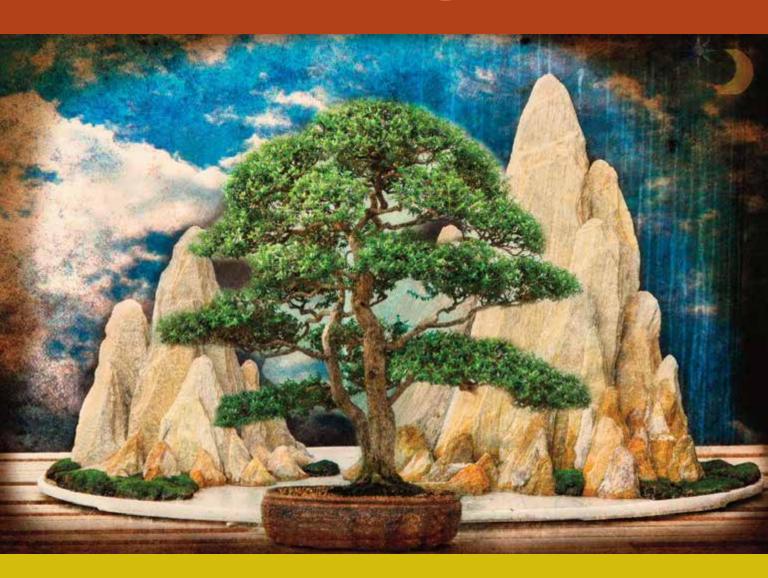
## Envisioning Como



Como Friends Annual Report 2012

## Envisioning Como: Our Community Photographers

Most of the photos in this annual report were taken by Como visitors who posted their photos to the "Como Park Zoo & Conservatory" Flickr group—a great place to explore how our community "sees" Como.

JENNIFER SHIELDS captured "Bonsai Dreams" and "Mother Love" featured on the front and back covers. (Flickr id: ijs08)

"I was amazed it was free," St. Cloud photographer Jennifer Shields says about discovering Como after moving from Indiana. "But I find I actually end up paying more at a free zoo, because you want everyone to experience this. I've worked in inner city schools, and I think there's something so special about being able to see animals that every child should have."

JEFF LEE snapped "Jaya," page 5 (Flickr id: jlee8399)

Two things changed when Jeff Lee and his wife had their first child. "I bought a camera, and we started coming to Como," says Lee, an electrician who lives in East St. Paul. "The place has completely changed since I was a kid, with the amusement park and the new polar bear exhibit. It's gotten a lot more family-friendly." Though he enjoys the Zoo, he prefers the Conservatory, where he snaps pictures with his Nikon and his daughter "likes looking for fish" in the North Garden.

JOHN OAKES got up-close and personal with Schroeder the gorilla on page 9.

"There was a group of kids there and the gorilla was showing off for them and I just kept shooting him. After a while the kids left and he just sat there with a kind of a bored look and that's when I took this shot," says Oakes, a music store manager. Favorite corner at Como? "I love the Primate House. The Tamarins in particular."

MELISSA KOPKA used macro and fish-eye lenses to capture the Conservatory photos here and on pages 14-15. (Flickr id: m01229)

Though she'd been to Como Zoo as a child, it wasn't until her photography group came to the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory for an early "artists and photographers" morning that Melissa Kopka rediscovered Como. "I loved it. I couldn't wait to go back," says Kopka, a U.S. Bank project manager from New Hope. What's her favorite place? "Definitely the Sunken Garden."

