



Open minds

schoolprogram



**Zoo
School**

Annual Report 2022-2023



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Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo



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MISSION

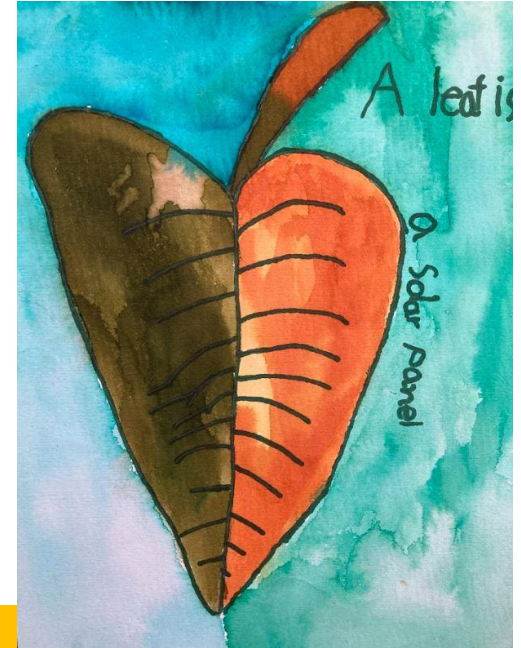
To transform teaching and learning by increasing student engagement through community, funder and educational partnerships.

Overview

Zoo School is a part of the Campus Calgary/Open Minds **learning network**, a curriculum-based program comprised of a ten learning sites throughout the city of Calgary. This program, funded by the Chevron Corporation, is founded on a ground-breaking educational model that **represents inquiry learning at its finest**. Since 1993, students from grades 2-12 have been immersed in a week-long field study experience at the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo site. Through hands-on activities, animal encounters, careful observation and interactions with zoo experts, students are able to experience learning beyond the walls of their classroom. Each week is tailored to meet curriculum objectives, teacher needs, as well as a 'big picture' idea for the class. This experience is meant to encompass a year of learning, which helps to generate a lasting impact on students.

With today's wide-reaching human impact on the environment alongside a disconnect between many children and the natural world, it has become paramount to engage youth with nature and to present opportunities for students to become ecologically literate.

This year Chevron Open Minds Zoo School helped **644 students, 36 teachers** and **359 volunteers**, for a **total of 1039 participants form a lasting bond with nature** which will hopefully result in the conservation stewards of our future. We welcomed **8** new schools into the program.



Our Year in Numbers



Participants 1039

Students 644

Volunteers 359

Teachers 36

Weeks of Zoo School 26

Zoo School Experts 10

CBE Schools 14

CSSD Schools 3

Total Schools 17

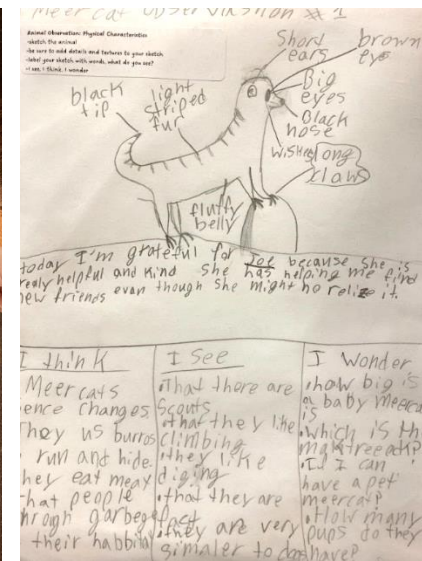
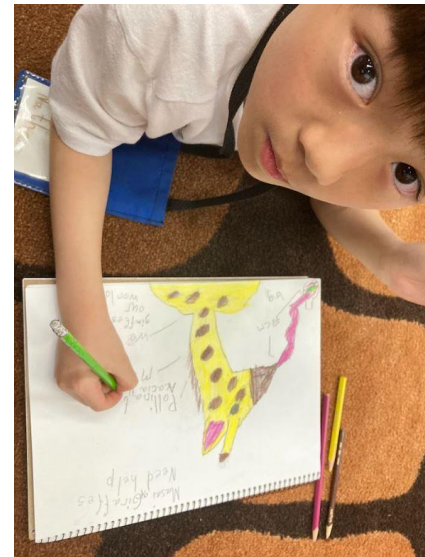


Historical Statistics



| Historic Summary | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 | 2004 | 2003 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Total # of applications | 43 | 41 | 11 | 21 | 28 | 39 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 24 | 28 | 29 | 18 | 40 | 26 | 43 | 34 | 34 | 26 | 31 | 49 |
| Total weeks requested | 88 | 85 | 22 | 35 | 41 | 71 | 64 | 56 | 57 | 44 | 44 | 56 | 40 | 74 | 47 | 74 | 53 | 56 | 44 | 49 | 82 |
| Total weeks rejected | 62 | 59 | 0 | 17 | 15 | 42 | 32 | 28 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 29 | 13 | 47 | 19 | 46 | 25 | 29 | 18 | 23 | 54 |
| Total weeks Accepted | 26 | 26 | 22 | 25 | 26 | 29 | 32 | 28 | 31 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 27 | 26 | 26 | 28 |

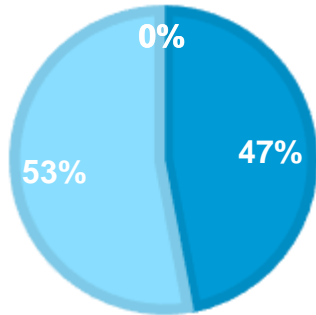
“I have always focused on a student driven inquiry-based programming. Each time I attend Open Minds I learn more amazing ways to support my students. Thank you.” ~ Teacher



Teacher Survey Results

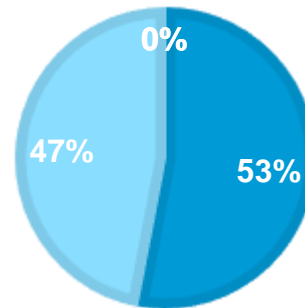


Because of my participation in Open Minds, I have a better understanding of my role in the inquiry process.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Because of my involvement in Open Minds, I am more likely to practice inquiry-based learning/teaching on a regular basis.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

"I have a stronger understanding of how I can be more successful with planning learning experiences that will move my students toward the outcomes through avenues that provide the structure for focused inquiry." ~ Teacher

