



# Annual Report

## 2019





SAVE THE DATE • SATURDAY, SEPT. 12, 2020

# Rendezvous at the ZOO

A fundraiser for Happy Hollow Foundation



Come enjoy an extraordinary evening under the stars!

[HAPPYHOLLOW.ORG/RENDEZVOUS](http://HAPPYHOLLOW.ORG/RENDEZVOUS)

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This Annual Report was  
produced and published by  
Happy Hollow Foundation, and  
the information inside reflects  
the calendar year 2019 unless  
otherwise noted.

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Dear Happy Hollow friends,

Unlike countless people in Silicon Valley, I didn't grow up going to Happy Hollow Park & Zoo. In fact, my first visit wasn't until Oct. 25, 2010, seven months after a sweeping two-year remodel and grand reopening — and my daughter's 1st birthday.

As a new mom, my heart burst wide open as I watched goats nuzzle her outstretched palm. Her smile lit up as we rode the carousel, and she was captivated by our slow rumble through the world of Danny the Dragon. I took a photo that day that now sits in my office. She's standing at the meerkat exhibit, turning around to beam at me while those adorable critters stare up at her from the other side of the glass.

That was a decade ago! Since then I've had a second child, and both have grown up as Happy Hollow kids. They have squealed with joy on each and every ride, revisited their favorite animals regularly, and spent endless hours exploring the towering Redwood Lookout.

It's hard to imagine how I could love this place more.

And yet. In 2019, I had the great pleasure of leading a new effort to invite children from nearby low-income schools to visit Happy Hollow on a field trip — a special day funded entirely by Happy Hollow Foundation. I found myself fighting tears as I saw this place anew through the eyes of so many elementary school students who had never visited before.

This Annual Report is our salute to the donors who made those field trips happen, as well as all the other sponsors, partners and friends who fuel Happy Hollow's mission to connect people to nature through play. Thank you for believing in this special place, and please come visit soon!



Amy Pizarro  
Executive Director  
Happy Hollow Foundation  
[apizarro@happyhollow.org](mailto:apizarro@happyhollow.org)



# LET'S GO *behind the scenes*

Happy Hollow staff share about life, love and laughs at our beloved park and zoo

## FAVORITE RIDES:

- "The Pacific Fruit Express. It's a lot of children's first roller coaster. And it's so cool to watch them walk up with a little fear, anxiety and anticipation — and then see their faces filled with joy after the ride!"  
— *Mario Day, Amusement Park Supervisor*
- "I like the Danny the Dragon ride. It reminds me of 'It's a Small World' at Disneyland."  
— *Imee Afandor, Office Specialist*
- "It would have to be Mini Putt Putts and Danny the Dragon. I rode both of these as a child, and now I get to watch my son light up with excitement when he gets to ride them."  
— *Julio Serrano, Guest Services Specialist*



## FAVORITE ANIMALS:

- "Mchanga the sand boa. She is incredibly calm, easy to handle and a great example to the public of why snakes are not scary." — *Kendra Smith, Zoo Educator*
- "Eloise the collared peccary. She's very inquisitive, fun to watch, and way more vocal than you'd expect. She's quick to bark at unexpected noises and loves to dig through substrate piles and rip bark off branches."  
— *Emma Trollman, Zookeeper*
- "Picking a favorite animal would be like picking my favorite child or grandchild — I love them all! I've never met an animal, no matter how big or small, that I wasn't completely enthralled with and amazed by."  
— *Kevin Hertell, Zoo Manager*



## FAVORITE MEMORIES:

- "After the flood in 2017, the blue and gold macaws lived in the vet clinic. Every day as I was leaving, I would say, 'Goodnight, boys!' Eventually, Sarge caught on and would say 'Goodnight, boys!' back to me." — *Rachel Atkins, Vet Tech*
- "I was working the ice cream cart when a guest walked up with several children. I was overwhelmed with the big order, but when I was done the guest said 'Tell Mr. Joshua thank you!' And all five children in unison said 'Thank you, Mr. Joshua!' It almost put a tear in my eye!" — *Joshua Goshay, Senior Account Clerk*
- "During a training session with Dwayne, the juvenile opossum, he started offering up every training behavior he knew without being cued, just to get more treats." — *Kristy Benner, Education Coordinator*





# FUN FACTS ABOUT OUR ANIMALS

The three species of lemurs at Happy Hollow call out so loudly that they can all communicate from across the zoo.



