

LEGACY ANNUAL REPORT FY23 Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund / January 2024



Como Park Zoo & Conservatory



Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is pleased to submit our annual report on programs and projects supported by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF), which was created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. This report is required by M.S. 3.303 and details outcomes for FY 2023: July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

We are grateful for your support of our programs.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is a statewide resource for every Minnesotan, inspiring visitors with the wonders of the natural world. More than a century since its founding, Como's free admission, family-friendly accessible environment and free non-formal education programs continue to make this facility the State's most visited cultural destination.

Funding supported from the Legacy Amendment's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund allows Como Park Zoo and Conservatory to provide a variety of accessible and free programs and enhancements that interweave the arts, culture, and history for citizens of the entire State.

The report of projects funded with ACHF appropriations must contain the following information:

- 1. The name of the project and project description;
- 2. The name, telephone number, members of the board or equivalent governing body, and e-mail address of the funding recipient and, when applicable, the website address where the public can directly access detailed information on the recipient's receipt and use of money for the project;
- 3. The amount and source of funding, including the fiscal year of the appropriation;
- 4. The amount and source of any additional funding or leverage;
- 5. The duration of the projects;
- 6. The number of full-time equivalents funded under the project;
- 7. The direct expenses and administration costs of the project;
- 8. Actual measured outcomes and evaluation of projects as required by statute; and
- 9. Specific information for each program produced and broadcast, including the cost of production, the number of stations broadcasting the program, estimated number of listeners, and other related measures. If the programs produced include educational material, the noncommercial radio station must report on these efforts.

The report must be submitted by January 15 to the Minnesota Department of Administration, the Legislative Coordinating Commission, and the chairs and ranking minority members of the Senate and House of Representatives committees and divisions having jurisdiction over Arts and Cultural Heritage policy and finance. Reporting Period:

This document covers the Fiscal Year 2023 reporting period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

FY 23 Total Funding Amount: \$1,500,000

Administrative Costs: 3% to MN Department of Administration Grant Management \$40,500, 2% to Como Administrative Costs \$29,100

Duration of Projects: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 Staff FtE: 5.05 FtE

Oversight of these projects is the responsibility of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, a division of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department and key senior staff. Questions about these projects may be directed to:

Michelle Furrer

City of Saint Paul - Parks & Recreation michelle.furrer@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

www.comozooconservatory.org 1225 Estabrook Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55103









LEGACY AMENDMENT'S ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory FY 2023 Report Minnesota Legislative Reference Library July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 / January 2024

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is owned and operated by the City of Saint Paul's Department of Parks and Recreation.

Leadership:

Michelle Furrer Campus Manager & Director, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

Andy Rodriguez Director, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

> Melvin Carter Mayor

City of Saint Paul City Council:

Amy Brendmoen *City Council President* Chris Tolbert Rebecca Noecker Mitra Jalali Elsie Yang Jane L Prince Russel Balenger

Reporting: As a recipient of funds from the ACHF, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory must abide by certain reporting requirements as stated in Minnesota Statutes § 3.303, Subd. 10, § 129D.17 Subd. 2 (d), and § 129D.19 Subd. 5. 4 According to Minnesota Statute 129D.17, Subdivision 2(d): A state agency or other recipient of a direct appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund must compile and submit all information for funded projects or programs, including the proposed measurable outcomes and all other items required under section 3.303, subdivision 10, to the Legislative Coordinating Commission as soon as practicable or by January 15 of the applicable fiscal year, whichever comes first. The Legislative Coordinating Commission must post submitted information on the Web site required under section 3.303. subdivision 10, as soon as it becomes available.

> Cover photo by Steve Solmonson, Como Volunteer

MUSIC IN NATURE

Live music showcasing rich and vibrant rhythms and sounds of Minnesota's multicultural community. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory offered a variety of ways to introduce music and local artists to their visitors. Groovin' in the Garden offers an eightweek concert series of live music on the front lawn of the Conservatory in the summer months. In the winter months, the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory hosted an eightweek concert series called Music Under Glass. On Mondays during the summer months, Music Mondays features strolling musicians throughout the zoo grounds. Both music series were free to the public and each featured Minnesota artists. The concerts were held outside of the standard public hours and introduced the arts to a new audience.





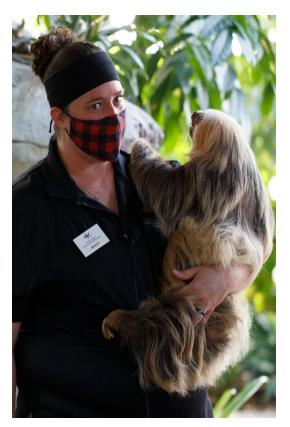
Outcomes & Outputs FY23

- 16 concerts
- 71 artists
- 8,165 attendees

Proposed Outcome Achievement

- Achieved all (Achieved 100%
 - of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved most (Achieved greater than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved some (Achieved less than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved none (Achieved 0% of proposed outcomes)
- OOutcomes data not yet available





EDZOOCATION PROGRAMS

Como Class Pass is free educational and engaging programs for all Minnesota schools focused on 3-4th grade students. These lessons build meaningful connections between students and Como's plants and animals at a time when field trips are not feasible.

