

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## A TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR







Dear friends,

When we think of 2024, we think of transformation. And when we think of that word, we think of metamorphosis, of dramatic change reaching ever toward improvement.

While that definition certainly rings true, for us here at Zoo Atlanta, the word “transformation” is more than just cosmetic; it is a consistent state of being that runs far deeper than the surface. That’s because in just the past decade, we have been continuously transforming, constantly redefining who we are and what we do.

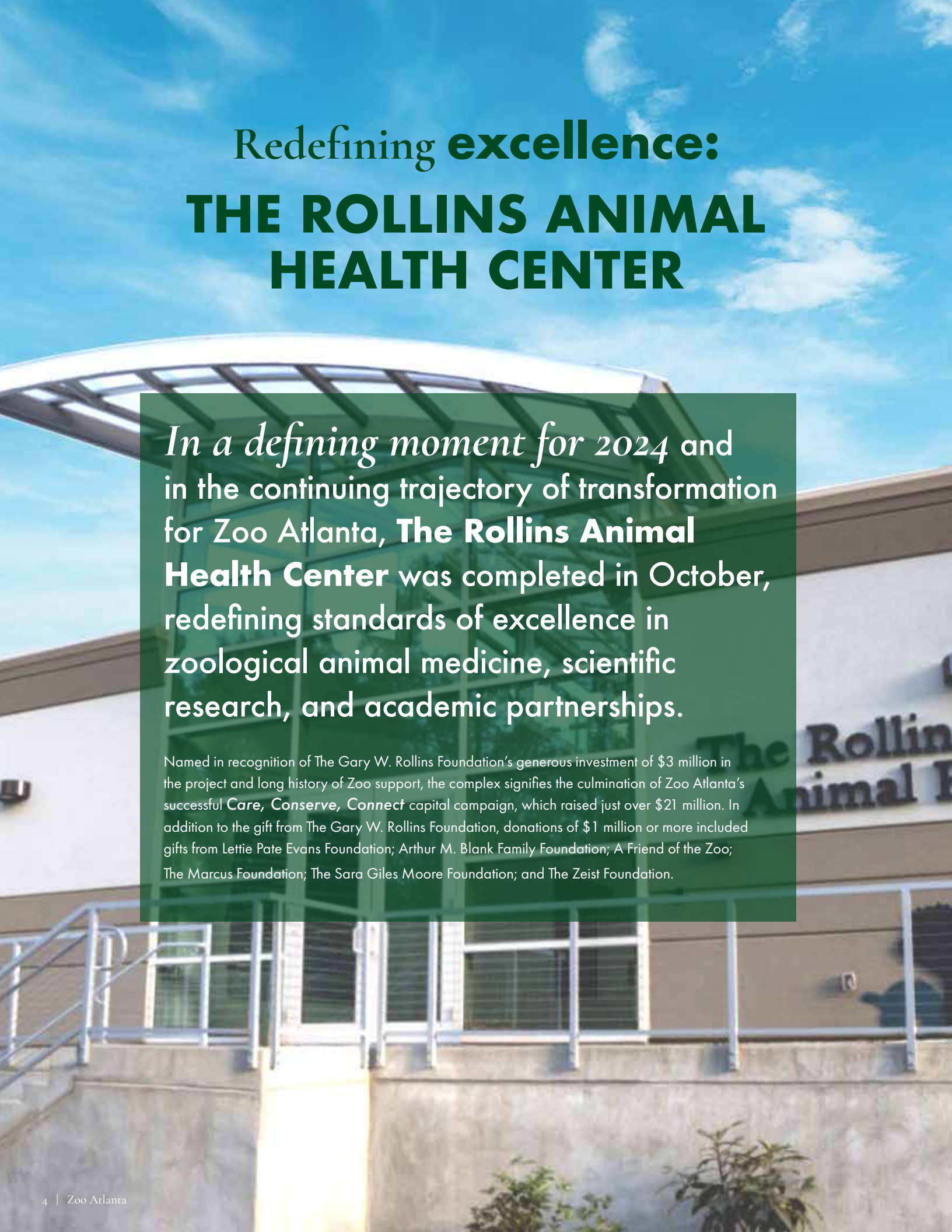
We saw many examples of that phenomenon in 2024, from the historic and compelling example of the completion of our state-of-the-art Rollins Animal Health Center, to new visions for animal wellbeing and guest experience, to ways to engage our community further in the milestones in the lives of the animals in our care, to “eureka” moments that continue to place us at the forefront of animal stewardship.