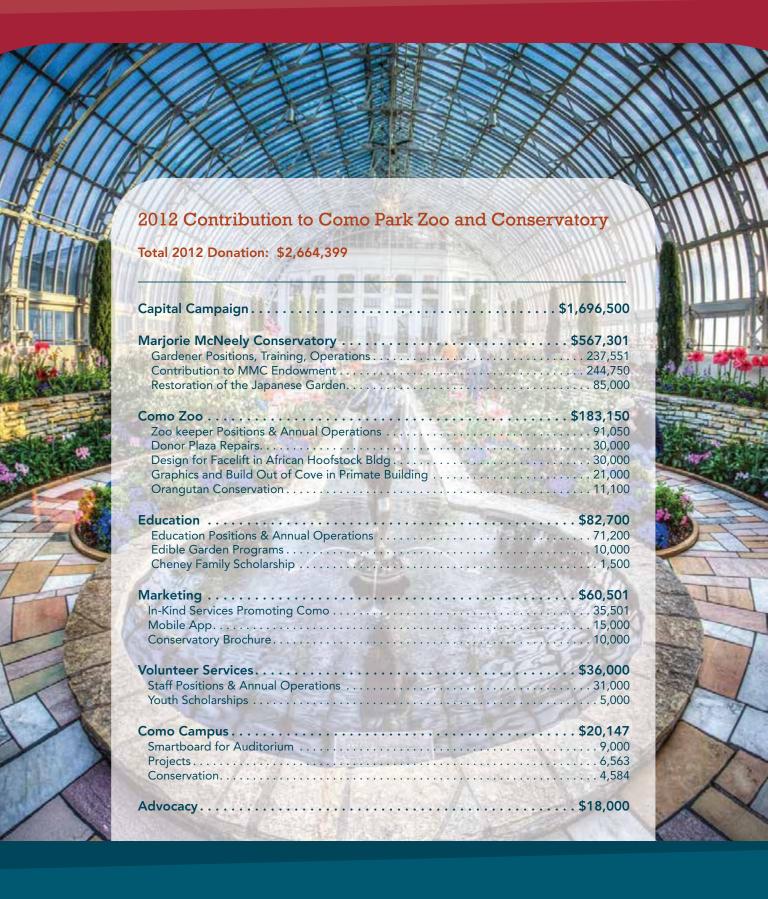
**ANTHONY KWAN** got nose-to-nose with Judy the brown bear on page 11.

University of Minnesota aerospace engineering major Anthony Kwan was on assignment for The Minnesota Daily covering an exhibit called "The Hidden World of Bears" when he captured this image of Judy, one of the visiting bears from Minot, N.D. "I'd been taking pictures of polar bears and we were just about to leave, when this brown bear poked around the corner," says Kwan, who came to Como regularly before he graduated last spring "not just for the animals, but I also liked laying on the grass to read." Kwan graduated from the U last spring, and hopes to launch a career as a professional photographer. To see more of his work, visit www. Anthonykwan.com. (Photo used with the permission of The Minnesota Daily.)

STEFAN PRESSLEIN focuses on visitors in the Sunken Garden on pages 6-7. (Flickr ID: StefPress)

"My parents owned a flower shop, so I grew up around this," says Presslein, who drives to St. Paul from his home in St. Michael two or three times a month just to relax and take photos in the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory. Even though he's a regular, "it just blows me away how fast they turn the gardens around and make everything look beautiful and like it's always been there." A fan of Como's "Music Under Glass" series, he's also looking forward to the unveiling of *The Ordway Gardens*. "I can't wait to see how it all looks now."





"We inspire community
generosity to advance Como
Park Zoo and Conservatory as
a destination where people
from all walks of life can
gather, learn and enjoy
the natural world."

 Como Friends' new mission statement, adopted December 2012









#### Dear Como Friends Supporters,

What do you see when you come to Como? How do our two million visitors view our work? What do we envision for Como Zoo and the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in the next five years—or the next fifty?

These were some of the questions Como Friends explored in 2012, as we set out on a strategic planning process that allowed us to reflect on just how far we've come in the last decade, while imagining where we'd like to move in the next one. After the fast-paced, four-year *Campaign for Como* came to a successful conclusion in 2011, our board of directors agreed the time was right to catch our collective breath and reenergize around our shared love for all that Como has to offer. In a series of surveys, interviews and community discussions, we asked our supporters to help us consider both the challenges and opportunities we face as one of Minnesota's few free admission cultural destinations.

You can read more about the results of our strategic plan in the following pages, including our mission statement. When Como Friends first incorporated in 1999, our goal was to "preserve and enhance" the historic Zoo and Conservatory, a mission that inspired community investment of more than \$31 million in improvements, from the Visitor Center in 2005, to the *Ordway Gardens* wing opening this spring.