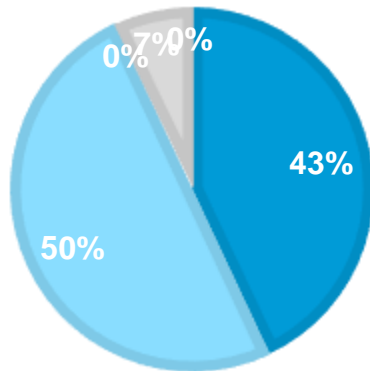


Teacher Survey Results



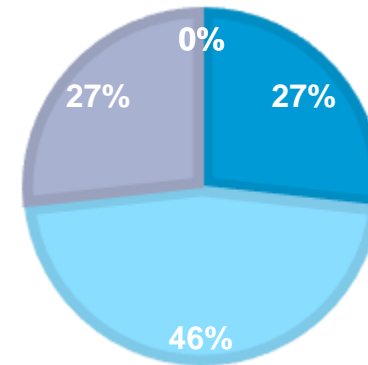
My ability to identify and create relevant and authentic connections among disciplines has increased and deepened after my participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Personalizing learning comes from an awareness of students' strengths and needs. My ability to personalize learning has grown after my participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



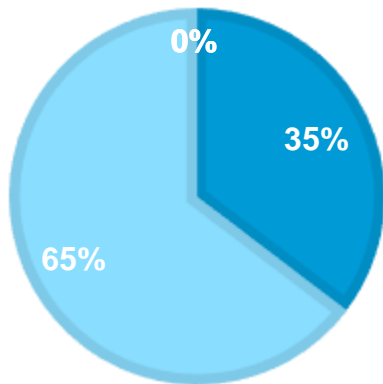
*"I loved that students were provided with a journal designated for their time at Zoo School. This added formality to their documentation of the week. Students took pride in their work. **I noticed a difference in their drive to produce their best work**, especially when the journaling tasks were left more open-ended." ~ Teacher*

Teacher Survey Results



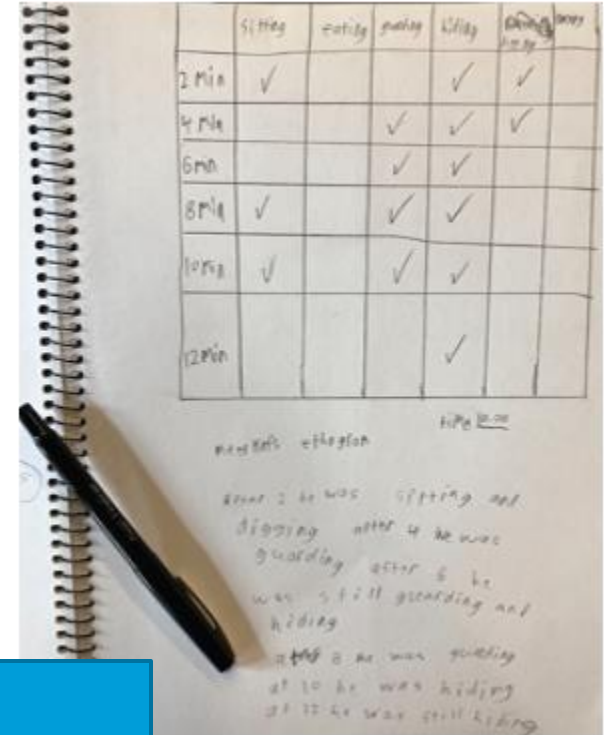
My practice of listening to student voice through journals, conversation and experiences and responding with flexibility as we co-design learning tasks, has grown since my participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



"I feel this is the case with our zoo school. Our class designed our Rainforest Habitat (The one and Only Ivan) together and worked on fact checking areas we wanted to be '100 percent' accurate about, such as plant life. We learned so many things about Rainforest Plants from Boyd and students recorded their work in their journals. They checked to see which type of plants were appropriate by first checking their documentation in their journals." ~ Teacher

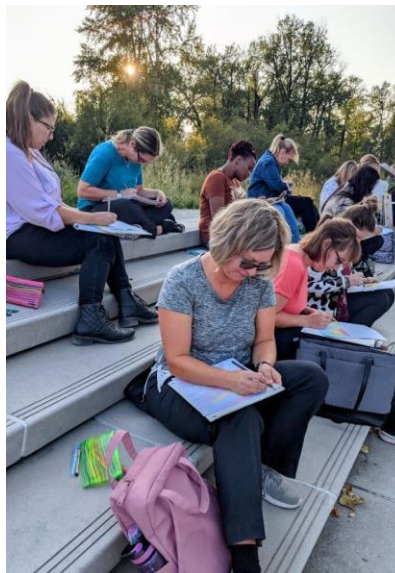
"I definitely was not a journal person before this experience, but it has helped me discover that students learn more sometime when we give them a blank piece of paper." ~ Teacher



Teacher Survey Results



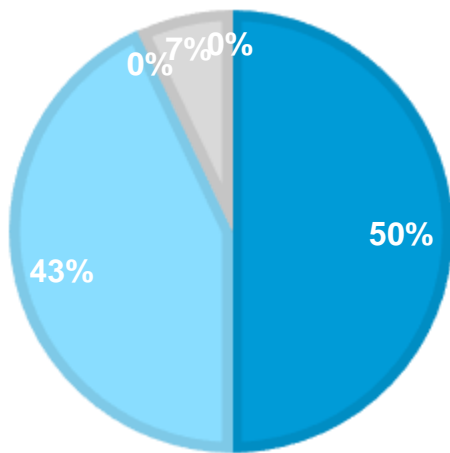
The orientation, summer in-service, planning meeting and CC/OM workshops throughout the year have met my needs.



“I enjoyed the summer in-service and planning meetings with staff. I really enjoyed working together on task design and focus that would suit the needs and interests of my students. Our colleagues Andrea and Kale were excellent at designing experiences that connect to our learning needs and theme. I was able to learn about journaling tasks and work on looking more deeply at my surroundings. Our students started sit spots this year and I love participating.” ~ Teacher

“The summer session inspired us, motivated us and excited us about our upcoming year with students. We used much of what we learned to guide our planning. We loved all the ideas provided! It was great to connect with other teachers as well.” ~ Teacher

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

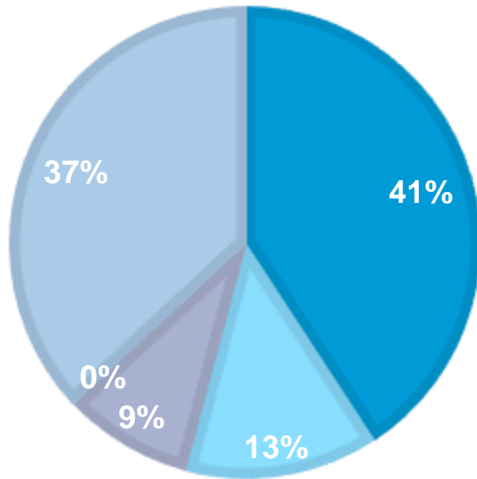


Teacher Survey Results

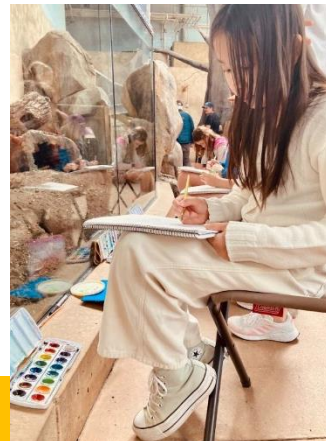


My participation in Open Minds has renewed my passion for teaching and learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



