

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Message

Nikki Dzialowy, Facilities Manager, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park



Happy New Year! We are halfway through the first quarter of 2023 and I have already missed too many of my goals for this year. I was so ambitious, and I still hope to pick many of them up. While a part of me is disappointed in myself, I am also sure many of you can relate.

It does not mean we are failures. It does not mean these goals were not important. Sometimes it is just how the facilities world runs...always running.

We start a task and think we know how it will end but the next thing you know a sick animal needs heat in a winter storm, or the earth barely shifts and a 4" water line decides to geyser up a guest pathway on a Friday. Sometimes it feels like a constant scramble, like we are drowning in these water breaks and cannot come up for air. I do not know about all of you, but a part of me enjoys the chaos. I get excited by the unexpected interruption. My brain jumps into problem solving mode, I start organizing priorities and thinking about cost, who to contact, how to get to the end result. Then after the rush is over, I pause, and I think. What information needs to be documented? Did this contractor deliver in

the best way, and I want them on speed dial? Did we search for water valves for too long? How do we update a resource to make us more fluid in the next crisis? Inevitably, before I even have a chance to process the chaos that has calmed, I am being pulled into the next high priority.

I have been reflecting on how to organize my chaos. How do we harness the superpowers we have to as facilities staff for good instead of evil? It is the million-dollar question for all of us, right? We just need a few million dollars more and we could solve all of our problems, but the money is not rolling in in waves. What is within our control? For me, it is about my team, my peers, and my AZFA network. When the chaos feels out of control, I send up my bat signal and I let the support fly in.

Support comes in different forms for all of us. To me support has been when an employee volunteers to stay late with a contractor so I can have dinner with my family after a week of late nights. It has been when Kirsty at Cheyenne Mountain Zoo reaches out to nudge me about AZFA committees. It has been when Sam throws together a membership invoice before I have even seen the other four emails. Support was when my supervisor checked in on my mental health after a difficult week

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In This Issue...

President's Message 1
AZFA 2023 Conference..... 2

New Members 2

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT cont.

end, or when a CFO wrote a recommendation letter for me because he knew I deserved the next big step in my career. Sometimes support is little gestures or thank you cards. Support can be saying nothing so I can have guilt free time off.

How are you supporting your peers, your team, your supervisor, and yourself? How are you being supported? I encourage you to pick up the phone and call an

AZFA friend. Check in with someone on your team that you have not connected with recently. Set boundaries for yourself. We have set goals for 2023, but they are moving targets. Set your priorities, build your support network and find your super suit because it takes more than an average person to be in facilities.

I promise committee lists and invites will be out by February 1st! Look for emails, doodle polls and phone calls from me!

AZFA 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AZFA 2023 Annual Conference Call for Presentations

Samanthe Peterson, Sustainability Coordinator, San Antonio Zoo

The AZFA Program & Education Committee is seeking presenters for this year's in-person conference hosted by the Louisville Zoo October 1st - 5th in Louisville, Kentucky.

During the Denver conference last year, suggestions for future topics included minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) procurement, geographic information systems (GIS), electrical infrastructure / backup / grid projects / generators, DEIA, mental health, organic waste management, fleet electrification (including trains), and

EV charging stations. Other standard topics are new projects or exhibits, sustainability, safety and emergency response, AZA accreditation, housekeeping, project management, and hands-on workshops.

If you would like to present a session in Louisville or have a suggestion for a topic, please contact sam.peterson@sazoo.org to get involved. Our members are a wealth of industry knowledge and we look forward to learning from these experts every year. Let us hear from you!

NEW MEMBERS

Professional

Kim Busey, Gardener, Topeka Zoo

Ron Cathey, Maintenance, Topeka Zoo

Dennis Dinwiddie, Director of Conservation and Education, Topeka Zoo

Michael Freehauf, Assistant Maintenance Manager, San Antonio Zoo

Rick Knight, Horticulture and Grounds Manager, Topeka Zoo

Nick Lopez, Lead Mechanic, San Antonio Zoo

Elizabeth Mankevich, Grounds Manager, The Pittsburgh Zoo

Fawn Moser, Director of Zoo Operations, Topeka Zoo

Hope Thomas, Maintenance, Topeka Zoo

Brendan Wiley, Zoo Director, Topeka Zoo

Organization

Topeka Zoo



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Email: info@athruz.net | Website: <http://www.athruzcad.com>

