

World Rhino Day at The Saint Louis Zoo

Stephanie Richmond, Keeper/River's Edge



In recent years the rhino poaching rate has continued to increase and now more than ever awareness needs to be raised of this growing crisis that threatens their survival. World Rhino Day is held annually on September 22nd for this purpose. The Saint Louis Zoo held its first official celebration of World Rhino Day in 2012 and this will be an annual event in the future.



The festivities were kicked off with a lecture given by rhino keeper Stephanie Richmond. The talk focused on the Saint Louis Zoo's black rhino program, the status of rhinos in the wild, and an overview of conservation efforts currently underway. This lecture served to educate and inspire Zoo staff members and volunteers about the plight of the rhino, why these magnificent species should be saved and what they could do to help.



Visitors had the opportunity to interact with various biofacts including a rhino skull and horn. These items were used to convey the message that rhino horn is not medicine and why it is important to save these amazing animals. Flanking this station were two educational posters, the first of which provided basic information on each of the five living rhino species and what the Zoo is doing for them. The second poster contained information on each of the three black rhinos living at the zoo and photos of their daily care and training.

Fundraising efforts were coordinated with the St. Louis American Association of Zoo Keepers chapter. The Zoo's rhinos got in the spirit of the day by creating 20 Limited Edition paintings that raised \$830 for black rhino conservation in Zimbabwe through the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) and the Lowveld Rhino Trust. Activities for the day were advertised on the Zoo's social media, including photos and video of the Zoo's rhinos painting with their prehensile lips.



Kids and adults were encouraged to don a shuka (a colorful shawl worn by Samburu scouts in East Africa) and binoculars as they learned about what it takes to be a rhino scout in Africa and why they are essential to the rhino's survival.



Children colored at a craft table and made paper rhino horns to tie onto their noses. They also received an activity sheet to take home, which included a coloring page, a rhino-related word search, maze, and basic rhino information.

World Rhino Day

Did you know?
Rhinos can run up to 35mph.
Rhino horn is made up of keratin, the same material that makes up our hair and nails.
A group of rhinos is called a "crash."
There are 5 species of rhinos, 3 of which are critically endangered due to poaching.

For more information please visit: stlzoo.org or rhinos.org

What can you do?
Bowling for Rhinos held in May each year.
Educate others that "Rhino Horn is NOT Medicine."
Visit the rhinos at the Saint Louis Zoo and donate to rhino conservation efforts.
When buying products with Palm Oil, only buy products made with certified sustainable palm oil.




Saint Louis Zoo
Animals Always®

Guests walked away with a pin featuring the Zoo's rhinos as well as a bookmark conveying the important take-home message of what "you" can do for rhinos.

Every person or institution can make a difference in the conservation of rhinos and World Rhino Day is a great forum for spreading their conservation message.