*“I believe that this experience has helped serve as a strong reminder that my students can reach their potential by offering them a variety of learning opportunities. I was able to see students grow and become excited through their hands on interactions and was able to see some **shine brighter in a new environment that allowed them to share their knowledge in a different way** - through journaling and interacting with materials and animals. I am mindful that my students need different entry points and this experience has helped me see student strengths more closely.” ~ Teacher*

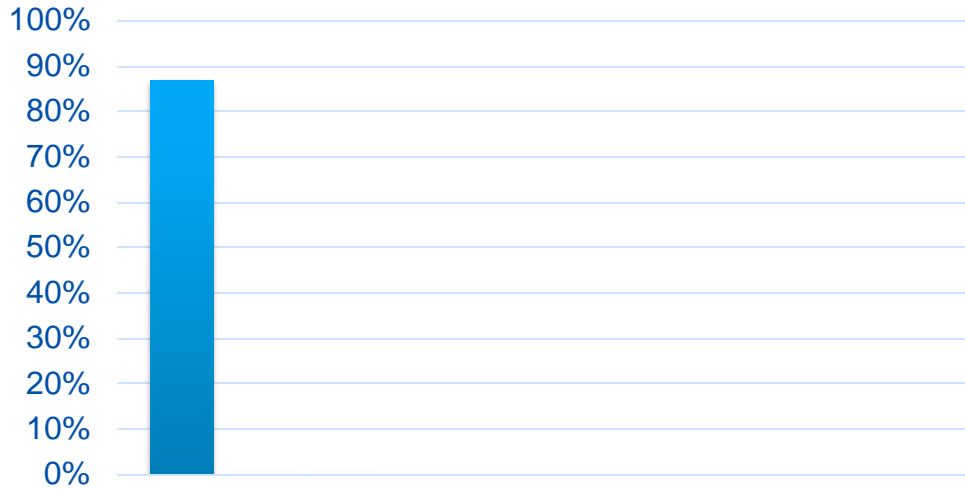


*“Yes!!!! I can't say enough about how grateful I am that I was able to work with my students to prepare for and experience this program. **Seeing my students learn and grow helped renew my own passion** and bring me back to the 'why' of my practice. I learned so much and this was equally as exciting for me.” ~ Teacher*

Teacher Survey Results

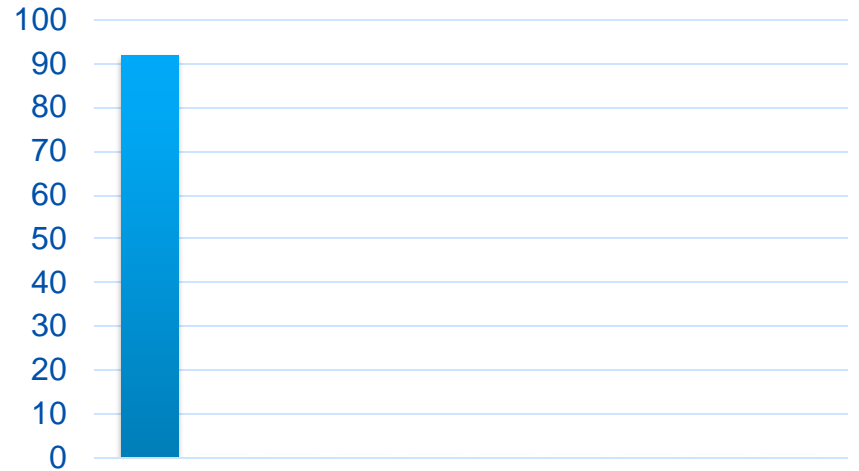


Conservation Messaging



By participating in this program did you learn that you can take action for wildlife conservation (cell phone recycling, FSC, Oceanwise, RF Alliance, protecting or providing wildlife habitat etc.)

■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know



Is supporting the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo is a good way to support wildlife conservation?

■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

"Students have a much better understanding of sustainability and conservation and can see themselves doing 'real' actionable steps to make a difference and build a better world."

~ Teacher

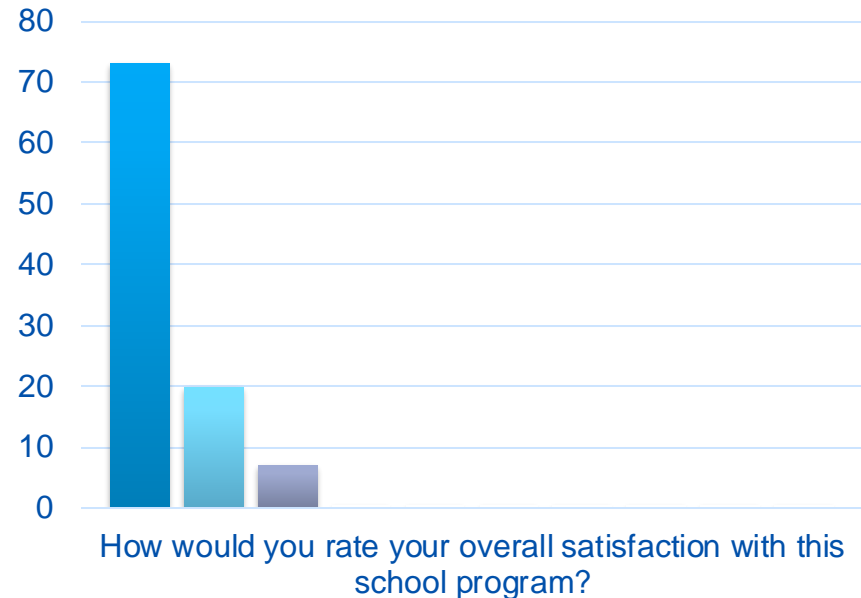
Teacher Survey Results



“Each time I take part in an Open Minds program I get so much better at how I utilize journaling as a part of the learning process all year. I love all of the workshops that you offer and the authentic experiences shared/offered during the summer session as well. I have especially appreciated the way that applying to the program encouraged my teaching team to be more cohesive and started some really great conversations about what Inquiry is and the importance of connecting the program to the curriculum. This can be very challenging for some and I think we have grown a lot as a team.”

