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Enrichment Day at the Zoo





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What is “E-Day”?

- ❖ A special day dedicated to educating zoo guests about something we do every day, **ENRICHMENT!**
- ❖ Stations highlighting enrichment and activity stations for visitors.
- ❖ Wanna add some variety, give your Enrichment day a theme!
- ❖ A day (or two) full of activities for guests of all ages.





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Why all the buzz????

- ❖ What better way for guests to make special connections with zoo animals.
- ❖ Make it a Community Event, invite:
 - Local animal shelters
 - Pet toy suppliers
 - Wildlife experts
- ❖ Involve all areas of the zoo
 - Keeper Staff
 - Development
 - Marketing
 - Education
 - Special Events
 - Volunteers
 - Horticulture





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Wanna play the animal way????



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WE'RE GONNA SHOW YOU HOW!





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GROUP ASSIGNMENT

BRAINSTORM ENRICHMENT DAY ACTIVITIES



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ENRICHMENT/TRAINING DEMONSTRATIONS

- ❖ Set up specific times and locations where visitors can observe enrichment or training in action!!
- ❖ Provide handouts that list the time/location or highlight locations on a map





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PET ENRICHMENT

- ❖ Station where visitors can make simple enrichment devices for their pets
- ❖ Cut costs by inviting a local pet store to “set up shop” and charge exhibitor fee
- ❖ Local supplier set up a table where zoo visitors can purchase pre-approved toys for animals
- ❖ Success increases when a keeper is available to interpret and explain the toy





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BACKYARD ENRICHMENT

- ❖ Station where visitors can make simple enrichment devices for wildlife
- ❖ Supplies to make “nature crafts” such as bookmarks





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RECYCLED ENRICHMENT

- ❖ Station that discusses how many enrichment devices are made from recycling items
- ❖ Opportunity to discuss home recycling and recycling program at your zoo





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WHY ENRICHMENT IS IMPORTANT?

- ❖ Opportunity to educate visitors about why we do this
- ❖ Discuss the natural history of animals and how we come up with ideas





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KIDS GAMES

- ❖ Giraffe Jacks
- ❖ Forage and Feast
- ❖ Painting like an animal
- ❖ Bug catch
- ❖ Penguin toss
- ❖ Training Game





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COMMISSARY / NUTRITION CENTER

- ❖ Opportunity to get other departments involved
- ❖ Allow staff to discuss animal diets/treats





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MULTIMEDIA

- ❖ PowerPoint presentations on a continuous loop
- ❖ Videos on a continuous loops





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5 SENSES

- ❖ Discuss how enrichment can target 5 senses
- ❖ Activities to highlight the senses
- ❖ Guess the smell – jars with scented cotton balls (garlic, vanilla, perfume)
- ❖ Tactile – reach into hide boxes and guess the item
- ❖ Sight/Sound – guess the animal sound, find the camouflaged animal in the picture
- ❖ Taste – commissary display





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CASUAL ENCOUNTERS

❖ Up close and personal with animals to create a memorable experience





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WORKSHOPS / CHALLENGES

- ❖ Visitors can help a keeper make an enrichment device
- ❖ Exhibit make over
- ❖ Create a habitat





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BE A SCIENTIST

❖ Discuss how science is used to see how good enrichment is

❖ Have visitors “input data” or make behavioral observations on an animal using enrichment





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HORTICULTURE

- ❖ Involve other departments
- ❖ Discuss how plants can be used as enrichment





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ENRICHMENT DAY AT YOUR ZOO?????

TURN THE IDEA INTO REALITY



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GREAT IDEA! HOW DO I SELL IT?

Other zoos are doing it (and doing it well), you're excited and see all of the benefits to holding an Enrichment Day at your zoo.

You think "The Boss" would never agree. But maybe if it is presented in the right way, then Management will say "YES!"

The following are some potentially helpful bits of information/ideas that may help "sell" this idea to your facility and managers.





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FIVE REASONS THIS IS A GREAT IDEA!

Increased Attendance and Revenue:

- ❖ Guests want an “experience.” They love to participate in events at their local zoo, especially ones with family activities
- ❖ Guests like to contribute to the animals welfare
- ❖ Provides unique experiences, different from “regular” zoo visits (especially great for members!)
- ❖ It is a fun annual event, which zoo guests will look forward to participating in each year
- ❖ Offers opportunities for unique gift shop items or food/beverage choices only available during enrichment day (maybe mirror animal treats!)