I hope you will agree as you review just a few highlights from another year of that ongoing transformation. As always, thanks for all you do for the Zoo!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raymond B. King  
President and CEO



# Redefining **excellence:** **THE ROLLINS ANIMAL HEALTH CENTER**

*In a defining moment for 2024* and in the continuing trajectory of transformation for Zoo Atlanta, **The Rollins Animal Health Center** was completed in October, redefining standards of excellence in zoological animal medicine, scientific research, and academic partnerships.

Named in recognition of The Gary W. Rollins Foundation's generous investment of \$3 million in the project and long history of Zoo support, the complex signifies the culmination of Zoo Atlanta's successful **Care, Conserve, Connect** capital campaign, which raised just over \$21 million. In addition to the gift from The Gary W. Rollins Foundation, donations of \$1 million or more included gifts from Lettie Pate Evans Foundation; Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation; A Friend of the Zoo; The Marcus Foundation; The Sara Giles Moore Foundation; and The Zeist Foundation.

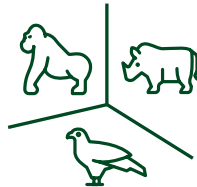
# The Rollins Animal Health Center has many special features.



**17,000 square feet** of dedicated laboratory, pharmacy, radiology, treatment, and surgical facilities



**CT scanner** that, for the first time ever, allows the Veterinary Team to access advanced imaging on Zoo grounds that limits the need to transport animals offsite



**Interior and exterior animal holding dens** and animal diet preparation kitchen



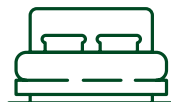
**Five animal quarantine dens** with dedicated care team member access and dedicated animal diet preparation areas