This transformation wouldn't have been possible without the generosity of thousands of individual supporters and advocates, and the commitment of those whose names and businesses are listed in this annual report. Though award-winning animal habitats and gorgeous gardens and plants bring us together, it's people from all walks of life whose support and encouragement have been at the heart of the critical improvements we've witnessed at Como over the last decade. We're pleased to have a mission statement that now reflects the power of the people who make Como what it is. **Thank you for all you do for Como!** 

Jadie Sticha

Jackie Sticha President Anne Hazelroth Field

**Board Chair** 

# The Fundamentals of Como Friends

After nearly a century of service, the historic Zoo and the beloved Conservatory were in need of major improvements by the late 1990s. The long wish list included a visitor center, classroom space, and facilities that would allow both organizations to keep pace with improvements in animal and horticultural care. Though the Zoo and Conservatory had always operated as separate entities, it was clear to civic leaders and community volunteers that the case for Como would be far stronger if the two sides forged a new future together. Though the transition was challenging at first, creating this new public-private partnership through Como Friends made it possible to unite



the historic Zoo and Conservatory with a shared entrance and a shared mission, and preserved Como's place as **one of the country's last completely free metro zoos and botanical gardens.** 

When Como Friends' stakeholders came together in 2012 to imagine the nonprofit's second decade of service, free admission emerged as one of the fundamental goals of our community of two million visitors. Supporters also told us they're committed to continuing the transformation they've witnessed at Como over the last decade, creating exhibits and educational programs that enrich every visitor, while earning global recognition for Como's innovations in animal care, horticulture, and conservation.

To get there, Como Friends' board of directors have adopted a series of new strategic initiatives designed to strengthen Como Friends' "brand" identity as a leading nonprofit, build relationships with new donors and long-time supporters, increase the contributions Como Friends cultivates for the Zoo and Conservatory, and create a board and staff that can respond to change while reflecting the audience we serve.



#### In the next five years, the work of Como Friends will be guided by these core values:

Engage the community and donors of Como Friends.

Steward the resources entrusted to us, and respect the wishes of each donor.

Embrace Como Friends' growth to support continuous improvements of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory.

Serve as a model for an exemplary public-private partnership with the City of Saint Paul.

Honor the traditions of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory in our community.

Support education and enjoyment for all, with special concern for those who may not otherwise have access.

## **Under Construction**

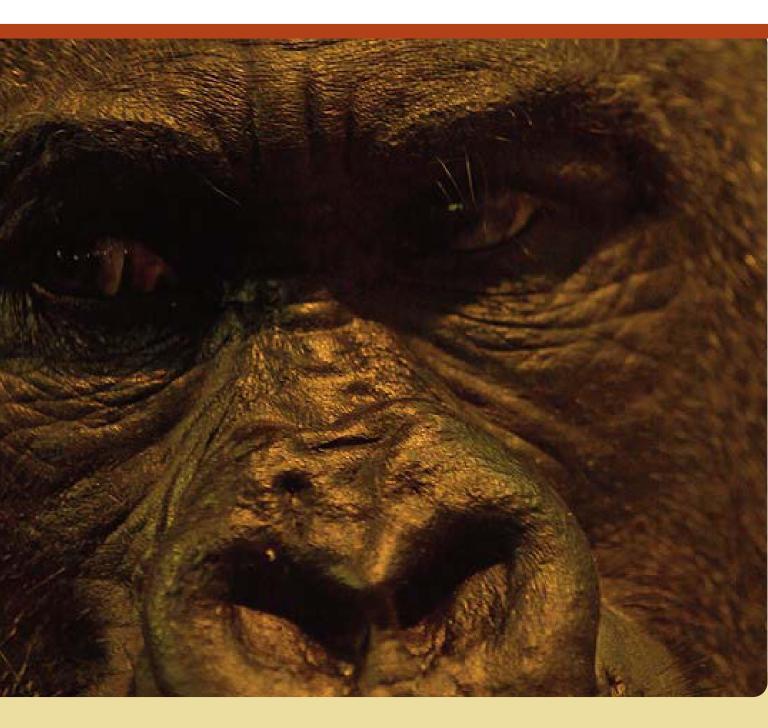
"Please Pardon Our Mess" was the motto at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory in 2012, as staff and visitors made way for two major construction projects that will be completed in 2013.

To create *The Ordway Gardens: A Japanese Collection* at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, construction crews turned Como's seasonal "Bonsai garage" into a new glass wing that will become the permanent home of Como's nationally-regarded collection, while landscape architects and horticulturists planted an inviting new pedestrian pathway leading into the beloved Charlotte Partridge Ordway Japanese Garden. This \$2.8 million improvement was funded entirely by private contributions to Como Friends, which also invested in landscaping and plantings within the Japanese Garden that will better reflect the original intentions of landscape designer Masami Matsuda.

