

Hi folks! It has been great to welcome back the incredible warm weather and our incredible Zoo guests! It really is a great reminder of what a difference a year can make, with last year's COVID-19 closures resulting in us not being able to host you until June. Thanks to the diligence of our Veterinary staff and Wildlife Care teams, we have vaccinated our highly COVID-susceptible animals and are excited to be operating in full swing. I look forward to welcoming all of you to join us for some amazing interactive summer programming including our new Wild Encounters tours, Splash Island and our Gorilla Climb Ropes Course!

For those seeking a deeper educational experience our behind the scenes *Wild Encounters* team have added three awesome new experiences! The Hakuna Matata experience is a behind the scenes tour of the African Savanna to meet our Warthogs, Spotted hyena and Wildebeest. The Sumatran Tiger encounter takes you on an up-close adventure to see where the smallest tiger species lives and our African Savanna tour allows you to experience an African safari without leaving the city, with a tour of our Eland and Zebra habitats. Check out our Wild Encounters page at [Torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com) for more detail on each of our eleven Wild Encounter experiences.

Join us this month as we celebrate Pride with giveaways and Pride enrichment pieces happening across the Zoo. On June 11<sup>th</sup>, talented performers Tiffany Boxx and Erin Brockobić will be hosting a story time from 1pm to 2pm featuring animal-themed children's stories that teach lessons of inclusion, diversity, self-love and respect for others. At 7pm, Tiffany and Erin will be joined by fellow queens as they take the stage for the Toronto Zoo's inaugural drag show! Head to [torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com) to purchase your ticket for an evening of ferocious lip syncs and fierce laughs at the Zoo's Waterside Theatre.

June 21 is National Indigenous People's day, and your Toronto Zoo will be honouring the occasion with a smudging at 9am at the front entrance. Guests are welcome to join us for educational walks at the First Nations Traditional Knowledge trail located in the Canadian Domain. This is also the day we release Blanding's turtles into the Rouge National Park, having first received a blessing from an elder before starting the next chapter of their lives in their natural world. Referred to as 'the turtle with the sun under its chin,' the Blanding's turtle is significant to First Nations communities, and we are proud to work with a long list of partners help re-introduce them into Rouge National Urban Park.

Thank you to those who sent us your votes and helped name the three cheetah cubs, born this past January. There were nearly 10,000 votes and it's always amazing to see the community actively participating in special Zoo moments. While it was a relatively close call, we are pleased to announce the winning name group was Marie, Berlioz and Toulouse, after Disney's animated film, *Aristocats*! Check out our social media platforms for updates about when you will be able to meet these newly named fluffy cubs in person!

Thank you for your continued support, and I'm looking forward to crossing paths with you this summer at your Toronto Zoo!