**Office and conference space** for the Veterinary Team



**Necropsy suite**



**Two second-floor apartments** with kitchen space and laboratory working space for students or visiting scientists



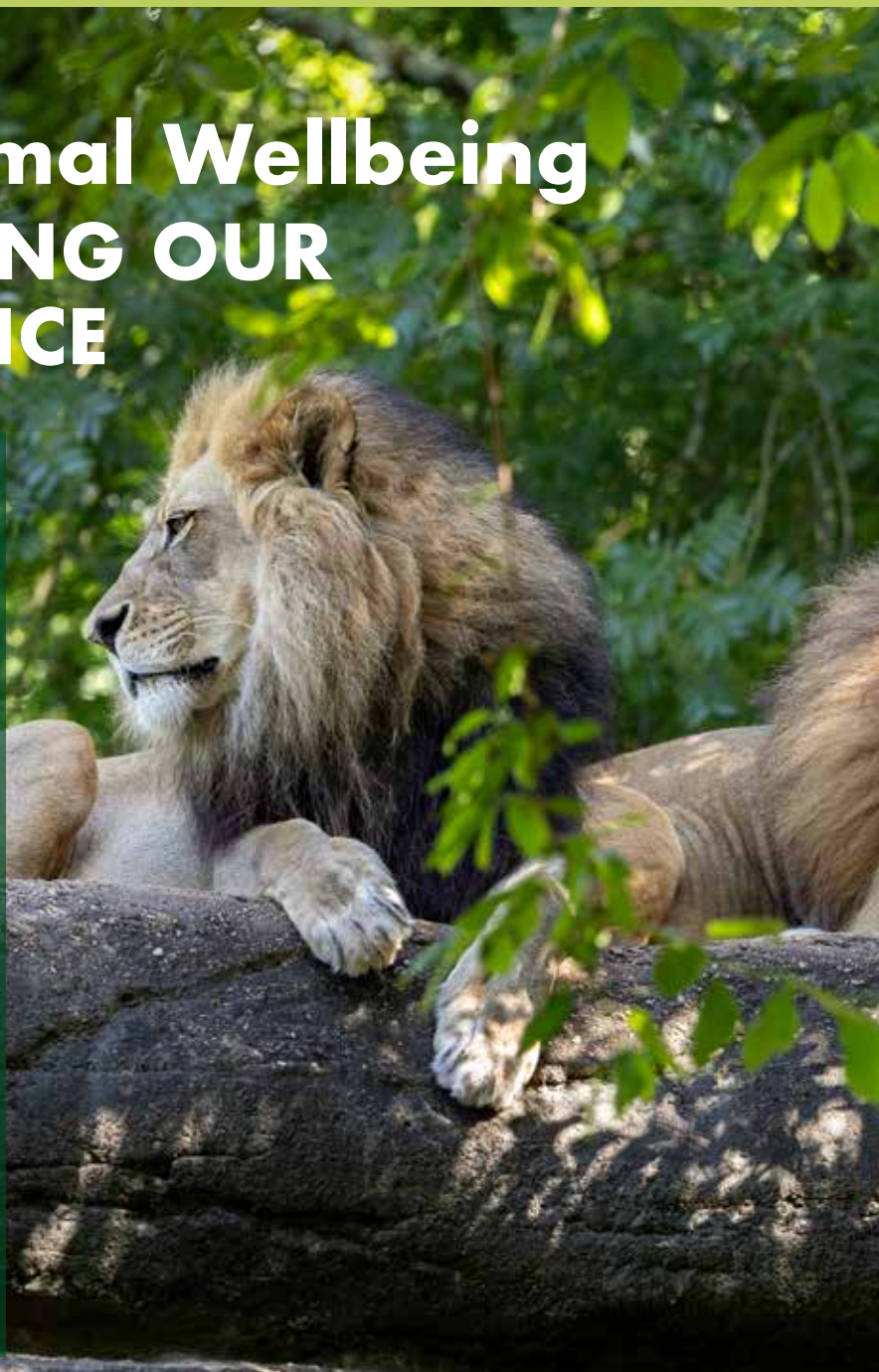
**Remote learning capabilities** and expanded capacity for research and academic partner collaborations

# Designing for Animal Wellbeing AND REDESIGNING OUR GUEST EXPERIENCE

The \$3 million project  
is due for completion  
in spring 2025.

Construction began in fall 2024 to **renovate Zoo Atlanta's African lion complex**, home to brothers Hondo, Hatari, and Azizi. Design elements to enhance animal wellbeing will include around 1,500 new square feet of habitat space for the lions and a new shade structure and rain shelter. Guest experience upgrades will highlight three different viewing areas, featuring a viewing deck that will allow guests to see the entire habitat, including a pond which was previously obscured from view.

1,500 new  
square feet of  
habitat space





## Welcoming **AN INNOVATIVE AND PASSIONATE NEW LEADER**

Following a competitive nationwide search, Zoo Atlanta was thrilled to welcome **Gina Ferrie, PhD**, as Vice President of Collections and Conservation in May 2024.

A proven leader and the author or co-author of more than 30 peer-reviewed publications in applied zoo and aquarium science, biology, and conservation journals, Dr. Ferrie brings a passion for applied scientific and evidence-based practices that enhance animal care, wellbeing, and conservation—all areas integral to Zoo Atlanta's mission.





## Growing **OUR IMPACT**

**The Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment Fund** annually awards grants to projects that enable Zoo Atlanta to amplify its global conservation impact. Projects are proposed by Zoo Atlanta team members and are selected by a review committee based on relevance to the Zoo's mission; conservation status and needs of the species in question; conservation significance; and inclusion of education and community outreach.

