

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Zoo will honor local leaders and kick off Living Northwest Initiative fundraising at Thrive Wildlife Heroes event**

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo will honor Pacific Northwest wildlife heroes at its **Thrive Wildlife Heroes** dinner and fundraiser to be held February 27 in Seattle.

Co-chaired by Anders Brown of Valence and Sandra Andrews of Microsoft, Thrive Wildlife Heroes will bring together Puget Sound region business, community and conservation leaders, and philanthropists to advance the mission of Woodland Park Zoo and action to save wildlife and wild places. Funds raised at Thrive will support the zoo's Living Northwest program, which saves species, engages students in inquiry-based science learning and protects ecosystems right here at home.

The 2019 Thrive honorees are:

**Woodland Park Zoo Conservation Leadership Award: Chris Morgan**, a wildlife researcher, wilderness guide, and environmental educator who has worked on every continent where bears and other large carnivores exist. Western Wildlife Outreach Founder and Senior Advisor, Morgan has partnered with Woodland Park Zoo to raise awareness about imperiled species and the recovery process in a non-advocacy environment. Morgan most recently completed the documentary BEARTREK, an epic feature following him on a global crusade to four continents to discover the wondrous world of bears.

**Outstanding Philanthropic Leadership Award: Rose Letwin**, who advances the zoo's mission through annual leadership gifts and was instrumental in launching the zoo's wildlife conservation program with generous seed funding. Through the Wilburforce Foundation, she also made possible the critical work of Woodland Park Zoo's research on regional carnivores with the goal of informing best practices around how humans and carnivores can coexist peacefully in the state's shared landscapes. A pioneering environmental philanthropist, Letwin embodies the spirit of generosity and the power of philanthropy to improve lives for all species.

**Guy C. Phinney Corporate Leadership Award: BECU**, who for more than a decade has been a dedicated supporter of Woodland Park Zoo and a loyal sponsor of ZooTunes. The local cooperative has helped to bring music to the community and helped advance the zoo's mission to save wildlife and inspire people to make conservation a priority in their lives. The zoo thanks BECU for their longstanding partnership and financial contributions in working together to save species and empower communities.

**Woodland Park Zoo Youth Conservation Award: Nazma Noray**, a member of Woodland Park Zoo's ZooCorps teen program. Noray is a senior at Shorecrest High School, where she started a composting program with the school's Environmental Club—a program that has since expanded to two other schools. She credits the zoo with helping her find a confident and passionate voice about conservation and education. Noray hopes to use that voice one day as a physician caring for marginalized groups in the Puget Sound community.

"Each of our 2019 honorees brings their passion, dedication, and resources to helping Woodland Park Zoo advance our social movement to better our relationship with nature, consistently inspiring and empowering our mission. Together, we stand for wildlife," said Woodland Park Zoo President and CEO Alejandro Grajal, PhD.

The Thrive Wildlife Heroes event will also kick off Woodland Park Zoo's significant new efforts to raise funds for its Living Northwest Initiative. The funds will expand and advance its



Living Northwest conservation and education programs, as well as support a re-imagined Living Northwest exhibit experience projected to open in 2020. The new exhibit experience will be a revitalization of the zoo's award-winning Northern Trail exhibit and will become a hub for engaging zoo guests and community members around discovery, species recovery, human-wildlife coexistence, and saving the wildlife and ecosystems right here at home for the benefit of every species.

For information, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org).

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