~ Teacher

Program Satisfaction



■ Excellent (10) ■ 9 ■ 8 ■ 7 ■ 6 ■ 5 ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ Poor (1)

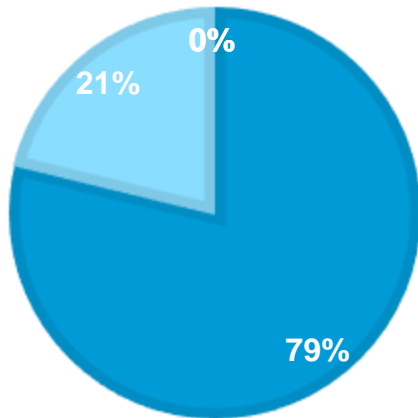
Student Survey Results



My students have gained a greater sense of environmental awareness and concern for the environment since their participation in the Open Minds Zoo School program.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



'My students have noticed the 'rainforest alliance' symbols on goods and have been providing examples from home. They want to work on a project to help others in the community by collecting technology and are much more aware of reusing items and sustainability.' ~ Teacher

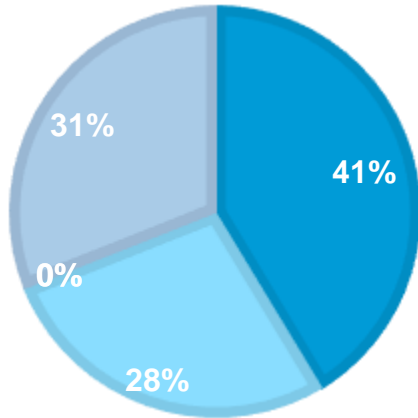
'We raised 140 dollars for burrowing owl conservation and donated it to the Wilder Institute. The kids did this by creating a cardboard arcade and charging the student body to play the games.' ~ Teacher

Student Survey Results

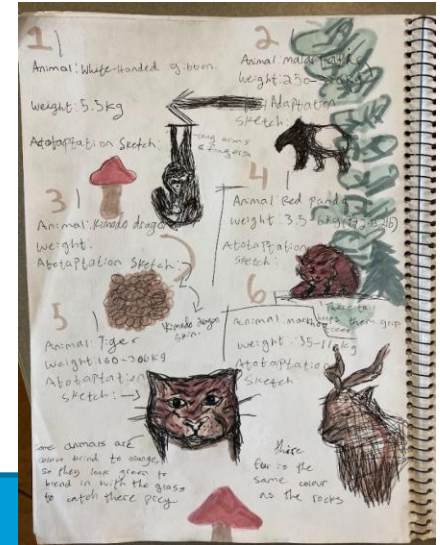


My students are likely to apply the knowledge and skills acquired across all academic disciplines since their participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



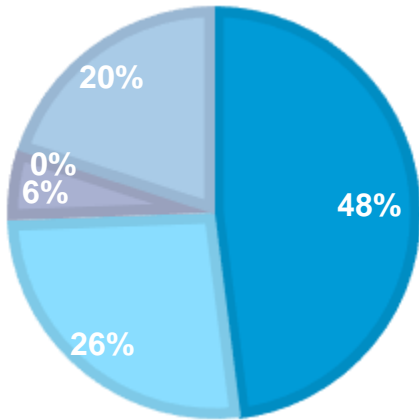
“Students that don't normally write or label were given the safe place (with safe adults) to challenge themselves and expand their production.” ~ Teacher



Student Survey Results

My students have gained confidence as learners since participation in the Open Minds program.

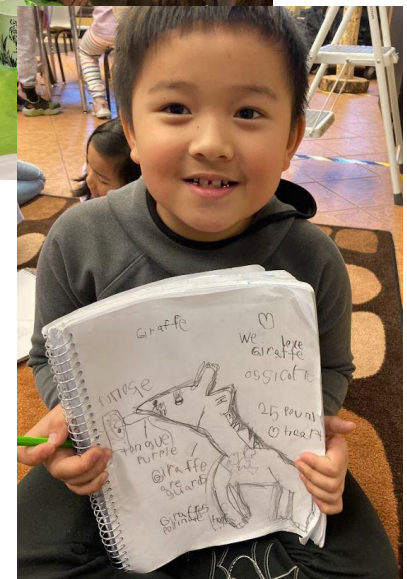
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



'My complex learners really became more engaged and fully participated with their peers during our week.' ~ Teacher

'Their ability to communicate passionately about what they have learned, through conversation, drawing and writing has grown.' ~ Teacher

'So many opportunities for students to find their interests and strengths in the program.' ~ Teacher

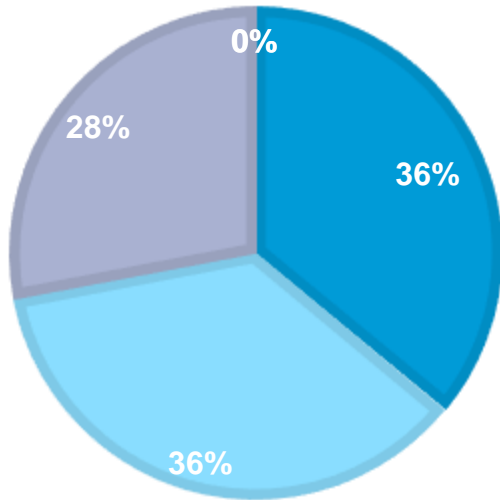


Student Survey Results

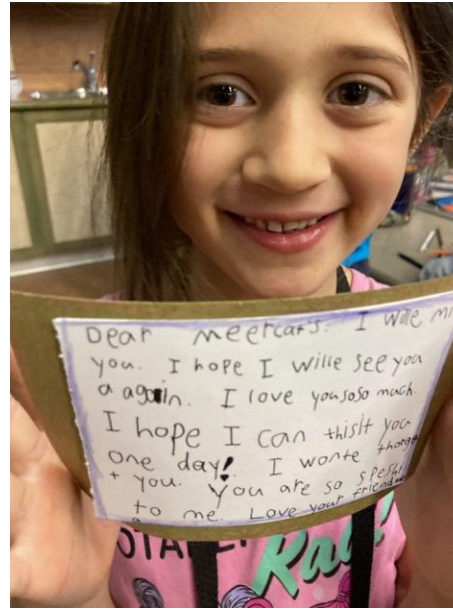


My students are more engaged as demonstrated by taking responsibility for their own learning since their participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