**In 2024, Zoo Atlanta announced that seven international conservation partnerships would benefit from Zoo support in 2025:** the **Red Panda Network** (red pandas, Nepal); **Borneo Orangutan Survival USA** (orangutans, Borneo); **El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center Foundation** (golden frogs, Panama); **Pan African Sanctuary Alliance** (drill monkeys, Cameroon); **Wildlife Alliance Veal Pi Ranger Station** (clouded leopards, Cambodia); **Goulougo Triangle Ape Project** (gorillas and chimpanzees, Republic of Congo); and the **Turtle Survival Alliance** (radiated tortoises, Madagascar).

# Signature Partners



Beyond those projects supported by the **Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment Fund**, Zoo Atlanta has significant relationships with signature conservation partners **Conservation South Luangwa**, a Zambia-based organization working to protect African elephants and other species impacted by illegal wildlife trafficking and human-wildlife conflict, and the **Golden Lion Tamarin Association**, a Brazil-based organization protecting the endangered icons of Brazil's Atlantic Coastal Forest from habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and disease.



## The Mickelberg Field Conservation Grant

Launched in 2024 to honor the legacy of Jennifer Mickelberg, PhD, Zoo Atlanta's Vice President of Collections and Conservation who passed away in 2023, the **Mickelberg Field Conservation Grant** funds travel opportunities for Zoo team members to participate in field conservation projects, both abroad and regionally in the U.S., to broaden their understanding of the work of conservation partners and to learn about and support this work in person and in the field. The grant allows team members to learn firsthand the value of crossing borders, collaborating with partners, and seeing the power of the efforts that support the Zoo's mission.



# Hatching **THE FUTURE**

Zoo Atlanta's  
contributions to the  
study and conservation  
of this species **date  
back more than  
25 years.**

In an outstanding example of collaboration for the conservation of one of the world's rarest lizard species, in January 2024, 11 endangered **Guatemalan beaded lizards** hatched at Zoo Atlanta arrived at Parque Zoológico Nacional La Aurora. The lizards will be part of a breeding colony to bolster the wild population of the species, which is estimated to number only 500 to 600 individuals in its native Motagua Valley.





## Sharing What We Learn, INFLUENCING WHAT WE KNOW

What we learn about animals improves a global body of knowledge of species biology, behavior, conservation, and professional care. A key commitment outlined in the Zoo Atlanta Strategic Plan, **scientific research has been a notable area of excellence at Zoo Atlanta** for more than 45 years. Over this time, Zoo Atlanta team members and academic partners have been responsible for more than 430 peer-reviewed publications, often at the forefront of animal science.

The **10 studies published in 2024** explored topics including golden lion tamarin population dynamics; comparative animal personality; auditory enrichment for elephants; scent and behavior in Guatemalan beaded lizards; quantity discrimination in eastern box turtles; evolutionary patterns in Central American toads; and more.



## Promoting **SUSTAINABLE HABITS**

Conservation starts at home, and Zoo Atlanta hosted two **community opportunities promoting sustainability** in August 2024. During a two-week **E-Recycling Event** spearheaded by the Zoo's on-grounds Green Team, Members and guests were encouraged to bring small electronics such as cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and digital cameras for recycling. Zoo Atlanta also partnered with Prime Asset Recovery on a single-day event accepting large items such as monitors, desktop PCs, and printers.

Small electronic devices recycled through these programs were recycled through the Gorillas on the Line ... Answer the Call campaign and the Zoo's partners at Eco-Cell. Proceeds from these donated items benefited the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Gorilla SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) Program.



# Engaging Our Community IN ANIMAL MILESTONES



## Say hello to *Zuri*

A special Christmas Eve delivery on December 24, 2023, the first southern white rhino calf ever born at Zoo Atlanta got her name through a public **“Rhino Naming Madness”** campaign from March 20 through April 10, 2024.

**Zuri**, a name of Swahili origin which can mean “beautiful,” was one of more than 4,000 online submissions entered when the public was invited to suggest names to compete with nine monikers provided by the Zoo’s Rhino Care Team. Seven of these names joined nine names from the Rhino Care Team to form a Sweet Sixteen bracket, with Zuri emerging as the victor after four rounds of public voting. The name was announced via special enrichment for Zuri at the Zoo’s Delta Air Lines Rhino Habitat.



