Like many businesses and organizations throughout the U.S., our Zoo has been hit hard by the devastating effects of the Covid-19 virus. However, unlike many other attractions or others in the hospitality industry we were not able to just close everything down and lay off our entire staff. Our expenses to care for our animals and maintain critical life support systems remained high while our income was virtually nonexistent. Thanks to our amazing dedicated staff, we have kept things going and are now open again for our guests to enjoy and visit all their animal friends.

Unfortunately, we are not out of the woods yet. Due to the closures and new restrictions, the Zoo is anticipating losing up to $5 million, half of its anticipated revenue for the year. Being open is a good start towards our path to recovery, but we still need your support more than ever. I encourage everyone to participate in and support many of our upcoming virtual events and programs. If you have contributed to our emergency fund, I want to thank you. If you have not given yet, please consider a gift to your Zoo during this very difficult time.

We are your Zoo family and continue to remain dedicated to being here for you and our community. With your support, we will get through this and be able to continue our important mission of conservation, education and excellence in animal care.

I look forward to seeing you at the Zoo.

COMING UP – WHAT IS AHEAD

If you are a fan of Brew at the Zoo, Zoobilee, or Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular (JOLS), all the events are still on the schedule for 2020. Both Brew at the Zoo on Saturday, August 29 and Zoobilee on Thursday, September 17 are virtual events so everyone can participate. JOLS, October 1 – November 1 will be a live event. However, instead of walking through the Wetlands Trail, guests will drive through the Zoo witnessing a sea of pumpkins celebrating Special Places. Watch our Facebook and Instagram for up to date information regarding everything going on at Roger Williams Park Zoo.
EXPANDING FAMILIES

If you follow us online you know that our Linne's two toed sloth Fiona gave birth to a beautiful baby on Wednesday, May 13. We held a naming contest and are thrilled with the overwhelming number of responses we received. Our naming committee, Michaela Johnson of WPRI's The Rhode Show, Chelsea Priest, meteorologist at ABC6, Artie Tefft of WJAR, Channel 10 along with Jennifer Hennessy animal keeper in Faces of the Rainforest, selected the name that got over 350 votes. Family and friends came together and submitted the name Brenton, or as his mom called him Beany, after a young boy who died of osteosarcoma two weeks before the baby sloth was born. Brenton's mother informed us of her son's love of sloths. Brenton told his mother that whenever she saw a sloth that would be a sign from him. Therefore, when she saw the sloth naming contest she knew it was a sign from her son. Our little Beany is a loving tribute to Brenton.

Raff and Kyle, our adult golden lion tamarins, are proud parents of another boy expanding their family to include two little very energetic males. The whole family is settling into life in the Rainforest running and playing. Zoo staff are thrilled to see families in the Faces of the Rainforest continue to grow.

KEEPING OUR ANIMALS HEALTHY

At the John J. Palumbo Veterinary Hospital our team has been working to ensure animals stay healthy. Like humans, animals encounter health issues that often need special care, and ongoing medical treatment. Veterinarian Dr. Kim Wojick recently gave us an update on Sha-Lei the female red panda. She had been diagnosed with a tumor. Of course, all the staff were quite concerned. Now, 7 months after her surgery to remove the tumor from her chest she is doing great and there is no indication that the tumor has returned. Sha-Lei will continually get check-ups. Don’t forget to walk by the red panda exhibit and visit with Sha-Lei and Rusty who will be climbing, eating bamboo, and snoozing on the Marco Polo Trail.

Sometimes a specialist is required. Frankie the male tamandua needed a colonoscopy recently. Not just anyone can do the procedure, so Dr. Rebecca Kessler from Ocean State Veterinary Specialists worked with Dr. Wojick to perform the colonoscopy as part of a full medical evaluation to check out any GI issues in the little animal. Frankie is ok and back in Faces of the Rainforest.

COVID-19 has affected every part of our daily lives. Even for the animals at Roger Williams Park Zoo life was different without guest interaction and the daily hustle and bustle of an open Zoo. It is so nice to be open and see everyone.