Turkey vultures can smell scents from a mile away.



Fennec foxes are more ferocious than they appear. Our head female, Safar, has been known to nip at the keeper's heels if they don't feed her quickly enough.



Goats need to have their hooves trimmed just like humans need to clip their fingernails!



Giant anteaters have really sticky saliva. It is quite difficult to wash off!



We use the eggs from our chicken flock to feed other animals in the zoo.



Lemurs are matriarchal, so the female is the boss!



Monkeys like to rub their urine on their hands to leave their scents behind... yet another reason why they may not be the best pets!



Kengele, the African spurred tortoise, loves having her shell rubbed down. Although tortoises don't have feeling in their shells, they do feel pressure.



## TELL US SOMETHING WE *DON'T* KNOW:

- "Happy Hollow's carousel features a custom-built black-and-white lemur. Our staff worked with the artists to make it as realistic as possible. In fact, one of our zookeeper's drawings is now a headpiece at the top of the carousel!" — *Charlotte Orr, Communications and Conservation Manager*
- "Lots of animals, like jaguars and fossas, are solitary! Not only do they prefer being alone, they would be stressed out if they had to share their exhibit, and likely would spend a lot of time fighting." — *Theresa Plass, Zookeeper*
- "Our puppet theater is one of the oldest in California, and all puppets and sets are created in-house. And even when a story has multiple characters, there's often just one puppeteer running the whole show!" — *Kiersten McCormick, Assistant General Manager*
- "Happy Hollow is for everyone! We're a great place for all ages to learn about animals, have a delicious meal and enjoy the nostalgia of a hometown amusement park." — *Shannon Heimer, General Manager*





*A beautiful day in  
the neighborhood*

## SMILES GALORE AS NEW PROGRAM OPENS GATES FOR LOW-INCOME SCHOOLS

For nearly six decades, Happy Hollow Park & Zoo has been a family-album fixture, a beloved tradition for generations of people who grew up in and around San Jose. And yet it remains out of reach for many in our community.

In 2019, Happy Hollow Foundation addressed this inequity with a new effort to fund field trips for low-income schools. The program kicked off in May when four yellow school buses rolled up with 128 second- and third-graders from nearby Lowell Elementary. At Lowell, 84% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Then in the fall, Happy Hollow welcomed students from Washington, McKinley and Santee — all among the nine Title I elementary schools within a 2-mile radius of the park and zoo.

"In my class, I have about five students who live around the block from Happy Hollow, and they've never been here," said David Hernandez, a teacher at Lowell. "It's such a simple trip we take for granted ... but they never get to go. The family has a choice — the park or food."

The foundation pays for admission and bus transportation for students and chaperones, plus a class with Happy Hollow's education team. Live animals draw oohs and aahs as students learn about grassland, wetland, desert, urban and rainforest habitats. Then an educator walks the crowd to give kids a close-up look at animals like an eclectus parrot, a hedgehog and a hissing cockroach. (Petting the cockroach is a surprisingly popular activity.)





When the formal learning ends, students get to explore the zoo, ride the Pacific Fruit Express roller coaster and Keep-Around carousel, and play on the massive Redwood Lookout play structure.

As one Washington student told a teacher, “Today feels like a dream!”

These field trips provide a bright spot in a distressing education landscape. According to the Santa Clara County Office of Education, 34% of Santa Clara County students performed below proficient on the Grade 5 California Standards Test Science assessment in 2016. For economically disadvantaged students in our county, this number jumps to 60%. In Silicon Valley, the high school dropout rate among Latinos is nearly twice the overall rate.

Ultimately, how much does a field trip mean to education? More than we might realize. In 2013, researchers at the University of Arkansas studied the effects of a newly opened art museum. The study, *The Educational Value of Field Trips*, concluded that “students from rural areas and high-poverty schools, as well as minority students, typically show gains that are two to three times larger than those of the total sample.” Gains were across the board: critical thinking, historical empathy, tolerance and interest in museums.