## A “sweet” name for an infant sloth

Across the Zoo, a second public engagement campaign helped to name another baby who was a first in his own right: the first male sloth ever born at Zoo Atlanta. Born August 9, 2024, to parents Nutella and Cocoa, **Rolo** received his name via selection by the Zoo’s Sloth Care Team from among just under 2,000 public submissions.





**9,329**  
Panda Palooza  
attendance

**\$19,594,283**  
Estimated earned media  
value in the month  
of October

**592,561**  
Social media reach

**800+ hits**  
Media coverage  
May to October



**4.6 million**  
Digital advertising impressions

# Celebrating A 25-YEAR LEGACY

2024 marked the **25th anniversary of giant pandas** at Zoo Atlanta. Dating to the mid-1990s, even prior to the arrival of Lun Lun and Yang Yang in 1999, Zoo Atlanta's partnership with colleagues in China highlighted a longtime history of collaboration and information sharing that has benefited the care, study, and conservation of this species.

In this same anniversary year, Zoo Atlanta announced that the four giant pandas remaining at Zoo Atlanta, original pair Lun Lun and Yang Yang and their two youngest offspring, would be traveling to China in tandem with the expiration of Zoo Atlanta's giant panda agreement with China in October. The four bears departed Atlanta for Chengdu on October 12, 2024, with transportation generously donated by FedEx.

While eyes around the nation and around the world are always on giant pandas, here in Atlanta in the place Lun Lun and Yang Yang called home for 25 years, our community reminded us of the place these treasured bears held in the cultural fabric of our city.

## Panda Palooza: A Farewell Party

More than 9,000 guests visited the Zoo on October 5 for Panda Palooza: A Farewell Party, bidding farewell to the pandas, creating thank-you cards for the Panda Care Team, and sharing memories with other panda fans.

## #LastCallYall

On September 30, fellow cultural destinations, sports teams, and civic organizations took to social media to participate in the Zoo's #LastCallYall campaign, posting images of mini giant pandas in iconic spots around the city and wishing a fond farewell to Lun Lun, Yang Yang, Ya Lun and Xi Lun. At the outset of the campaign, a YouTube video featured Zhu Zhu, the Zoo's giant panda mascot, waving goodbye to the people, places, and animals of Zoo Atlanta.



# Protecting **WHAT WE VALUE MOST**

In the continuing evolution of the 21st century zoo, it is vital that visitors to zoological destinations understand that they are embarking on an experience which insists upon respect for wild animal species and puts first, without exception, the safety of all animals, animal care professionals, and guests.

In a significant example of cross-collaboration and bipartisan support, Zoo Atlanta led the way in the development of HB-827, the **Wild Animal Criminal Trespass Law**, which was enacted into Georgia state law in summer 2024. The legislation was designed to establish clear consequences for illegal entry into wild animal enclosures, harassment of animals, and risky behaviors that endanger both humans and non-humans, with appropriate penalties based on the severity of offenses.

**Zoo Atlanta's leadership in seeing the law become reality was shortlisted for the AZA Advocacy Award in 2024.**

# Understanding VISITOR NEEDS

Zoo Atlanta consistently strives to provide an accessible and inclusive Zoo experience for all those who visit, and this means understanding challenges and barriers experienced by guests. In 2024, Zoo Atlanta partnered with iAccess Life to make **Voice by iAccess Life**, a tool which allows visitors to rate, review, and research locations based on their accessibility, available on Zoo grounds.

At various locations within the Zoo, guests can use QR codes to provide anonymous feedback on a range of experiences, including parking and entry; guest pathways and animal habitat viewing; and restrooms, food service outlets, and gift shops. Zoo Atlanta will use this information to assess areas of need and identify ways to increase accessibility for guests with mobility, hearing, or visual impairments.

Rate the Zoo's accessibility  
for this area.



**Voice**  
by iAccess Life

**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
and let us know how  
we are doing!



Rate the Zoo's accessibility  
for this area.



