2020 was another incredibly successful year for the Zoo. I know these words sound awkward if not crazy coming from the director of an institution that was completely closed for several months and lost millions in much needed revenue. However, success is not always measured in just dollars and cents. Thankfully, much of our staff stayed healthy and the few that got sick were detected early and fully recovered. Our zoo was delighted by the presence of a thriving baby boom that included our first-ever baby tamandua, our first flamingo chick in over 20 years and of course Beany, our superstar baby sloth. We also had tremendous success in pivoting our education programs and camps to a highly engaging virtual platform.

Most importantly, we were able to open back up and be there for you, our community. The ability to provide New Englanders with a fun and safe escape to take their minds off the pandemic even for just a few hours was priceless. The creativity of our staff and our partners to change the Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular into a drive through and the creation of our all-new Holiday Light Spectacular, gave our community a place to celebrate the magic of the holiday seasons and boosted everyone’s morale. The creativity of our staff and our partners to change the Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular into a drive through and the creation of our all-new Holiday Light Spectacular, gave our community a place to celebrate the magic of the holiday seasons and boosted everyone’s morale.

You - our community - were there for us. You donated to our emergency appeals in record numbers and helped us get out of the immediate crisis at hand. Now as we enter our recovery phase, I am confident that we will continue to be there for each other and get each other through the remainder of this pandemic. Like everyone, your Zoo will be forever changed by the events of this year, but I know we will have grown stronger by getting through this together.

I would like to express my gratitude to Maribeth Williamson who has been the chair of the Rhode Island Zoological Society Board of Trustees for the last 8 years. Under her leadership the board has done a remarkable job fulfilling their mission of oversight and support of your Zoo. We welcome our new chair, Pat LeBeau who will undoubtedly continue to strengthen the board and help us achieve great things.

I look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!
NINE-BANDED ARMADILLOS

Named after the members of a certain 2000s boy band, these lively armadillo pups joined the Zoo family in April. The rambunctious armadillos are since full-grown and off to their next adventures at Capron Park Zoo, Buttonwood Park Zoo, and even the Desert Museum.

Piper
HOWLER MONKEY

The first female howler monkey baby to join the Roger Williams Park Zoo family, the adorable Piper joined her big brothers Tucker and Ryder, and parents Ramone and Finley in December.

Sookie
BABY SAKI

Sookie, one of the Zoo’s newest babies, joined her mother Suni and siblings Gigi and Luke in December. Saki monkeys are quick learners, usually becoming independent by the age of four to six months.

Franklin
TAMANDUA

Franklin the adventurous baby tamandua joined us in November. Born underweight and requiring medical attention, Franklin has since grown healthy and strong and loves to explore and play with his keeper friends behind-the-scenes of Faces of the Rainforest.

Francis
FLAMINGO

In October, Francis became the first flamingo chick born at Roger Williams Park Zoo in 22 years! Baby Francis may not look like a typical flamingo, but around 2 years old those juvenile grey feathers will turn into that trademark pink plumage.

Ruth
GIANT ANTEATER

Born in December, Ruth is one of our newest Zoo babies, and will spend most of the next year hitching a ride around her Faces of the Rainforest home on mom Delilah’s back!

Magnus
GOLDEN LION TAMARIN

Playful and mischievous, Magnus the golden lion tamarin joined his big brother Angus and parents Raff and Kyle in the Faces of the Rainforest treetops in April. This growing family brings hope for the future survival of this endangered species.

Beany
LINNE’S TWO TOED SLOTH

Since joining us in May, Beany, along with mom Fiona has been one of the stars of the Faces of the Rainforest show. True to her name, she loves snacking on green beans, along with hibiscus flowers and other tasty treats!

Nounours
PREHENSILE TAILED PORCUPINE

This adorable little porcupette joined parents Pierre and Flora as the newest addition to the Zoo’s porcupine family in November. Fun fact: Nounours means “teddy bear” in French!
While we may be based in Rhode Island, Roger Williams Park Zoo funds and participates in conservation programs around the world. One such program, Project Selva, helps to provide a continuous revenue stream to indigenous communities in the Amazon. Founded by San Antonio Zoo’s Center for Conservation and Research, a key component of the project is that the support does not involve timber harvest, mining, or oil extraction – activities that damage the rainforests where indigenous communities, like the Bora, live. This, in turn, relieves financial pressure so that they are less inclined to allow removal of rainforest from their territories.

Realizing the damaging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global environmental conservation partners, Roger Williams Park Zoo and the Center for Conservation and Research at San Antonio Zoo provided emergency relief including food and medical support for the Bora, an indigenous people from the Amazon Basin of Peru, whose livelihood has been disproportionately affected. Assistance also included educating the Bora on the Coronavirus and providing information they needed to endure the pandemic. The Bora was also given San Antonio Zoo face masks, which was something they did not have access to.

