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Volunteers & The Visitor Experience



What is the Visitor Experience???

Every visitor to PDZA
is a VIP!

The “VE” is a collection of fun,
educational & FREE activities
and presentations that take place
every day all over the zoo
grounds. These opportunities
make every visit to PDZA
personal and exciting.



The Visitor Experience!

- Fun & Free!
- Personalized
- Strategically planned
- Dynamic:
 - Scheduled*
 - Planned, but unscheduled
(serendipitous)*
- Unified



Why?

- Construction!
- A special experience for everyone
- Are we reaching our visitors?
 - Mission related messages
 - AZA Conservation messages





What is
PDZA's
Visitor Experience?



Visitor Experience Categories

- Scheduled Encounters

Posted for our visitors

- Spontaneous Encounters

Surprises for our visitors, but planned by us.

Scheduled Activities



SCHEDULED

Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater



- Two presentations daily - peak season
- Close Encounters - off season

- Free-flying birds
- Audience participation
- All new trained behaviors



Keeper Talks



- Elephant Talks
- Marine Mammal Talks
- Aardvark Talks

- Enrichment Talks
- Asian Forest Talks
- Sea Otter Talks



SCHEDULED

Marine Discovery Center

- Open daily May - October
- Staffed by paid interpreters
- Posted schedule of activities

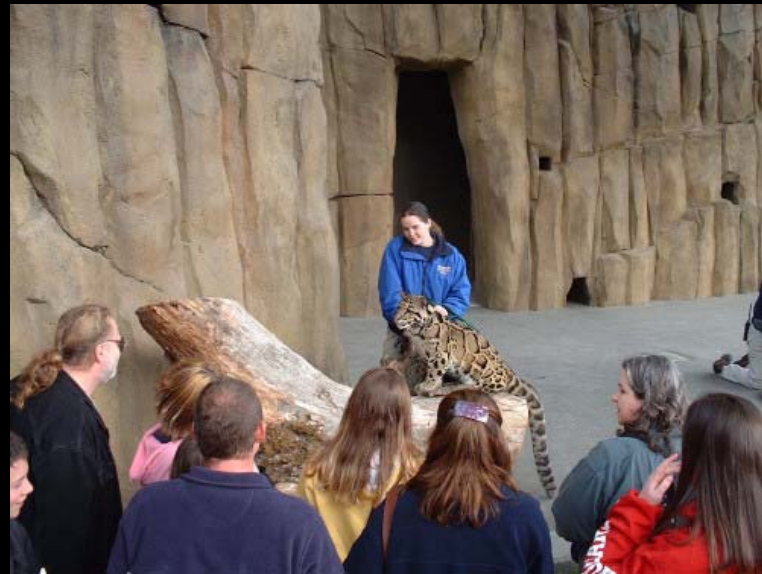


Aquarium Interpretive Program

- Presentations and interpretation during scheduled dives and feeds



Planned,
but Unscheduled,
Activities



Serendipitous!

SURPRIZE!!!!

Close Encounters



- Close up encounters with animals
- Available in designated locations on grounds (volunteers & staff)

- Walking with handlers on zoo grounds (volunteers & staff)



SURPRIZE!!!!

Spotlight Tours



- Rocky Shores Food Prep Building

- Elephant Barn

- Volunteer driven



SURPRIZE!!!!

Backpack Adventures

9 interpretive packs- one for each major zoo area



SURPRIZE!!!!

Keeper Talks

Throughout the day



- Asia
- Penguins
- Rocky Shores
- Polar bears
- Red wolf
- Aquarium

SURPRIZE!!!!

Marine Discovery Center



- Spontaneous activities daily

- Touch Tank

- Microscopes

- Murals

- Costumes

- Presentations

SURPRIZE!!!!