“The families of disadvantaged students are less likely to substitute their own efforts when schools



do not offer culturally enriching experiences,” the authors noted. “Disadvantaged students need their schools to take them on enriching field trips if they are likely to have these experiences at all.”

**“THESE KIDS ARE AMAZING. THEY ARE POOR KIDS. BUT THEY ARE *AMAZING*. LOOK HOW HAPPY THEY ARE. IT IS ON US TO LIFT THEM UP, AND THIS GIVES THEM THAT SPARK, THAT ADVANTAGE THAT THEY NEED.”**

Closer to home, evidence is clear during the field trips and beyond. More than one-third of students say they have never visited the park, including some who live so close they pass it “every day.” As they depart, these tired but happy children receive a gift bag that includes a book courtesy of the San Jose Public Library, plus a coupon to bring a family of four back to the park for just \$5. (The price would otherwise be \$51.) These coupons have a high redemption rate, meaning even more of the local community is getting to visit Happy Hollow.

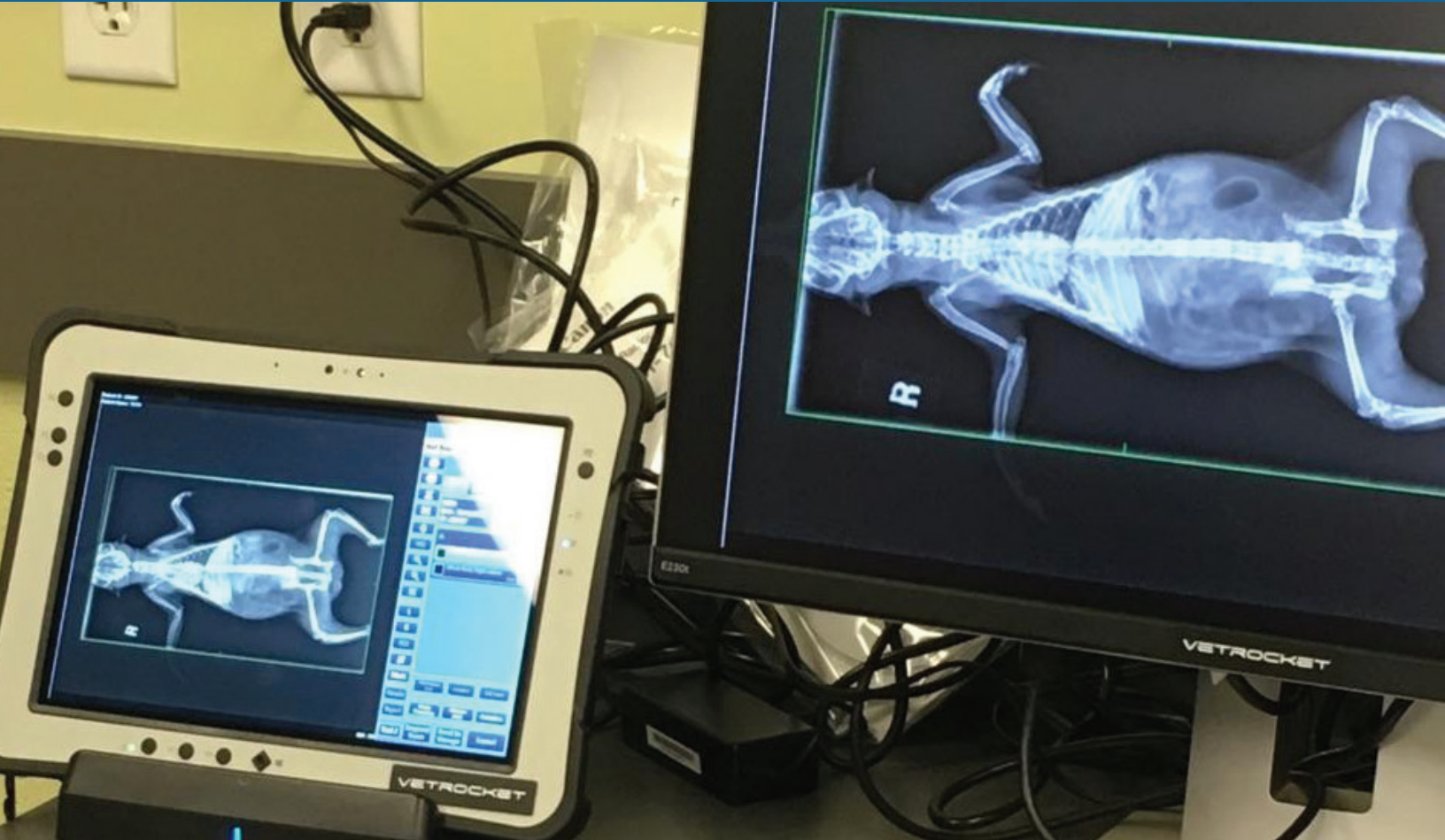
“These kids are amazing. They are poor kids. But they are *amazing*. Look how happy they are,” said one parent chaperone. “It is on us to lift them up, and this gives them that spark, that advantage that they need.”