“Even during the lowest point in our 106 year history, while we were fighting for our own zoo’s survival, we never wavered on our commitment to conservation and specifically the Bora” said Tim Morrow, President & CEO San Antonio Zoo “San Antonio Zoo has staff in the Amazon and staff from San Antonio Zoo visits regularly. The Bora have become our friends & family, and we will do all we can to ensure this indigenous group nor their lands disappear from earth.”

“It is an honor to help support the same indigenous group that I’ve had the privilege of working with since I was a kid. I will never forget my decades’ long relationship with these brilliant people. No one knows these forests like the Bora.” said Dr. Dantè Fenolio, Vice President of Conservation & Research at San Antonio Zoo. “We need to work with indigenous groups if we want our conservation efforts to experience success.”

“The Roger Williams Park Zoo is proud to be partnering with San Antonio Zoo on this very important project. If we are to conserve the rainforests, we must also take care of the indigenous people that live there and who need our help now more than ever,” said Roger Williams Park Zoo Executive Director Jeremy Goodman.

“Conservation doesn’t work if you ignore the people living in the forests you’re trying to protect. It’s an honor to support these amazing people and the biodiversity inhabiting the same forests,” said Lou Perrotti, Director of Conservation Programs, Roger Williams Park Zoo.

Unfortunately, since the Conservation Center’s last visit to provide emergency assistance, the Bora have faced many hardships including considerable damage to their boat, which has been a key means of labor and survival. We were also deeply heartbroken to learn that one of the projects fellow artists and friends lost a child due to sudden illness. Our heart goes out to the Bora during this difficult time as we continue to work hard to support these indigenous communities with the help of our collaborative partners. Thanks to our friends at the Providence Art Club, we hosted a successful fundraiser to give local community members the opportunity to learn about Project Selva and the importance of this global effort.

With your help, we will continue to help our indigenous friends and provide an alternative revenue stream for their communities while supporting their culture and the rainforests. If you are interested in purchasing a Gyotaku fish print, please contact Lou Perrotti at lperrotti@rwpzoo.org. Proceeds benefit Project Selva.

Conservation doesn’t work if you ignore the people living in the forests you’re trying to protect. It’s an honor to support these amazing people and the biodiversity inhabiting the same forests.”

What is Project Selva?

Project Selva’s co-operative approach to the conservation of the Amazonian rainforest, helps develop skill sets and opportunities for indigenous artists - along with providing a much-needed revenue stream for their communities. Gyotaku, the ancient Japanese method of printing, is being used by the indigenous groups of the Amazon Basin to make their handmade crafts which are exported and then sold in the San Antonio Zoo’s gift shops. Learn more about Project Selva at www.projectselva.org.

Photo credits: San Antonio Zoo
Meet Clayton, a five-year-old with a love for snow leopards and a big heart for wildlife. After saving up his allowance, Clayton expressed his wishes to donate it to the Zoo. His mom and dad were so proud that they matched his gift.

Thank you, Clayton, for helping all our Zoo animals with your thoughtful donation. You are what makes our Zoo so special and we are honored to have you as part of the Zoo family.
Valentine’s Day is a day of love, affection, and togetherness. Get into the spirit of the season and see if you can answer these WILD trivia questions!

1. Some animals form mating partners and stay with the same companion for their entire life. How romantic! Which of the following animals tend to mate for life?
   a. Swans
   b. Beavers
   c. Gibbons
   d. All of the above

2. Elephants are very social animals that spend a lot of time interacting with other members of their herd. They have even been known to show affection to one another by:
   a. Fluttering their eyelids
   b. Wrapping their trunks together
   c. Spraying water on each other
   d. Stomping the ground

3. The human heart is about the size of a fist and generally weighs less than a pound, while the largest heart in the animal kingdom can weigh up to 400 pounds and is around the size of a piano! Which animal does this massive heart belong to?
   a. African Elephant
   b. Great White Shark
   c. Blue Whale
   d. Walrus

4. The ______ is known for its “mating dance”. Males will curl their tails around their female partner before they spin and twist around each other, ending with fertilized eggs deposited into the male’s pouch, where they will be carried until they hatch.
   a. Howler Monkey
   b. Seahorse
   c. Blue-Tongued Skink
   d. Duck-Billed Platypus

Suggested Supplies:
- 12-inch x 12-inch blue cardstock or construction paper (for background)
- Brown, tan and cream-colored cardstock or construction paper (for sloth)
- Red and pink or purple cardstock or construction paper (for hearts)
- black marker
- scissors
- glue

Instructions:
1. Have a parent or guardian help you to cut out pieces of cardstock or construction paper to make your sloth and a branch for them to rest on.
2. Once you have your pieces cut out, glue together your sloth pieces and draw on a face, claws, and other details.
3. Glue your sloth and their branch down onto a piece of cardstock or paper background.
4. Cut out details like twigs, leaves, and hearts to decorate your Valentine’s Day craft and glue them to the background.

Try this:
Most sloths are similarly colored to the one in the picture, but that doesn’t mean yours has to be! Get creative, use your imagination, and make your Sloth Valentine look however you want!