo Ambassador Student Volunteers. All volunteers support the Zoo's educational programs by interacting with guests, helping to raise public awareness and involvement in conservation, interpreting the zoogeographic and ecological relationships of the animal and plant kingdoms, and enhancing the experience of each Toronto Zoo guest with whom they come in contact. In 2018, a team of 430 volunteers donated 34,106 hours of their time to the Toronto Zoo reaching an estimated 772,857 people.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

COMMENTS:**One hundred forty-two volunteers were recruited and attended volunteer training courses**

Thirty-five people completed the ten-session course to become Year-Round Volunteers. In addition, 51 Summer Volunteers were trained to assist visitors at interpretive stations throughout the Zoo during the busy months of May to August. Nineteen new Zoo Ambassador Student Volunteers also joined the 46 returning volunteers in this group, assisting at special events and with summer Zoo Camp programs. We introduced the Volunteer Host and Wildlife Health Centre Volunteer feature Volunteer programs in 2018. Combined we had 37 individuals who joined our roster through these programs. We also had 45 returning Panda Ambassador Volunteers with us from January to March to provide interpretation during the final months of the giant pandas' stay.

Effective Volunteer engagement results in high numbers of Volunteers returning and progressing to leadership positions

In 2018, approximately 18% of Volunteers from our short-term programs (Summer Information Volunteer, Volunteer Host, and Wildlife Health Centre Volunteer) moved up

to our Year-Round Volunteer program, one which requires a higher investment of time, knowledge, and skills. These trends have continued to be strong over several years, indicating the success in our objective of increasing our Volunteer roster by providing a positive introductory Volunteer experience through short-term Volunteer opportunities.

Recruited and hired a second full-time Coordinator of Volunteers

This position has allowed us to better support our current Volunteer roster, as well as successfully introduce two new short-term volunteer opportunities, transition smoothly to Volunteer Impact, a computerized volunteer management tool, and make significant progress on several important projects.

Computer-based volunteer management system was implemented (Volunteer Impact)

An outdated paper-based system was phased out and replaced with a more efficient and modern computer-based volunteer management tool, allowing us to better coordinate the activities of Volunteers, track statistics, motivate Volunteers, and meet their needs.

Volunteers continued to expand and upgrade their skills

Volunteer monthly meetings provide continuing education. 2018 presenters included:

Sarah Stata and Ryan Hegarty, Keepers, Wildlife Care
Dr. Kerriann McGoogan, Planet Madagascar
Katherine Wright, Adopt-a-Pond Coordinator
Kim Wefle and Sam McWatters, Keepers, Wildlife Care
Toby Thorne and Eryck Matczak, Bat Curatorial Programs
Kassie McKeown and Jocelyne Pelletier, Turtle Island Conservation
Dolf Dejong, Chief Executive Officer

A series of refresher training sessions were delivered during the winter months for Year-Round Volunteers. Sessions included: training on the Zoo's Environmental Management System, tours through the pavilions, reviews of policies and processes, and refresher trainings on interpretation.

Additional relevant skill development was fostered through various other training sessions throughout the year.

Toronto Zoo Volunteer Henny Bernards named CAZA Volunteer of the Year

A 22-year veteran of the Zoo's Volunteer program, Henny Bernards was named as Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) Volunteer of the Year at the annual conference. During her tenure Henny has contributed over 6,400 hours of service to the Zoo. In addition to fulfilling regular Volunteer duties, Henny took on several significant leadership roles over the years including day captain, Volunteer mentor, and program statistician. In her long-term role as the main Volunteer statistician for the Toronto Zoo's

Volunteer programs she gave more than 2,600 hours to the task of collecting, tabulating, and reporting monthly on Volunteer activities.

The Toronto Zoo continues to benefit from the dedication of long-service volunteers

Twenty-one Volunteers received awards for years of service to the Zoo at our annual Volunteer Appreciation/Strawberries and Wine event held in June. This included ten Volunteers recognized for 10 years of service, three Volunteers awarded for 15 years of service, six Volunteers reaching the 20 year level, and two Volunteers with 25 years of service. We also awarded Volunteers in our new hourly service award categories, a program that was introduced to recognize and motivate Volunteers who contribute high numbers of hours over a short amount of time, or who show longstanding commitment in our seasonal Volunteer programs. A total of 28 Volunteers received recognition for their cumulative service contributions. This included five Volunteers with over 750 hours of service, one with more than 1,150 hours of service, and three reaching the 1,500 hours of service level.

The Toronto Zoo supports a variety of recognition events and programs for volunteers

Forty-nine volunteers received awards for years or hours of service.

Volunteers were recognized each day throughout National Volunteer Week in April with light breakfast snacks and refreshments.

Six Year-Round Volunteers and three youth volunteers were honoured for their service at the annual Volunteer Services Awards ceremony hosted by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Volunteers' recognition events were held in June (Strawberries and Wine and Volunteer appreciation awards ceremony) and December (Winter Holiday Party).

A newsletter for volunteers "It's Happening" is produced each month, in addition to the bimonthly issue of the staff newsletter "Browse", keeping volunteers informed about Zoo events.

Volunteers receive uniforms partially subsidized by the Zoo.