While we were closed the animal care staff was at the Zoo daily interacting with animals, and the animals had plenty of time to participate in training, medical check-ups, and receive lots of extra love from the keepers. Zoo life was not static in any way.
2020 GRAND PRIZE WINNER:

Sumatran Orangutan - Dayeon Lee (6-8)

2020 WINNING ENTRIES BY GRADE CATEGORY:

Koala - Charlotte Healy (K-2)

Brown bat - Elena Hoffey (3-5)
GRADE CATEGORY SEMI-FINALISTS:

Red Wolf - Mackenzie Casto (6-8)
Tiger - Sanchali Pothuru (9-12)

Red Wolf - Jacob Roberge (K-2)
Red Panda - Olivia Yijie-chen (3-5)

West Indian Manatee - Sarah Schrank (6-8)
New Zealand Sea Lion - Alania Frias (9-12)
Growing up I had a strong interest in insects, especially butterflies and moths, and that interest has stayed with me right up until the present time.

When I started out as a kid, I would collect insects and mount them in display cases and shadow boxes. As I grew older my viewpoint changed. Now, I collect insects through photography. In the 1980s I became aware of the plight of pollinators so creating pollinator gardens is also a passion of mine. I brought pollinator gardens to the Zoo when I became the horticulture manager.

One pollinator we have heard about in the news lately is the Monarch butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*. Their populations are said to be down 80% which is scary considering it used to be one of the most common butterflies seen during the summer months. They are so well known because of their annual migration to Mexico, with some individuals flying 3,000 miles! Now more than ever the Monarchs need our help.

There are many contributing factors that caused the decline of this beautiful species. The first is habitat conversion and adverse land management, which causes a huge loss to the only food plant that their caterpillars eat - milkweed. This also includes cutting back of roadsides and fields, which house milkweed and so many other beneficial plants to insects. Second is the use of insecticides and herbicides to control insects and weeds that results in unintended consequences for the monarchs. Third is the habitat loss at both of their overwintering sites. In California, land development within and next to the overwintering groves has reduced the number of trees where the Monarchs live. In Mexico, where most of the Monarchs go in the fall, their overwintering sites have been greatly reduced due to illegal logging.

So, what can we do? Here at Roger Williams Park Zoo, in addition to our regular pollinator gardens, we have added a Monarch-specific garden. In this area, across from our camel exhibit, we have planted three kinds of milkweed as well as coneflowers (*Echinacea*) and the black-eyed susan flower (*Rudbeckia*). I chose these two plants because of the purple and yellow colors, that perfectly complement each other. The key to successful butterfly gardening is to offer not only the flowers that the butterflies will nectar from but also the plants that their caterpillars eat. Just planting pollinator flowers will attract the butterflies, but planting their caterpillar food as well, will keep them around much longer.

It is also important to use only native plants. Non-natives can be invasive and crowd out natives. On top of that, local butterflies are more conditioned to go to native plants than plants that are not familiar to them. Rhode Island has three species of native milkweed, which again...
is the only foodplant that Monarch caterpillars will eat. They are swamp milkweed (Asclepias incarnata), butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa) and common milkweed (Asclepias syriaca). All three can be easily grown by seed, though they do not take well to transplanting.

As far as native flowers to attract Monarchs, most pollinator flowers will work. Keep in mind that milkweed does flower as well, and butterflies and bees love it. Milkweed is also a great plant because it comes back year after year, and reseeds the area adding to your garden regularly.

Whenever possible, I recommend weeding by hand. This eliminates the use of herbicides which will kill bad plants as well as good plants. Also, working in a garden and getting your hands dirty is very relaxing and rewarding. Pesticides should also be eliminated since they kill just as many pest insects as they do beneficial ones. Pollinators are very sensitive to pesticides.

While all pollinators need our help, Monarchs have declined so much in such a short time that it is very concerning. It does not take much room for a Monarch garden either. If you build it, they will come. A small patch of milkweed with pollinator-friendly flowers will bring not only Monarchs to your yard but also many types of other pollinators.

Check out more of Dave Albaugh’s stories at www.davethebugguy.org/
Supplies you will need:

- Construction Paper (multiple colors if available)
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Glue
- Googly Eyes (optional)

Directions:

1. Have a parent or guardian help you cut the construction paper into strips. This example uses six strips for each of caterpillar, but you can make yours as long or as short as you want! Make sure to also cut a strip (in a different color if possible) for the head.

2. Next, create a circle with one strip of construction paper and staple the ends together. Then place another strip through first circle and staple it together into a second circle. Continue until you have stapled all of your circles together.

3. Using a scrap of construction paper, have a parent or guardian help you cut out a mouth and two antennae for your caterpillar.

4. Glue the mouth, antennae, and googly eyes onto the caterpillar’s head. If you don’t have googly eyes available, you can draw on eyes with a pen or marker.

Try this:

Get creative! Find pictures of caterpillars you like and use markers or different colored paper to decorate your creations to look like them! You can even make a whole family of different caterpillars!