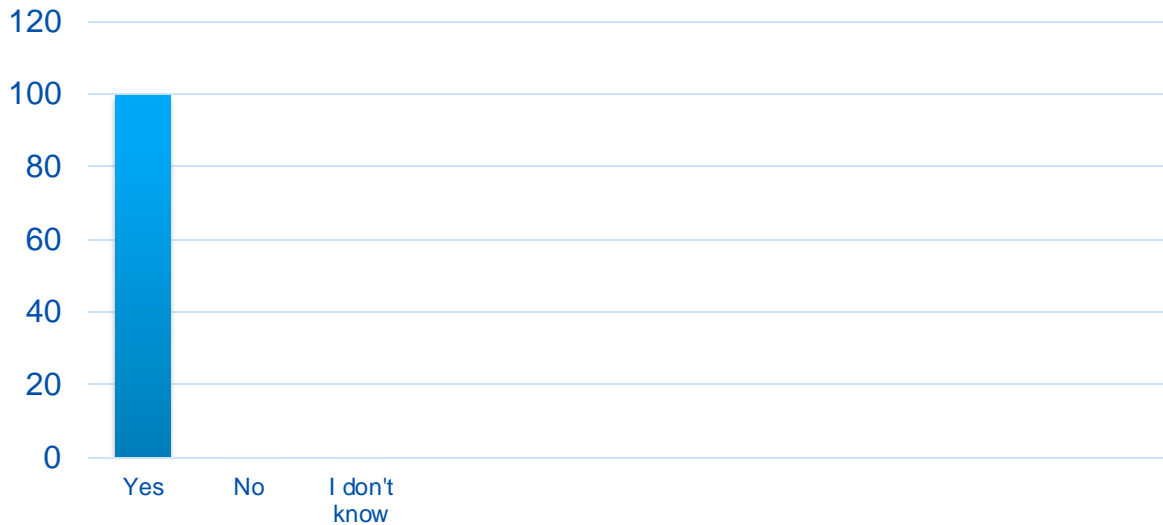
'Their understanding of our impact and role in conservation and caring for the planet continues to deepen, and their journaling skills have grown significantly. They enjoyed this opportunity, worked really hard, and continue to talk about it.' ~ Teacher



Student Survey Results



Through participation in the Open Minds Zoo School program did your students learn that they can take action for wildlife conservation? (For example- cell phone recycling, FSC, Oceanwise, RF Alliance, protecting or providing wildlife habitat etc.)



'They have already written persuasive letters to some of the brands they discovered where not actively contributing to the sustainability of palm oil and are researching who to send those letters to.'
~ Teacher

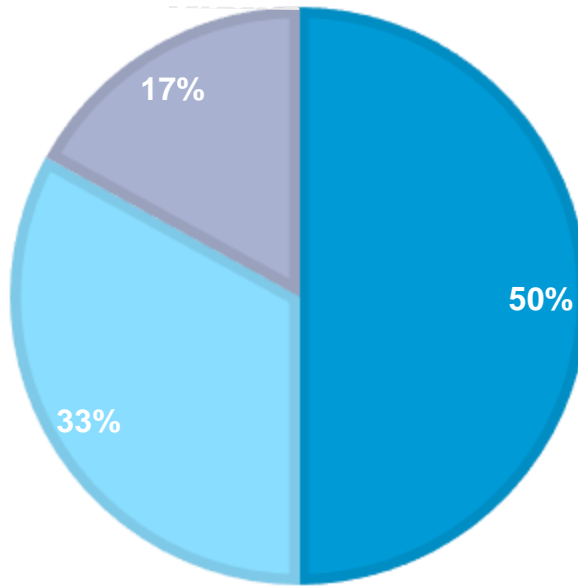
'For our Conservation Champions Action project, we collected cell phones for recycling to help the gorillas. Then we had a BTS encounter with the giraffes at Zoo School and learned about their silent extinction. We came back to school and the students wanted to do the whole project over again -- but this time to help giraffes! They wanted to make posters about the giraffes to put up around the school, make announcements to the school, go to the other classes to present about giraffes and their silent extinction, make another video ,etc... all to collect money to donate to the giraffeconservation.org website. Unfortunately, though, we did not have enough time to do all of that again!! (Because I really need to cover curriculum!)' ~ Teacher



Volunteer Survey Results



I have an increased understanding of zoos and the role they play in wildlife conservation.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

*"It was an eye opener to all the things the zoo is offering to conserve wildlife."
~ Parent volunteer*

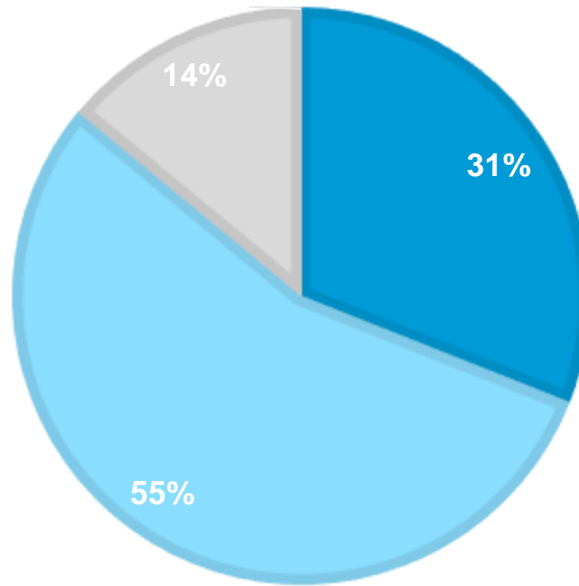


*"Every day my kid came home with different strategies we can do ourselves to help conserve wildlife."
~ Parent Volunteer*

Volunteer Survey Results



Due to my participation in Chevron Open Minds Zoo School I am more likely to visit the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo in the future.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