**Voice**  
by iAccess Life

**SCAN THE QR CODE**  
and let us know how  
we are doing!



# Empowering **FUTURE GENERATIONS**

## **Vet for a Day**

Zoo Atlanta provided a day of inspiration, learning, and career aspirations for 40 Atlanta children at **Vet for a Day** on November 9. The event was hosted in partnership with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and in collaboration with Terrence Ferguson, DVM, and Vernard Hodges, DVM, stars of the series “Critter Fixers: Country Vets.”

Invited students ranged in age from 12 to 16 and attended Title 1 Schools in metro Atlanta. Activities led by members of the Zoo Atlanta Veterinary, Research, and Animal Care Teams and AVMA veterinarians included educational simulations of veterinary CPR, parasite detection, and suturing, as well as heart and hoof checks at the contact yard in The Orkin Children’s Zoo and animal ethograms at the Delta Air Lines Rhino Habitat. Tours concluded with a visit to the new Rollins Animal Health Center.

## **Our stake in the future**

It is impossible to overestimate the role Zoo Atlanta plays in serving as **a source of education for individuals of all ages** in animal species and their adaptations and behaviors; the ecological niches filled by all species in ecosystems here at home and around the globe; and the accessibility of conservation action, creating indelible and often lifelong connections between people and the natural world.

**More than 94,000 students** in grades K through 12 visited the Zoo or participated in educational programming in 2024.

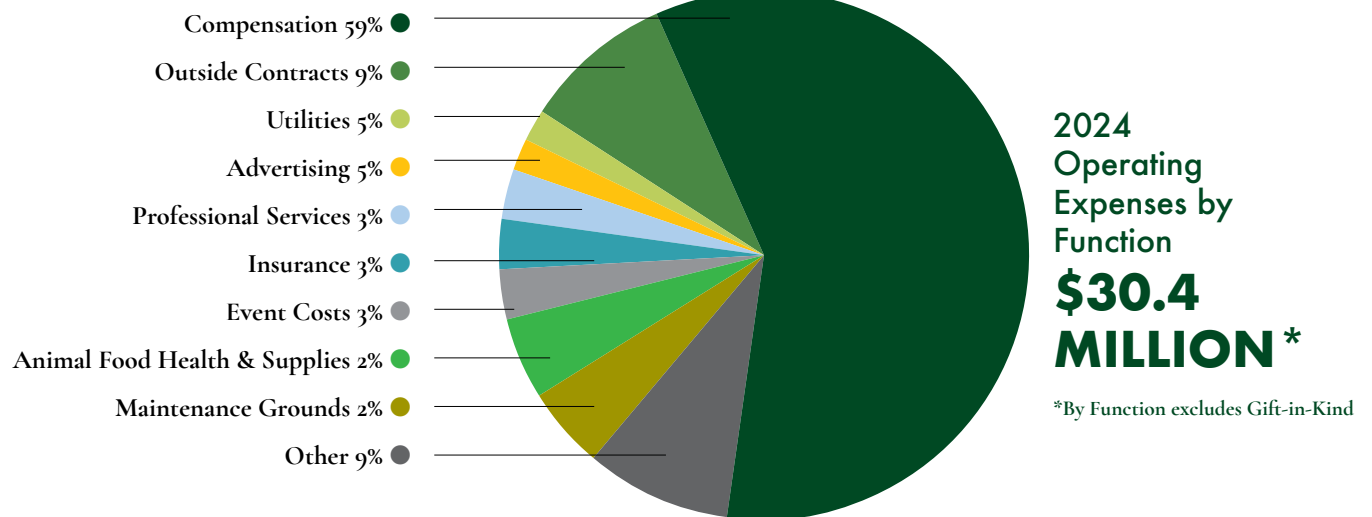
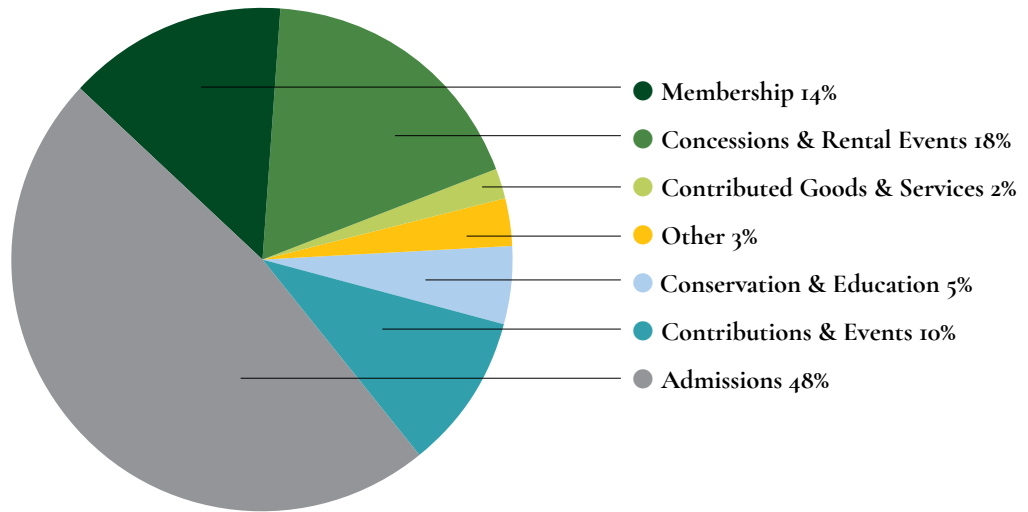
**Of the over 973,000 guests** who visited Zoo Atlanta in 2024, **over 985,000 experienced a direct interaction** with an Education Interpreter or Volunteer.