At the Como Zoo, the northwest end of the primate building is about to become *Gorilla Forest*, an \$11 million, publicly funded expansion for Como's western lowland gorillas. Long a leader in gorilla husbandry, Como Zoo will soon have a habitat that reflects that progressive care, with enriching and naturalistic features, public training areas, and even gorilla-sized blood pressure cuffs that will enable Como to contribute to worldwide conservation efforts. Support from Como's two million visitors and from people like you helped to make a powerful case for public investment in this long-awaited improvement. Thank you!







Remodeling can be stressful, but when Gorilla Forest is complete, Schroeder will have plenty of room to stretch out and explore his new habitat, which includes elevated terrain, natural substrate, running water, and other features that will dramatically improve the care keepers can provide Como Zoo's western lowland gorillas. Under construction throughout 2012, this \$11 million publicly funded improvement opens June 2013.

## **Unexpected Outcomes**





On June 20, 2012, more than 10 inches of rain flooded Duluth's Lake Superior Zoo, sending harbor seal sisters Feisty and Vivian on a wild ride from their exhibit right into downtown Duluth. After their rescue, they were delivered safely to Como Zoo, where they recovered from the excitement along with polar bear Berlin, who became the latest guest in *Polar Bear Odyssey*. Como's twin bears Buzz and Neil were already sharing their new digs with Goldie, Sandy, and Judy, three bears from the flooded Roosevelt Park Zoo in Minot, N.D.

Coming to the rescue of zoo partners in crisis wouldn't have been possible without the support of people just like you. Community support for *Polar Bear Odyssey* in 2010 made the difference in creating a state-of-the-art facility capable of serving multiple needs for a variety of animals. Your contributions also helped to provide life-saving medical care to Berlin, who underwent surgery at the University of Minnesota to remove a growth that caused internal bleeding while she was in the care of Como zookeepers. Being a good neighbor to partner zoos and botanical gardens is important to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, and your contributions in 2012 made it all possible.

The aptly-named Feisty the seal quickly became an internet sensation, with her own Twitter feed ("Feisty@DuluthZooSeal") and fundraising bracelets inspiring her admirers to "Live Feisty."

Berlin the polar bear was a good house guest to Buzz and Neil, who helped her celebrate her 23rd birthday in December just before her move to be part of a breeding recommendation at the Kansas City Zoo.



# Next Generation Conservation

"More than 150 million people a year visit zoos and aquariums in the United States. Why do we flock to them? It's not just a pleasant outing with family or friends, or to introduce children (whose lives are a cavalcade of animal images) to real animals, though those are still big reasons. I think people are also drawn to a special stripe of innocence they hope to find there....Few of us will ever see wild penguins sledding downhill to sea on their bellies, giant pandas holding bamboo lollipops in China or tree porcupines in the Canadian Rockies, balled up like giant pine cones. Meeting them at the zoo widens a visitor's view of nature and personalizes it."

Como Fun Facts:

Total volunteers in 2012: 1,199

Volunteer hours in 2012: 46,384

Total number of "interpretive moments" shared by Como's talented and well-trained volunteers in 2012: **275,520** 

—Naturalist Diane Ackerman The New York Times, February 4, 2012

Connecting visitors with the wonders of nature is the mission of Como's conservation education programs, which reached more than 500,000 children and adults in 2012. Whether it was learning how to start a kitchen compost bin in "The Edible Garden," asking questions about polar bear conservation at a "Bear Banter" session, or cheering for Sparky the Sea Lion's stylish recycling efforts, visitors of every age left Como with a deeper understanding of what we can all do at home to help improve the environment.

With so many families and field trip groups that depend on Como's free admission, Como created two very popular free programs in 2012—"Lil Explorers," a weekly program that captures the curiosity Como's littlest learners have for animals and plants, and "Nature's Engineers," a more immersive curriculum for older students that explores science, technology, engineering and math through the lens of nature's design. Funded by seed grants from the Minnesota Legacy Amendment, private contributions through Como Friends made it possible to continue these popular programs through 2012 and beyond. Thank you!