The foundation, with its generous donors and partners, will continue to light that spark.



# Donor spotlight

## SHANNON WASS & DAN KELMENSEN



When Rachel Atkins started her job as Happy Hollow's veterinary technician three years ago, she learned that administering routine X-rays to our animals required a desktop computer, sensor plates and a large machine to read the images. The equipment was bulky and stationary, making "bedside" X-rays impossible. Instead, whenever it was time for an animal's exam, the zoo team would have to transport the animal out of their enclosure and bring them to the clinic. Due to the limitations of the X-ray software, if Rachel needed to send images to another zoo or veterinarian, she actually had to burn them to a CD and drop it in the mail.

Not exactly the stuff of Silicon Valley.

So despite the high price tag of a portable X-ray device, Rachel put it on her wish list.

Fast-forward three years to Rendezvous at the Zoo, the signature fundraiser for Happy Hollow Foundation. Guests Shannon Wass and Dan Kelmenson were taking a behind-the-scenes tour of the vet clinic and felt inspired by Happy Hollow's dedication to its animals.

"It was amazing to hear about the work that they are able to do to keep the animals happy and healthy," Shannon said. During this tour, a guest asked Rachel if there was anything that she could think of that would make life better for herself or the animals, and her



# This high-tech donation is making life easier for our animals *and* the people who care for them.

answer was immediate: a portable X-ray device. "It seemed like such a simple fix to help the staff and make life just a bit more comfortable for the animals," Shannon said. "We knew right away that we wanted to make this happen." Just a few days later, Shannon and Dan contacted Happy Hollow Foundation to make their donation official.

The new equipment — the Vet Rocket digital radiography system — operates via a military-grade tablet that is powered by battery, so X-rays can be taken inside enclosures where no electrical outlets are available. The tablet utilizes bluetooth, sending images directly to the computer. The system is portable, simplified and powerful.

Rachel's excitement about this technology game-changer is contagious. "I was running around to all the keepers, showing them how I could bring the tablet to them and that they didn't need to leave their area to see the X-rays," she said. "They were pretty amused by my excitement!"

The zoo team also plans to incorporate new training techniques for X-ray procedures. "Now we can train animals to hold still for an X-ray voluntarily — without sedation or anesthesia. That will be much easier with this equipment," Rachel said. If she needs to send an X-ray to another zoo or veterinarian, she can do so easily with the new software.

Happy Hollow Park & Zoo is incredibly grateful to Shannon and Dan for this generous donation and their inspiring commitment to our zoo residents and the humans who care for them.

## INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING HAPPY HOLLOW FOUNDATION?

Head over to [happyhollow.org/donate](https://happyhollow.org/donate) to see all the ways to give or contact Amy Pizarro at [apizarro@happyhollow.org](mailto:apizarro@happyhollow.org).



*Veterinary technician Rachel Atkins gives a meerkat its annual X-ray.*



# Just a flap, hop and a wiggle away



Youth board member dreams up activity  
that shows guests how to be like a bee

When Alexandra Baeckler was voted in as Happy Hollow Foundation's first youth board member, she was asked to create a project that would help the park and zoo and support our mission of connecting people to nature through play. Inspired by Happy Hollow's local conservation efforts for pollinators, Alex dreamed up a playful activity about honey bees that would lift up our mission in a fun and innovative way: The Waggle Dance.

