

PRESS RELEASE

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Zoo celebrates inclusion with new accessible Zoo for All events

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo believes the zoo should be inclusive for all. To celebrate its commitment to inclusion, the zoo will host its first **Zoo for All** event on Thursday, July 5 to acknowledge and honor families and individuals from the special needs and inclusion communities.

Among the features of Zoo for All are additional accessible parking spaces, a new zoo map to help identify quieter and less heavily trafficked locations, and a reconfiguration of Zoomazium's nature play space to make it suitable for children with autism and other sensory disorders. In addition, families will be encouraged to join in a community bring-your-own lunch celebration on the zoo's North Meadow. Because Zoo for All falls during the zoo's new Evening Zoo event, the zoo will be open past normal closing hours until 8:30 p.m.

Zoo for All coincides with the potential opening of the long-awaited [Seattle Sensory Garden](#), an addition to the zoo's Rose Garden designed for those with and without disabilities to enjoy. The new garden includes a variety of elements for guests to touch and explore at their leisure, including deep-toned wind chimes, temple bells, and guiros—rectangular wooden posts with slots that create noise when touched. There is also an accessible paved pathway, special sensory-friendly carpeting, and raised beds to make for easier interaction with the variety of trees, shrubs and bulbs planted throughout the garden.

Zoo for All has been made possible through guidance from nonprofit partners in the community, including the Arc of King County, Special Olympics USA Games, Northwest Center and others. These organizations will have booths at the zoo throughout the day to provide information about their services.

Free passes to the zoo have been provided for select partners to remove economic barriers for attendance, and Special Olympics athletes and coaches are eligible for half-price zoo admission. In addition, the zoo has a limited number of free zoo passes for individuals and families with economic barriers. To request a pass, contact Rubai Aurora at rubai.aurora@zoo.org or 206.548.2432.

Zoo for All is part of Woodland Park Zoo's greater commitment to making the zoo a place of inclusion in which people of all backgrounds and abilities feel welcome and inspired to make conservation a priority in their lives. As part of that partnership, the zoo began a three-year partnership with Northwest ADA Center in 2016 to commit to accessibility site surveys of its public spaces. In 2017, the zoo's executive leadership team took a pledge through Welcome Inclusion (WIN) of King County to strive to understand, accept and accommodate differences in the zoo's guests.

"Zoo for All is a day to celebrate families coming together here at the zoo," says Alejandro Grajal, Woodland Park Zoo's president and CEO. "But our pledge to inclusivity is year round. We are constantly looking at ways to strengthen our commitment, improve our processes and make them more equitable. Creating this event has been a wonderful chance to truly learn from the community, and we hope to approach more Zoo for All events with the same spirit in the future."

This Zoo for All is the first in a new series of events and engagements the zoo is undertaking to reach communities that are often underserved in society. A second Zoo for All event will take place on August 1: Honoring Those Who Serve, a celebration of veterans and active military. And, an event will take place in the holiday season for youth and families living in homelessness.



Founded in 1899, Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 35 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Each year, the zoo engages more than a million visitors of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life in extraordinary experiences with animals, inspiring them to make conservation a priority in their lives and a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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