Students report an increased understanding of how to use engineering to solve problems. Teachers report that student's connection between plants and animals are stronger and enhance STEM curriculum.

Outcomes & Outputs FY23

- Class Pass Outputs
- 29 classes
- 1,538 participants and 57 teacher/adults

Proposed Outcome Achievement

- Achieved all (Achieved 100% of proposed outcomes)
- OAchieved most (Achieved greater than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved some (Achieved less than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved none (Achieved 0% of proposed outcomes)
- OOutcomes data not yet available

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Como is committed to ensuring that there are program offerings accessible to all. Public Engagement programs are focused on equity, access, and virtual learning. These programs provide opportunities for participants to learn and be creative in a free environment. Participants report feeling an increased interest, appreciation and engagement with the living world. These programs increase participation with new audiences.



SENSORY FRIENDLY MORNINGS

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is an energetic environment full of sensory stimuli. We know this environment can be overwhelming for some visitors. Because of this, Como has early access mornings designed for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. A Social Narrative, created in collaboration with the Autism Society of Minnesota, explains what to expect step-by-step as they explore the campus. The Visual Schedule Board tool helps visitors plan their route around the zoo. A Sensory Friendly Map is also available and highlights areas of stronger smells and quiet spaces.



LITTLE EXPLORERS

Little Explorers was created to provide opportunities for families of young children to create memories while developing an appreciation for the natural world. This program provides age-appropriate, hands-on educational activities, along with two interactive story times. Little Explorers is offered Thursdays from 10am-12pm, year-round.



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ASL INTERPRETED PROGRAMMING

An ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter joins select Como programming every Thursday. These programs include a Little Explorers story time, a keeper talk located at rotating habitats around the zoo, and a Spire Sparky Show seal & sea lion training demonstration. These ASL interpreted programs allow our deaf/hard of hearing visitors a chance to fully engage.

Outcomes & Outputs FY23

- 332 program offerings
- 43,745 participants
- 53 digital episodes
 8,519 social media engagements

Program Outputs

- Little Explorers
- 51 total programs
- 5,633 total participants
- ASL Interpreted
 Programming
 - 82 programs interpreted
 - 19,968 total participants
- S.A.F.E. Tables
 - 53 total programs
 - 11,962 total participants
- Senior Strolls
- 24 total strolls
- 659 total participants
- Sensory Friendly - 18 total programs
 - 884 total participants
- Apprentice Program - 26 total programs
- Como Cares Table Programs
- 25 total table programs
- 4,639 total participants
- Social Media Videos
 53 total social media videos
 - 1,027,454 total views
 - 61,891 followers

Proposed Outcome Achievement

Achieved all

(Achieved 100% of proposed outcomes)

- O Achieved most (Achieved greater than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved some (Achieved less than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved none (Achieved 0% of proposed outcomes)
- O Outcomes data not yet available

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SENIOR STROLLS Senior Strolls is a program for Como's "55 and better" visitors. This program offers an opportunity for a leisurely stroll through the lush greenery and warm confines of the conservatory, or a walk amongst the amazing animals and worldclass exhibits on zoo arounds. Seniors Strolls takes place 9am-10am two Tuesdays a month. During the winter months, we also offer "Sunset Senior Strolls" which takes place in the conservatory after hours.



S.A.F.E. DAYS

S.A.F.E. (Saving Animals From Extinction) Days offer visitors a special opportunity to chat with an Education Specialist about one of Como's endangered animal species. This opportunity highlights the work zoos and aquariums are doing to save these species, and what everyone can do to help.



APPRENTICE PROGRAM

The Apprentice Program partners career development to students employed through the City of Saint Paul RightTrack program. Apprentices commit to two years of paid work to develop professional skills in zookeeping and horticulture, providing enough experience to meet employment requirements. RightTrack is a youth employment initiative for building a diverse future workforce, while supporting young people and their families now. RightTrack engages nearly 1,000 young people from cost-burdened homes throughout Saint Paul. The support of the program includes training, development and support.

COMO CARES STATIONS & VIDEOS

Como Cares (Conservation, Action, Research, Empathy, Stories) stations and videos help visitors strengthen their connection to Como through insider information about the zoo and conservatory such as animal names, personalities,

highlighting special programs, and even trivia! Along with these weekly stations, Como Cares reaches a virtual audience through social media videos (Instagram Reels) that take a look at Como's plants and animals through a humorous lens.



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SPECIAL EXHIBITS

For more than 65 years, "Sparky the Sea Lion" has been a beloved Minnesota tradition, teaching generations of children to care about seals and sea lions in the wild. As Como evolved, Sparky became a conservation ambassador, with a show that teaches visitors everything from the value of recycling to protecting marine mammals from plastic pollution.