While she was brainstorming for her project, Alex remembered an article about how bees communicate with each other through a series of dance-like movements, called wagging. That's when it hit her. She would create an area in the park where guests could learn how to do the waggle! Not only would this be fun, but it would work to change the perception of bees from being scary, harmful pests, to intelligent creatures who play a vital role in our environment. And what better place to learn about this than in the pollinator-friendly gardens of Happy Hollow's newly renovated Backyard Habitat?

Alex has always had a respect and adoration for animals, whether they be big, small, furry, slimy or sticky. "I was nicknamed Worm Girl when I was little," she said with a laugh, recalling how after every rainstorm she would gently pick up the worms from the blacktop at recess and safely transport them back to the moist dirt.

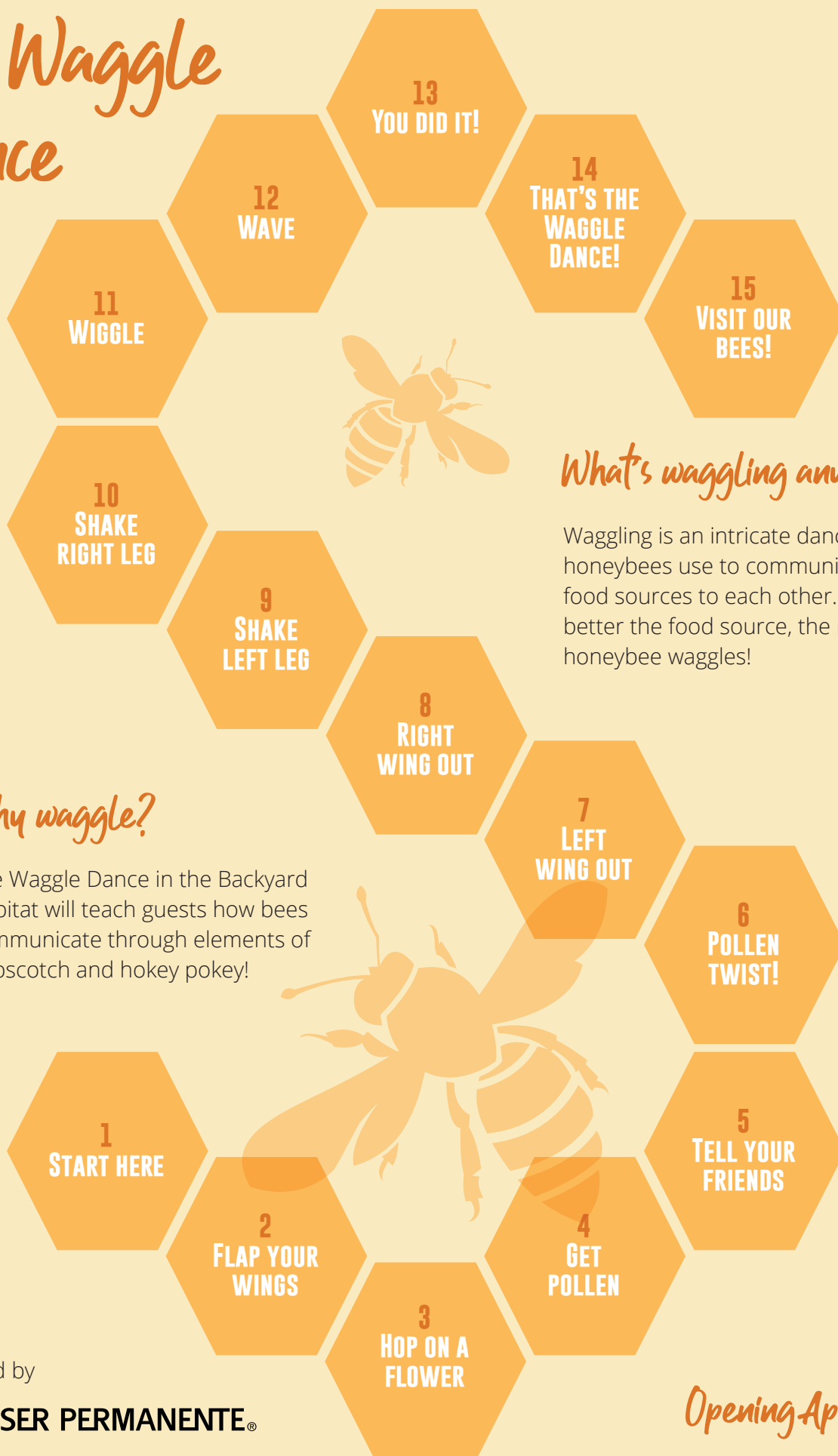
Since then, Happy Hollow has become Alex's classroom and her happy place. She has taken every camp multiple times, she enrolled in the ZooTeen volunteer program as soon as she turned 14, and she visits the zoo whenever she has a bad day. Now she is also Happy Hollow Foundation's first youth board member, joining the effort to support conservation, education and play at Happy Hollow. After high school, she hopes to turn her love of animals into a career by becoming a veterinarian, and she is off to a great start as she is already working at a vet clinic.