**More than 14,000 participants** engaged in family, individual, and educator-focused programs.

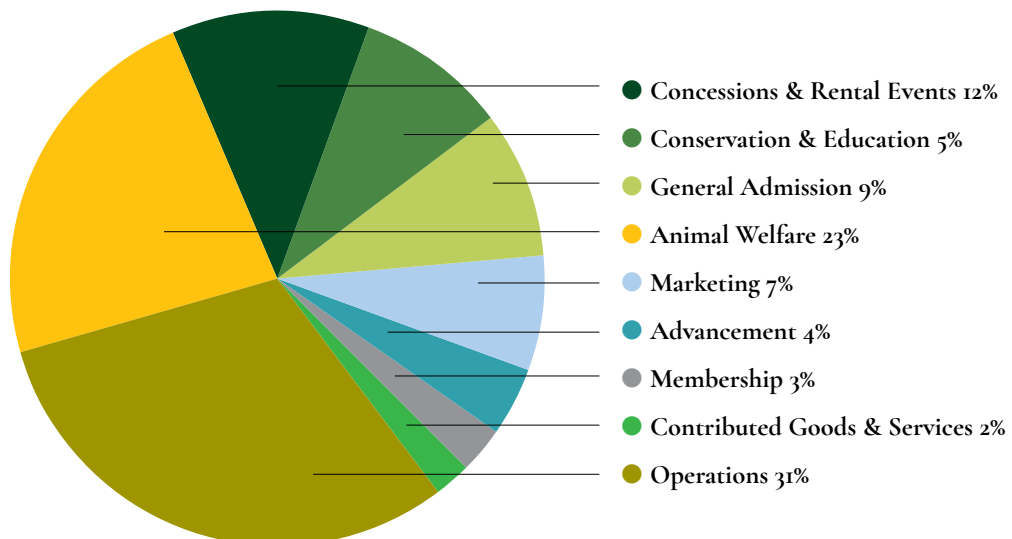
**We’re always transforming, and we look forward to having you with us as that transformation continues.**

# FINANCIALS

2024  
Operating  
Revenue  
**\$33.4  
MILLION**



2024  
Operating  
Expenses  
**\$31.1  
MILLION**



# Applauding OUR DONORS

Zoo Atlanta would like to express gratitude to the following donors for their generous gifts given between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, or given for 2024.

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document. If we have omitted anyone or made any errors, please accept our sincere apologies and e-mail [advancement@zooatlanta.org](mailto:advancement@zooatlanta.org) so that we may correct our records.

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Lettie Pate Evans Foundation

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