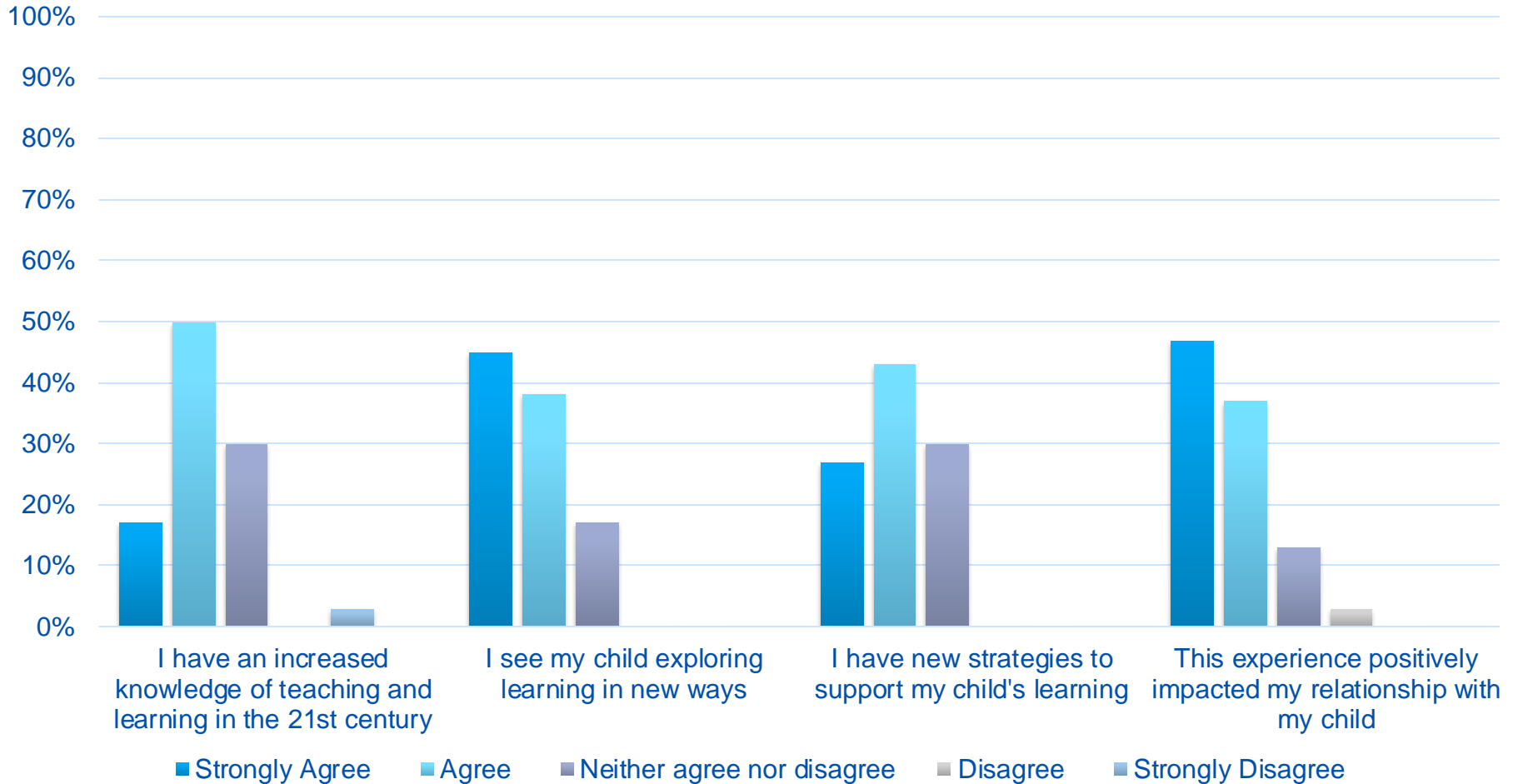


“My child really enjoyed the zoo week and was thrilled to see the behind the scenes tours such as the penguin exhibit and the animal hospital. Now that we have this extra education and experience the zoo will be more exciting to visit.”
~ Parent Volunteer

Volunteer Survey Results



"It was great to see teaching in action with the kids." ~ Parent Volunteer



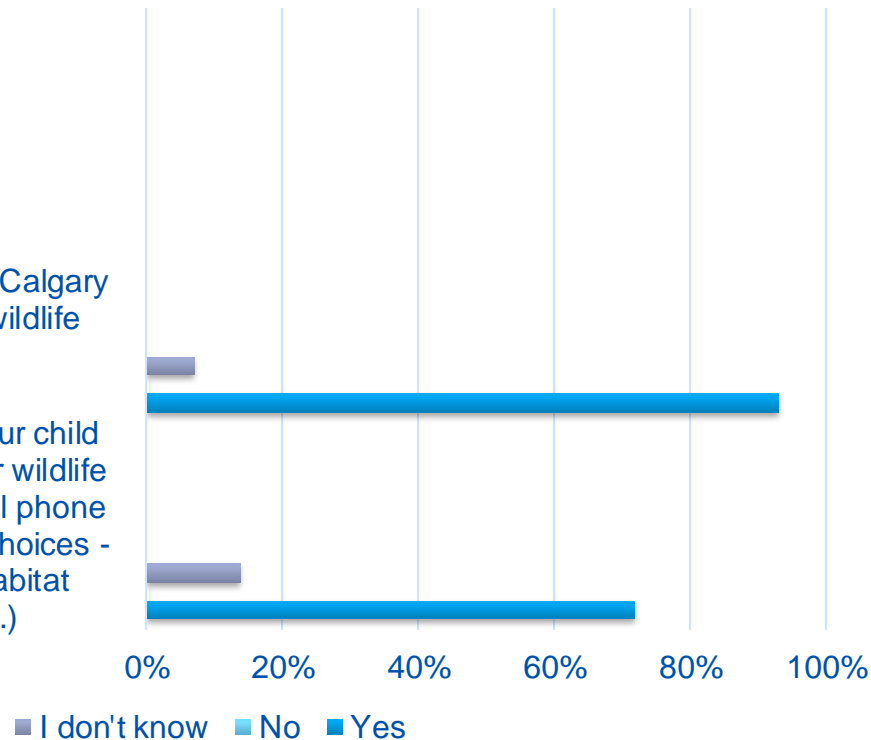
Volunteer Survey Results



"I think the experience was life changing for my child, he learned so much and had a great week. He has always been interested and a bit of an explorer, so my view is that continues rather than changes." ~ Parent Volunteer

Is supporting the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo a good way to support wildlife conservation.

By attending this program did your child learn that they can take action for wildlife conservation? (For example - cell phone recycling, sustainable shopping choices - FSC, Rainforest Alliance, or habitat protection and creation etc.)