In June 2022, Summer of Sparky launched, and the celebration continued into FY23. Como commissioned 20 custom 6ft Sparky statues that would then be hand-painted by local artists and placed throughout the Twin Cities. Statues were placed at businesses, parks, and tourist locations around the Twin Cities, including CHS Field, Rice Park, Harriet Island, Como Regional Park, Minnehaha Park, and the Minneapolis RBC Gateway until September 2022.

With a different educational and interactive pop-up event at each statue, we engaged 45,000+ attendees. Utilizing every avenue from summer Rec-check programs to partnerships



with the Science Museum of Minnesota, Minnesota Children's Museum, and Saint Paul Saints, we worked diligently to foster a connection between the public and natural world.

As a fitting finale for the Summer of Sparky, all the statues were collected and redistributed around the Como campus for a month-long celebration. With a team of educators, Sparky artists, sponsors, and volunteers, each weekend in October was a new celebration of Sparky and conservation. It was a culmination of everything we strived to achieve throughout the summer all rolled into one place. With activities ranging from our ever-popular ocean trivia to "Sparky beach clean-up", we worked to engage with every generation of visitor.

MISSION SAFARI MAZE

In May 2023, Mission Safari Maze invited guests to explore a vast biodiversity in Mission Safari, a bilingual, multi-layered adventure maze, and discover how even the most insignificant seeming wildlife (ahem...mosquito) plays an important role in human survival. Mission Safari.

Guests embarked on a journey by completing question-and-answer challenges that let you choose your own path through the winding maze.

Along the way they could transform into different animals and experience life on the wild side. They saw how a long jump measures up to that of a Red Kangaroo; Swing through the canopy beside an Orangutan; Soar on the breeze like a Bald Eagle; Hang with a Two-Toed Sloth; And try not to get squeezed by a Python or caught in the Black Widow's web!

They could also continue the survey of Earth's biodiversity on a Secret Safari. Here you will enter the hidden maze-within-a-maze and connect with a dozen different animals on missions to learn about their unique adaptations and survival stories. Each weekend in October was a new celebration of Sparky and conservation with the help of educators, Sparky artists, sponsors, and volunteers to engage with every generation of visitors.



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EXHIBIT GALLERY



Tiger! Tiger! April 1-May 31 Tigers are amazing! Test your knowledge of tigers while learning some interesting facts. Why do they have those stripes? How are house cats similar to the world's largest cats? Learn many "fun facts" about tigers.

Tigers are important! As apex predators, tigers keep their habitats in balance. This means lower levels of the food chain, including plants, depend on tigers. Humans have relied on this balance for thousands of years, tigers are a part of their cultural heritage.

"Roots to Healing: A Brief Survey of the Past, Present, and Future of Plant-Based Remedies in Minnesota" December 8-March 15

This exhibit examined the intersection of culture, medicinal plants, and current research. It invited viewers to consider the value of plants that have taken root in Minnesota. These include the commonplace plantain, the rare Lady's Slipper orchid, and the controversial Cannabis.



Endangered species - The chief threats to tigers in the wild are loss of habitat and poaching. Three species of tigers are already extinct. And only about 4,000 tigers are left in the world today.

Hope for tigers - Conservation efforts for saving tigers, in their natural habitats, are underway. Learn about the innovative methods being implemented to make sure tigers continue to have a home in a balanced ecosystem. Every person, regardless of age or location, can help save them.

Outcomes & Outputs FY23

- Increased free access to art exhibits to Minnesotans with ways they can feel, act, learn
- Attendance: 565,442
- Engagement: 52,392
- Provided a special exhibit that featured ways to connect with nature
- Summer of Sparky Statues
- 24 artists, 13 community partners
- 32 events

Proposed Outcome Achievement

- Achieved all (Achieved 100% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved most (Achieved greater than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- OAchieved some (Achieved less than 50% of proposed outcomes)
- O Achieved none (Achieved 0% of proposed outcomes)
- OOutcomes data not yet available



Monarchs and Milkweed: A Story of Survival June 1-September 30

This exhibit takes you on a journey into the world of butterflies and plants and introduces the complex relationship between monarchs and milkweed. We will explore how their very survival has been shaped over time by one another, as we travel through the seasons of a calendar year revealing how both insect and plant grow and interact, culminating in a massive migration that crosses a continent.

HABITAT RENEWAL

Improve interpretive graphics, add interactive elements, and expand encounters for both the guest and animal to better make the connection to inspire the public to value the presence of living things. Marine Mammal Building, Tropical Encounters and Exhibit Gallery Lobby are still underway.



Proposed Outcome Achievement

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- Outcomes data not yet available



GARDEN PRESERVATION

The art of gardening will be on full display for the preservation of the Lily Reflection Pool featuring the historical Victorian Water Platters, which first appeared in Como Park in the late 1880s. The Marjorie McNeely Conservatory has been a historical cultural landmark since 1915 and preserving the great staircase back to the artist's original design.

Work on the Great Stairs began in spring 2023 and completed by June 30. Design work and construction documents for the Lily Reflection Pool was done during FY23.



Proposed Outcome Achievement

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