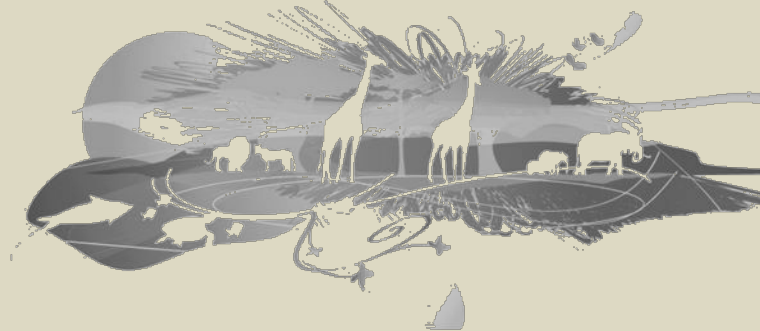




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Increased Guest Interactions with Zoo Staff:

- ❖ Establish a connection between guests, staff and animals, consequently increasing guests' desire to return
 - Keeper chats outside an animals exhibit
 - Volunteer and Docent interactions with zoo visitors
 - Opportunity to educate guests about Animal Enrichment and why it is important
 - Interactive stations with activities to engage the public
- ❖ Studies of zoo patrons identify interacting with keepers and animals is one of the favorite guest experiences





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- ❖ Unique opportunities to observe Animal Behavior and Training
 - Visitors observe animals interacting with their enrichment
 - Animals will demonstrate natural behaviors

- ❖ Get visitors excited about animal welfare and enrichment with their own animals by having local dog trainers to provide information on fun enrichment activities they can do at home with their family pets.





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Increased Community Awareness and Involvement:

- ❖ Spread the word about your zoo's Wish List of needed items for enrichment and training
- ❖ Local businesses (and even guests) can make donations of items or money specifically for enrichment
- ❖ Get the community more invested in the zoo. Display local sponsors for guests to see, recognizing participation and improving relationships for future events
- ❖ Establish networks with other facilities and merchandise suppliers





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Develop partnerships within your zoo as well as other facilities:

- ❖ Increase interdepartmental cooperation (building enrichment, novel food items, signage, PR...)
- ❖ Pair your event with other zoos, aquariums, humane societies and rescue/rehab facilities promote each others 'events and share ideas and resources





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Increase Zoo Publicity Opportunities:

- ❖ Notify local newspapers and news stations about the event; press release about enrichment, what it is, why we do it, and what the event will entail
- ❖ Widen social media coverage and cyber-involvement
- ❖ Further the positive public image of the zoo and its dedication to the care of the animals
- ❖ Increase guest awareness of future zoo events and how they can participate





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DIRECT BENEFITS

- ❖ **Increase Zoo attendance and revenue**
- ❖ **Improved guests experiences and return rate**
- ❖ **Reduce zoo' s financial burden: allow donations of or financial contributions towards purchase of enrichment items**
- ❖ **Increase sense of community among zoo staff**
 - *“An enrichment day brings staff together for a common goal.”
(Houston Zoo)*
 - *“Enrichment Day plays host to approximately 9,000 guests.”
(Houston Zoo)*





BE PREPARED FOR A TOUGH SELL!!

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PLAN AHEAD TO RESPOND TO COMMON ARGUMENTS

❖ No non-natural enrichment!

➤ *This is an opportunity to suspend the regular rules for one day, and to simultaneously educate guests while enriching our animals.*

❖ This will take too much of the keepers' time

➤ *Keepers are enriching daily as part of normal routine. Just doing it differently this one day.*

❖ Exhibits will be filled with trash and look terrible

➤ *Educational opportunities explaining why items are in enclosures will abound. Also a good chance to remind guests of importance of recycling!*





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FINAL WORDS OF ADVICE!!

- ❖ **Do a trial run of a few components and activities to see what your guests think**
 - Ask visitors what they liked, disliked and if they would participate in an event focusing on enrichment
- ❖ **Start small and build on the event each time you hold an Enrichment Day at your zoo**