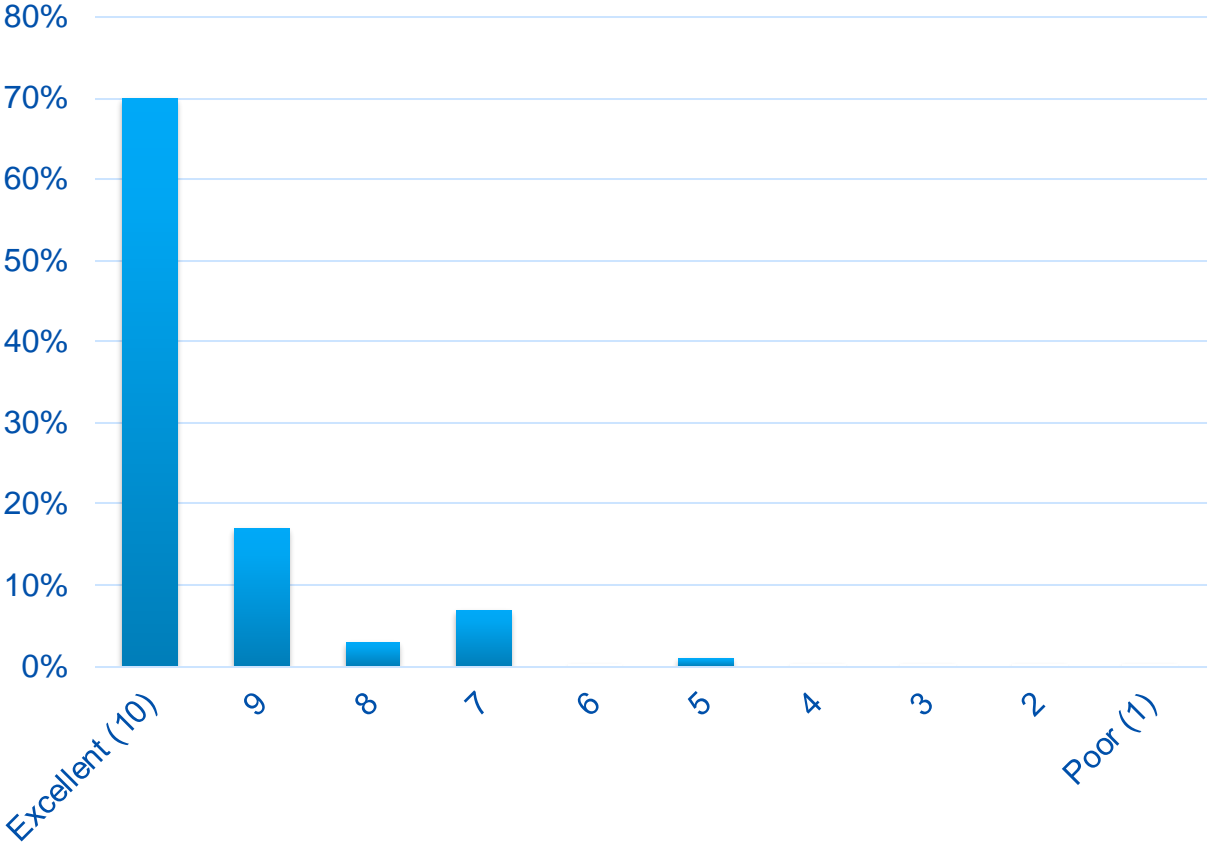


"My son has been educating others on how they can properly recycle or safely dispose of cell phones and other technology." ~ Parent Volunteer



Volunteer Survey Results

Q13. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with this school program?



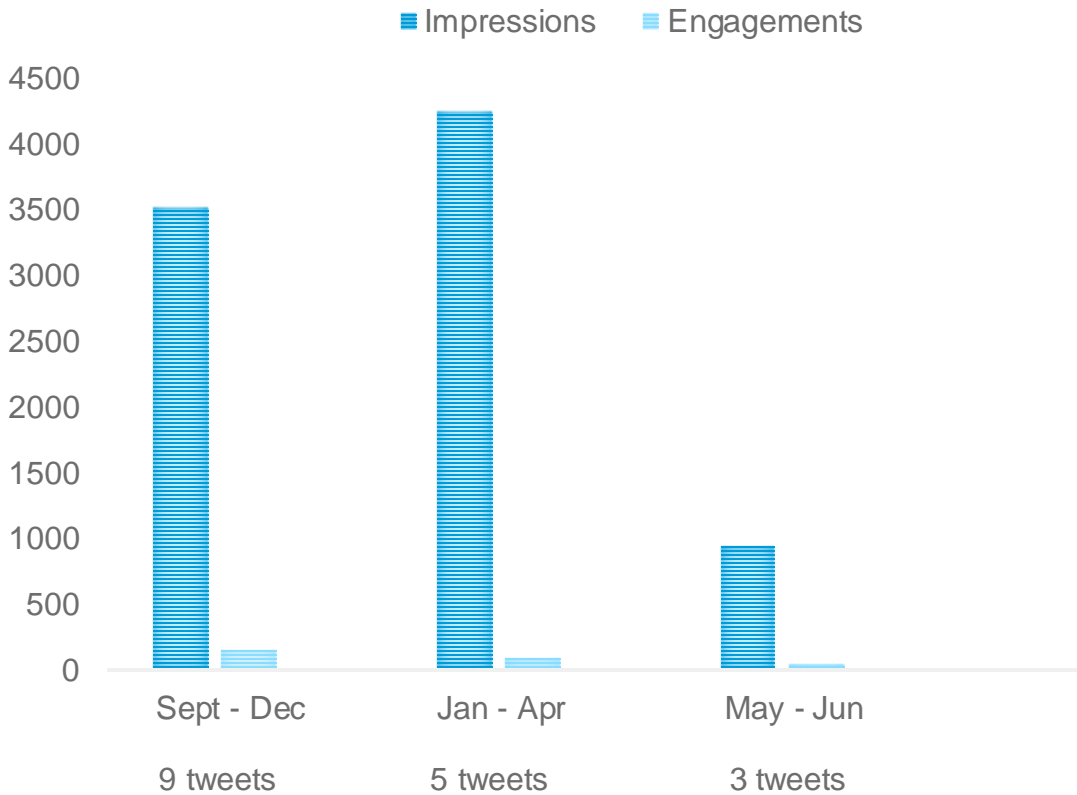
“I would love to have volunteered for more days. My son still talks about how amazing zoo school is.” ~ Parent Volunteer



Social Media Analysis



TWITTER ANALYSIS

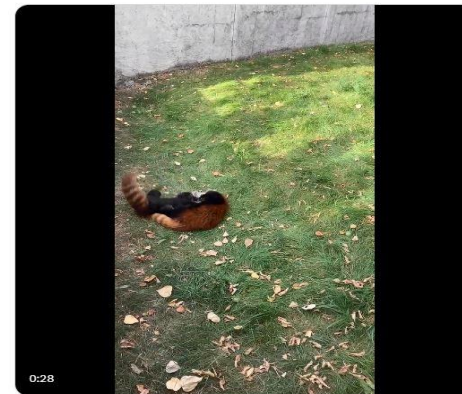


Chevron Open Minds Zoo School @ZooSchoollyc · Feb 14
 Sending out Valentines to all of our favourite animals @ZooSchoollyc @calgaryzoo with Erin Woods grade 5 students. #ilovewildlifeconservation



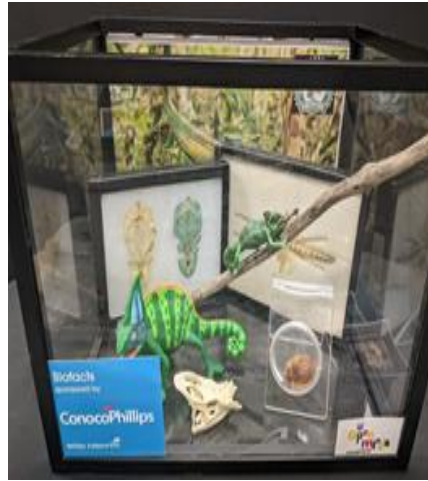
Top Impressions:
3748 views

Chevron Open Minds Zoo School @ZooSchoollyc · Oct 19, 2022
 Saw the first glimpse of our Red Panda Cubs at play @calgaryzoo Our big question this week @ZooSchoollyc: How do we invest in our world? The Red Panda is an integral part of our Species Survival Plan (SSP), an important zoo investment!