Volunteers support Seniors' Discovery Days

In 2018, the Zoo expanded its benefits to older adults by offering discounted admission and various perks on select days during the year. Volunteer-led guided tours were one of the additional offerings available to seniors. The tours were well-received by participants and Volunteers alike.

Enrichment-building by Volunteers provides benefits to Wildlife Care

Each year, Volunteers donate hundreds of hours to benefit the well-being of the animals in our care by literally getting their hands dirty making paper mache enrichment devices. These enrichment devices are necessary for the success of various events, such as Easter and the 12 days of Enrichment program.

Valuable animal data gained from volunteer observations

Volunteers continue to provide support to Wildlife Care staff by participating in animal observation studies throughout the year. Important information has been collected for many animals including: Aldabra tortoise, Amur tiger, cheetah, gorilla, reticulated python, and white rhinoceros.

Zoo Ambassador Student Volunteers assist with summer camps

Twenty-eight Zoo Ambassador Student Volunteers assisted staff with day camps throughout the summer, contributing 1,412 hours.

Volunteers support a number of International Conservation Awareness Days

Volunteers and Zoo Ambassadors were active in operating a number of activities and interpretive tables in support of international conservation days for animals such as bats, giraffes, penguins, polar bears, turtles, and white rhinoceros.

Partnership with Toronto Public Library Museum + Arts Pass Program (MAP)

As a venue supporting the MAP Program, Toronto Zoo provides outreach programs at various library branches. The “Wild about Cats” Program engaged young participants in learning more about the unique features and behaviours of felines and highlighted our new Amur tiger habitat. Throughout the year, the program was delivered at a variety of libraries, as well as other venues.

Volunteers continue to showcase the Toronto Zoo’s work at special events

Every year Volunteers use their knowledge and interpretive expertise to connect guests with our conservation messaging at numerous on-site events including major events, such as the Move your Paws for the Polar Bear Cause run and the corpse flower special exhibit, and more intimate Discovery & Learning tables adding value to corporate group bookings.

Wildlife Health Centre interpretive experience continues to engage guests and deliver on our mission

In 2018 the Wildlife Health Centre gallery was a free value-added experience for all Zoo guests, with interpretation delivered by Volunteers. With the goal of bringing the behind-the-scenes work of the Zoo to life, the guided commentary and interpretive activities in the gallery connected guests with the Zoo’s mission in engaging ways. The experience continues to be very well received and 48,558 visitors were reached with our interpretive efforts in 2018.

Orangutan palm oil hot spot activity zone improved and highlighted in 2018

Supporting the theme "Orangutans need rainforests, and so do we", we further enhanced this interactive activity zone to help visitors understand the importance of the rainforest to orangutans and raise awareness about the issue of sustainability surrounding palm oil. Most notably, we developed and created an orangutan-friendly shopping guide hand-out that guests could use to help make sustainable shopping choices. The hotspot was operated by Volunteers throughout the busy summer months, resulting in the messaging reaching 8,535 visitors.

Extended corporate/community volunteer activities at the Toronto Zoo

Outside of the activities of the Volunteer Services Unit, the Toronto Zoo also engages corporate and community groups/individuals in various volunteering opportunities under the larger co-ordination of the Conservation & Wildlife Division. These activities include tree plantings and harvesting browse cuttings to support the health and nutrition of the animals. Overall, 344 people participated in these activities donating 1,152 hours of their time.

Performance Measurements:

Table 1: The chart below shows the trend of various volunteer activities from 2014 to 2018.

Toronto Zoo Volunteer Led Programs / Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change vs. 2017
On-Site						
Number of people in groups toured	13,533	10,492	13,350	11,718	13,647	16.5%
Number of groups toured	589	489	555	476	586	23.1%
Off-Site						
Volunteer Led Outreach	60	40	37	18	16	(11.1%)
a) Schools/Group Presentations	11	22	23	13	11	(15.4%)
b) Event Interpretive tables	49	18	14	5	5	0%

Toronto Zoo Volunteer Led Programs / Activities	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change vs. 2017
c) Number of people contacted	14,896	11,085	6,141	2,426	1,951	(19.6%)
Overall						
Total Number of Volunteer hours	31,937	30,963	33,025	29,210	34,106	16.8%

Notes on Performance Measures:

Number of people contacted through off-site activities:

Again this year, we saw the trend of outreach requests that favoured more intimate audiences where the number of participants is lower compared to the larger community / summer festivals.

It should also be noted that additional grant funded outreach programs are delivered annually by staff of the Conservation & Wildlife Division. In 2018, the Adopt-A-Pond program reached over 62,084 individuals across the province. The Great Lakes Program returned to the Chatham-Sarnia and Kitchener-London regions in 2018. The program also reached into the east Lake Ontario region from Cobourg to Kingston. Altogether the Great Lakes Program reached 20,000 students in 2018.

Table 2: The table below provides a summary of the extended corporate/community volunteer activities in 2018.

Other Extended Volunteer Activities	Number of Participants	Total number of hours
Corporate Involvement		
Price Waterhouse Cooper – Browse collection	150	750
RBC – Browse Collection	14	42
Symcor - Tree planting	90	180
Symcor – Meadow planting	90	180
TOTAL	344	1,152

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