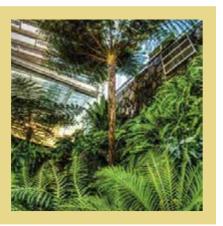
## Statements of Activities Sources of Revenue Gift Shop Revenue \$1,150,159 19% Annual Donations \$763,067 35% Event Revenue \$377,077 8% Memberships \$273,624 Investment and Other Income \$615,481 12% Capital Campaign Donations \$72,513 24% Contributions to Como and Expenses Contributions to Polar Bear Odyssey and 11% Japanese Garden Experience \$1,696,500 Salaries and Benefits \$869,431 12% Contribution to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory \$718,162 Gift Shop Cost of Goods Sold \$508,083 17% Other \$487,732 20% \*excludes in-kind gifts/expense

# The Marjorie McNeely Conservatory



The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is now. ~Proverb

Nearly a century ago, city leaders and civic planners had the foresight to set aside a great public green space where families could come to renew their connection to nature, and with each other. That early vision is still growing strong at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, one of the country's leading botanical gardens, with a horticultural collection that ranges from soaring tropical palms, to medicinal plants from the Amazon, to ten thousand tulip bulbs that arrive every autumn from Amsterdam.



In 2012, your contributions to Como Friends helped to provide professional training for our talented horticulturists, new acquisitions for the Conservatory's expansive orchid and Bonsai collections, and even an endowment fund that preserves and protects this 97-year-old glass treasure. Como Friends also invested in engaging interpretive programs in "The Edible Garden," five seasonal Flower Show brochures that inspire backyard gardeners across the region, and a restoration of the Japanese Garden that Como's two million visitors will see unveiled in April 2013.



## Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31,	2012	2011
ASSETS		
Current		10.00
Cash and Cash Equivalents Investments Contributions Receivable Inventory Prepaid Expenses Total Current Assets		\$1,170,394 2,170,341 734,544 186,953 22,281 4,284,513
Other		
Contributions Receivable, Net of Current Portion	8,655	2,971,641 11,252 4,734,110
Beneficial Interests in Assets Held by Others		7,717,003
CONTRACTOR		7,717,003 <b>\$12,001,51</b> 6
Total Other Assets		To 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
Total Other Assets		To 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
Total Other Assets		To 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
Total Other Assets  Total Assets  LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS  Current  Accounts Payable  Grants Payable  Accrued Expenses and Other Liabilities		\$12,001,516 \$ 63,060 900,164 59, 147
Total Other Assets  Total Assets  LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS  Current  Accounts Payable	\$10,070,865 \$47,261 \$47,261 72,446 119, 707	\$12,001,516 \$63,060 900,164 59, 147 1,022,371
Total Other Assets  LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS  Current  Accounts Payable		\$12,001,516 \$ 63,060 900,164 59, 147

## Como Zoo



Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. ~Albert Einstein

Moving our progressive animal care from behind-the-scenes to center stage has been a growing trend at Como Zoo, driven in part by your contributions to Como Friends.

In 2012, your support allowed Como zookeepers to share their knowledge at keeper talks and public training sessions with visitors from around the region, and to serve as active partners on conservation projects to save endangered orangutans and amphibians around the globe. In the new *Gorilla Forest* habitat set to open in June 2013, Como Friends' also invested in an engaging new interpretive cove on the second floor of the primate building that will teach visitors more about the world of the western lowland gorilla. The African Hoofstock building will be the next exhibit to be remodeled, thanks to a new facelift design plan paid for by Como Friends.

Helping Como Zoo to welcome and serve nearly two million children and adults every year was also a priority in 2012. Your contributions helped to pay for much needed repairs on the zoo's well trod Donor Plaza, and even provided a fun, new mobile app that takes visitors on a self-guided tour of Minnesota's most visited zoo.





## { Thank you, Donors! }

#### \$200,000 +

Katherine B. Andersen Fund Donald McNeely Family The Saint Paul Foundation

#### \$50,000 - \$199,999

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#### \$1,000 - \$2,499

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#### \$500 - \$999

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#### \$250 - \$499

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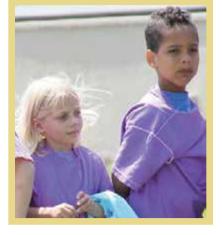
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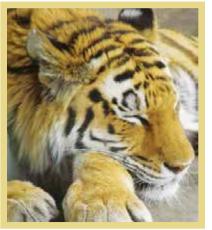
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