The Waggle Dance project required patience and determination. It took a year of researching, prototyping designs, working with the foundation board of directors and Happy Hollow staff, and a generous sponsorship from Kaiser Permanente to turn Alex's idea into a reality. The Waggle Dance combines elements of hopscotch and hokey pokey to involve parents and their children in an interactive lesson on honeybees. Look for the Waggle Dance when the new Backyard Habitat opens in the spring of 2020!



**Alexandra Baeckler**

# The Waggle Dance



## What's waggling anyway?

Wagging is an intricate dance that honeybees use to communicate food sources to each other. The better the food source, the more a honeybee waggles!

## Why waggle?

The Waggle Dance in the Backyard Habitat will teach guests how bees communicate through elements of hopscotch and hokey pokey!

Presented by



Opening April 2020!



# Thank you

## IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT HAPPY HOLLOW FOUNDATION



### DANNY THE DRAGON'S DREAMBUILDERS

These donors invest in Happy Hollow Foundation with annual gifts of \$1,000 or more to support its mission to advocate for, support and enhance Happy Hollow Park & Zoo.

#### Destination Directors: \$25,000+

Shannon Wass and Dan Kelmenson

#### Adventure Ambassadors: \$10,000-\$24,999

Anonymous  
Tamara Swenson Current  
Patty O'Malley

#### Memory Makers: \$2,500-\$9,999

Tracy and Gregg Baeckler  
Laura and Jason Bennert  
Leanne Bernhardt and John Bernstein  
Donna and Jeff Boss  
Vikki Bowes-Mok and H.B. Mok  
Mary Ellen and Mike Fox  
Alicia Gutierrez and Philip Martin  
Char McCaskey  
Ren Renzel  
Diane and Dan Riccio  
Moirra and Michael Saign  
Marianne and Carl Salas  
Rhonda and Jimm Vosburgh  
Melody Walsh

#### Creators Corner: \$1,000-\$2,499

Lisa and Mike Beyersdoerfer  
Michael Borkenhagen  
Chuck Bowes  
Rebecca and Matt Bright  
Reena and Michael Brilliot