Asian Forest Sanctuary

- Activity-based exhibitry
- Zoological staff & paid interpreters to answer questions & give presentations

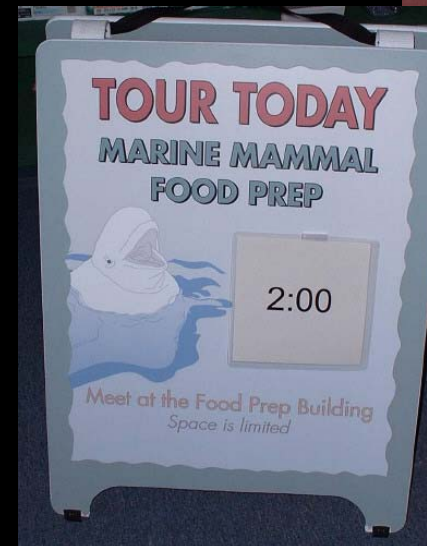
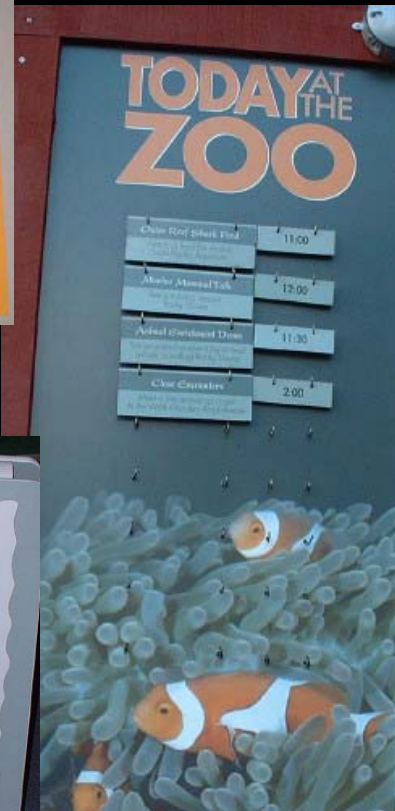
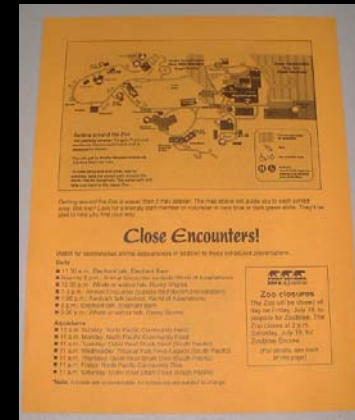


- Volunteers providing interpretative opportunities

Communication

Visitors know about the VE through...

- Flyer at entrance
- Sign at entrance
- Zoo's website
- Well-informed staff & volunteers
- Sandwich Boards



Communication

For Up-to-date info.....

- Listen carefully to daily ERT reports
- Carry your copy of the VE Schedule

- If you have any questions, contact a VE staff member

Visitor Experience Schedule
Summer 2004, June 26-Sept. 6

DAILY

Aquarium Dive or Feed (see below).....	11:00
Marine Mammal Talk.....	11:30
Wild Wonders Presentation.....	12:00
Elephant Talk.....	12:30
Aardvark Talk.....	1:30
Enrichment Talk (see below).....	2:30
Marine Mammal Talk.....	3:00
Wild Wonders Presentation.....	3:30
Elephant Talk.....	4:00
Marine Discovery Center.....	10-4

Aquarium:

Sunday	NPC Feed @ 11:00
Monday	NPC Dive @ 11:00
Tuesday	Outer Reef Shark Feed @ 11:00
Wednesday	Lagoon Feed @ 11:00
Thursday	Outer Reef Shark Dive @ 11:00
Friday	NPC Feed @ 11:00
Saturday	Outer Reef Shark Feed @ 11:00

Enrichment Talks:

Sunday	Adult muskox (Tundra)
Monday	Young muskox (by penguins)
Tuesday	Whale or walrus
Wednesday	Octopus
Thursday	Goat, pig or goose (Farm)
Friday	Octopus
Saturday	Polar bears

Marine Discovery Center:

Food Preparation and Feed	11:30
Dissection	1:00
Feed	2:00

How did we start?

- Visitor Experience (VE) Staff Member!
- Management buy-in
- Evaluated main visitor areas of zoo & aquarium
- Layout current activities and staff & volunteer levels
- Determine future activities



Volunteer Involvement!

- Close Encounters, Spotlight Tours, Backpack Interpretation, Aquarium Presentations
- Scheduled to fill all areas of VE throughout grounds
- Evaluate VE effectiveness at end of peak season
- Critical to fulfilling VE goals and PDZA mission



How are we doing so far?

- 1997- ~2%
- 2000- ~1%
- 2004- >75%!!!
(Jan. – June)




Challenges!

- Big Cheese Buy-in
- Staff?
- \$\$\$\$\$\$
- Roadmap



Visitor Experience



“Watching the children’s faces show their delight meant time well spent... Thank you for the experience.”