Top Engagement:
41

Highlights of 2022-2023



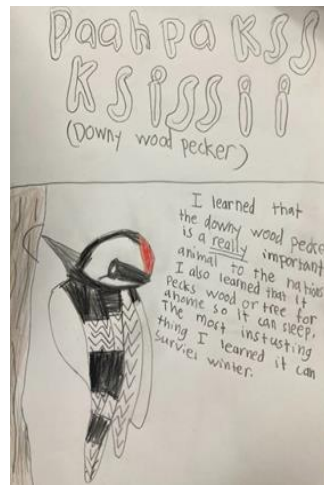
- Incorporating the initial stages of **Indigenous educational programming** into the Zoo School program.
- Incorporating **new community experts** such as Puppet Stuff Canada into our programming, who were able to bring our conservation messages to life by introducing the skill of puppeteering.
- Our Zoo School Ambassador, Mykale Hastie, **enabled the program to grow** in incredible ways, one of which was in helping to design and present programming tied directly to our Behind the Scenes programs highlighting the **conservation messages connected to our animal experiences**. As a result, **100%** of our teachers reported that their students learned a conservation action.
- We formally integrated **storyboxes** as an additional resource that teachers could use throughout the year. This resource served to enhance their year-long learning and created a great way for them to connect to the zoo, both before or after their Zoo School experience.



Highlights of 2022-2023



- The grade 1s from Nellie McClung school **hosted a Crafts for Conservation sale. All proceeds from the sale of their artwork was donated to the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo.** The parent council was willing to match the donated amount.



- We partnered with the Conservation Champions Club to complete the painting of their Mt. Blue Bird Houses, which were then taken to the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation area to **increase Mountain Bluebird habitat.**

Looking Ahead



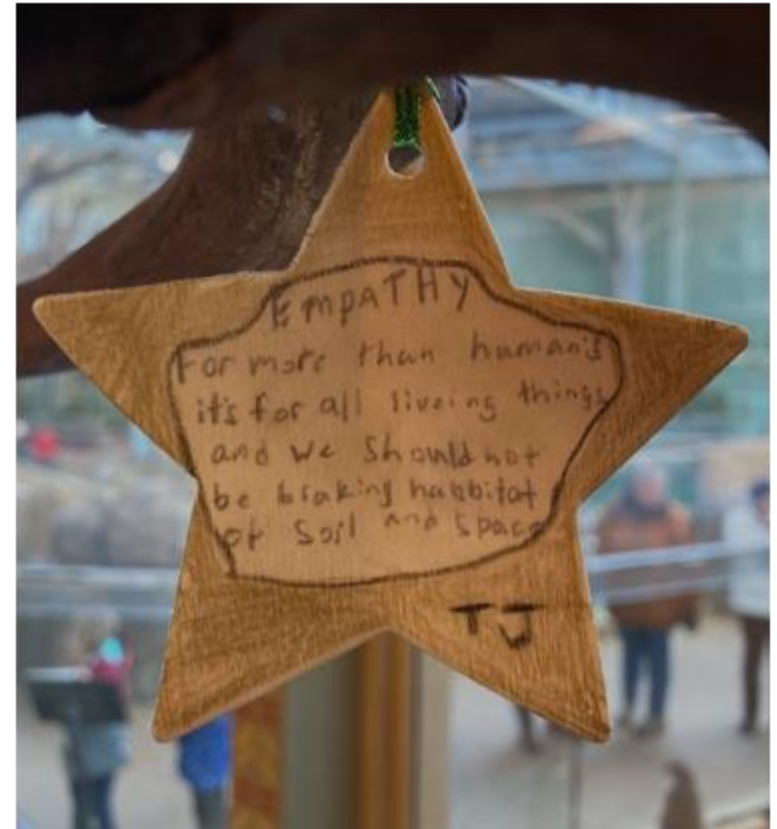
We are excited for what the future holds for this program. Since the pandemic, the number of applications to the Open Minds Zoo School program has been reaching record numbers. Teachers continue to be inspired and motivated to be a part of this learning experience and we will continue to raise the bar on the quality of educational programming we can provide. Our goals for next year include:

1. Continuing to implement more **formalized Indigenous Educational Programming** and **evaluate its impact**.
2. Continuing to **grow our international expert base**, working towards creating global citizens and broadening perspectives by connecting students to our international conservation projects in real and tangible ways.
3. Assessing the impacts of our current **conservation messaging** and striving to improve and increase delivery for a wider range of our zoo animals.
4. Finding innovative and age-appropriate ways to **engage students in conservation action**, with a new focus on climate science to connect to our new **polar bears and Wild Canada exhibit**.
5. Continuing to delivering **best practices** in teaching, learning, critical thinking and conservation related behaviour change through our connections with the Campus Calgary/Open Minds network and through AZA professional development in education.



Challenges Ahead

- **Attracting high school teachers** to the program as well as increasing the number of junior high participants.
- **Receiving more applications from the Catholic Board of Education** to broaden reach, each year has proven to be consistently dominated by Calgary Board of Education schools.
- Inspiring **100% of teachers to take conservation action** with their students.
- Motivating teachers to **continue learning within community** once they leave the program.
- Navigating the continuing **Wild Canada redevelopment** project on grounds for the fall of 2023.
- Training both a **new Zoo School Ambassador** and **new Zoo School Coordinator** for their roles in the next school year.
- Thoroughly **researching** and presenting a **bias-balanced approach** to new climate science programming.





Thank you Chevron, for allowing all of the small things to come together. Your unwavering support over the past **30 years** has allowed thousands of students to experience learning in new ways and hopefully given them a touch point in their lives which will result in conservation minded and environmentally literate future citizens.

*“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.”
~ Vincent Van Gogh*