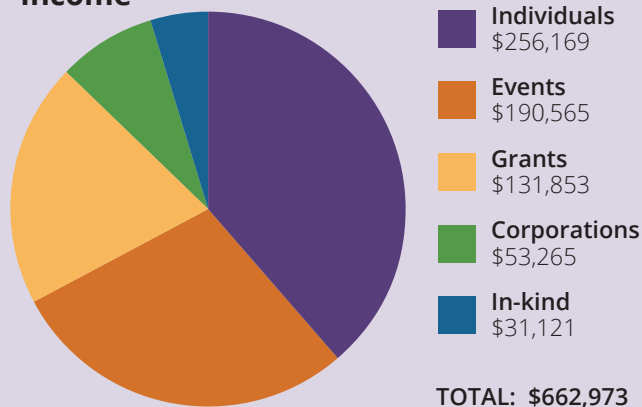
Debbie Bylina  
Allison Cheim  
Ronny Conway  
Chris and Gene del Pilar  
Angela and Dave Delgado  
Gretchen and F. Matthew DiNapoli  
Betty Duong and Khai Nguyen  
Stephanie and Michael Fujii  
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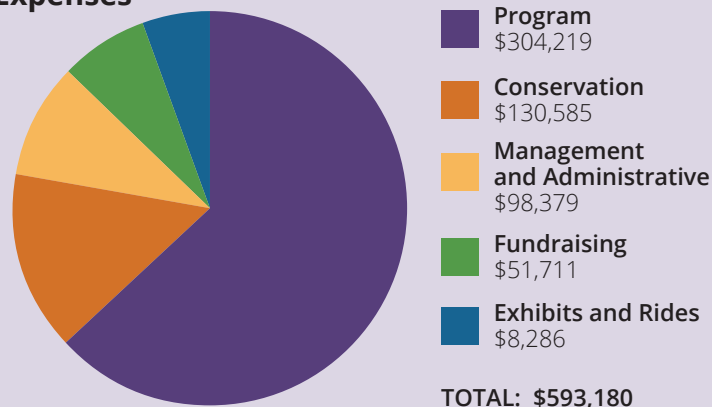
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Information reflects fiscal year ending June 30, 2019.

### Income



### Expenses



## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTERS

Thank you to these companies, organizations and individuals who invested in Happy Hollow Park & Zoo programs, events and exhibits.

### \$10,000+

Kaiser Permanente  
Linda Lee Lester  
Star One Credit Union

### \$5,000+

Apple, Inc.  
California Water Service  
Del Grande Dealer Group  
eBay  
El Camino Hospital  
Farrington Historical Foundation  
Google  
GreenWaste Recovery  
Lissa Kreisler  
Lewis & Tibbitts, Inc.  
Lexus Stevens Creek  
Salas O'Brien, LLC  
San Jose Water  
Santa Clara Family Health Plan  
Sutter Health/Palo Alto Medical Foundation  
Tech CU  
Water Works Engineers  
West Valley Construction Company

### \$2,500+

Anthem: Caremore  
Belmont Village  
California Bank of Commerce  
Comcast

Angela and Dave Delgado  
Golden 1 Credit Union  
Health Trust  
Johanson & Yau Accountancy  
LCH Consulting  
Charlie McCollum  
Petrinovich Pugh & Co LLP  
R & B Company  
Republic Family of Companies  
San Jose Flea Market  
The Schoennauer Company  
Swenson  
UA Local 393  
U.S. Pipe and Foundry  
Valley Water  
Kirk Walukiewicz, CPA  
Xactly

### \$1,000+

Adobe, Inc.  
Anonymous  
Brownlee Foundation  
Toyota Financial Services

### In-kind

Cafe Stritch  
Catered Too!  
Dahl's Equipment Rentals  
Steve Demkowski  
Method 42 Productions  
Photo Bomb  
Santa Clara County Dept. of Aging and Adult Services  
Jimm Vosburgh  
VTA  
WM Earthcare

*These lists reflect gifts made between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.  
If you are interested in supporting Happy Hollow Foundation, contact  
Amy Pizarro, Executive Director, at [apizarro@happyhollow.org](mailto:apizarro@happyhollow.org).*



# 2019 Events



## RENDEZVOUS AT THE ZOO

Cheers to all the sponsors and guests who made our reimagined fundraiser a smashing success!





# DANNY THE DRAGON'S DREAMBUILDERS

It's always a pleasure to celebrate the donors who make our work possible.



## SENIOR SAFARI

These guests prove that going outside to play is awesome at any age!







1300 Senter Road  
San José, CA 95112

## 2020 EVENT SERIES • THURSDAYS, 9 TO 10 A.M.

May 28 • June 25 • July 23 • Aug. 27 • Sept. 24 • Oct. 22

Arrive before 10 a.m. and stay as long as  
you like after doors open to the public!

*Exclusively for ages 50 and up*

Visitors ages 50 and up are invited to take  
over San Jose's iconic Happy Hollow Park &  
Zoo! Get fresh air and exercise as you enjoy:

- Free admission, free parking
- Early entry to the park and zoo
- Animal meet-and-greets
- A 10,000-step challenge
- Fun activities and giveaways
- Healthy breakfasts available  
for purchase



# SENIOR SAFARI

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