

How Docents Can Take Root in Education
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What Is Roots & Shoots Day?: Roots & Shoots Day (RSD) is an event which can bring thousands of school children into your institution to learn about culture, the environment, and animals. It can be held as either a one-day or two-day event where children move from workshop to workshop at set times. Zoo volunteers, community businesses, and organizations that work within the three topic areas run workshops.

Roots & Shoots/Jane Goodall Institute Overview: The Jane Goodall Institute's purpose is to advance the power of individuals to take informed and compassionate action to improve the environment of all living things. The world-renowned chimpanzee researcher, Dr. Jane Goodall, founded the institute in 1977. Currently, there are five institute offices in five countries, including the United States, which is found in Silver Springs, Maryland.

In Africa during 1991, Dr. Goodall founded the Roots & Shoots program. This environmental education program reaches a variety of students from preschool to the university level. It is designed to involve students in hands-on activities that will benefit the environment, non-human animals, and humans. Students learn how their daily actions truly make a difference to the world around them. Roots & Shoots was historically set up as a club program where environmentally minded people could get together and participate in beach clean ups, tree plantings, recycling programs, animal adoption programs, etc. . . . The opportunities are endless. However, zoos and aquariums can benefit from this program by increasing the amount of students learning about environmental issues, highlighting the conservation work being done at the zoo, developing positive relationships with other conservation-minded organizations, and increasing community awareness about environmental issues.

By holding some kind of RSD event at your zoo or aquarium, you can make a variety of people aware of this program as well as educate them about the environment and the organizations in your community dedicated to improving the environment. If they enjoy the activities at your program they may even register their class, Boy Scout troop, Girl Scout troop, etc., with the Jane Goodall Institute as a Roots & Shoots group.

The Sunset Zoo became involved in Roots & Shoots when the zoo held the 1999 national ChimpanZoo conference. ChimpanZoo is a captive chimpanzee behavioral observation group run through the Jane Goodall Institute. Sunset Zoo hosted a RSD during the conference, which incorporated a variety of community groups including animal activities provided by the zoo. The response to Sunset Zoo's RSD was phenomenal. It was the largest RSD event ever held with more than 1,000 participants. It was also the first RSD event to accommodate students in mass numbers. Unlike the children's workshops held at Sunset Zoo, previous events had focused on teacher workshops. As you will soon see, a RSD event requires some hard work, as does any other special event, but it is well worth the effort.

How to Sell to the Education Department: Four things are always critical when looking at new programs: conservation education value, low cost, volunteer assistance (lots of it), and increasing education department program participation. RSD fits into all four categories! There are few programs that educate a large number of people more successfully. Each child leaves knowing more about conservation, culture, and the environment.

Since Sunset Zoo was able to get sponsors to cover the majority of the cost, this program did not cost much more than staff time. Volunteer assistance was a very important part of the day. It could not have happened without volunteers. From the start, the education department had a volunteer intern who worked on RSD three days each week from the end of August until the week after the event. This was key because most staff do not have enough time to take on another project in addition to their normal routine. The intern did all the footwork for the department and made the day a success. Besides at least one intern, 100s of volunteers are needed. We pulled volunteers from local high schools to assist with the groups while at the zoo, and local business and environmental organizations to present workshops. We were able to bring in more than 1,000 people in one day, which covered the last critical area and made it an easy sell for the education department. If a zoo that has only one full-time staff person in education can develop this program, anyone can with the right volunteer assistance.

Cost Effectiveness: In order for our education department to be able to run this program, cost-cutting measures were very important. In 1999 it was estimated that RSD would cost approximately \$1,500. We are planning to double that amount in 2000 due to running the event two consecutive days. To help with costs we solicited sponsors. We felt that it was important to make sponsorships cost effective for small organizations so we developed \$250 and \$500 sponsorships in addition to the donation of supplies. However, donations of any kind were gladly accepted. To solicit sponsors, we first contacted commercial organizations that were also presenters. 100% of the presenters asked became sponsors. These sponsors paid for the printing of RSD shirts, lunches, and table and chair rental for speakers and volunteers. \$1,200 was raised through sponsorships, and the remaining costs were covered by selling shirts to the children participating in RSD. These shirts were all pre-ordered and delivered before the day so the students could wear them to the zoo.

Supplies such as carpet squares, pizza, bags, and copy costs were also donated by organizations not presenting. Because we are a smaller institution, we needed to rent tables and chairs. To cut table and chair rental costs, we contacted local carpet stores and asked if they would donate carpet squares; more than 400 were donated. Each carpet square was then stenciled with the zoo logo and used for children in kindergarten through second grade. At the end of the day, these students were allowed to take a carpet square home with them as a souvenir. This was such a success that in 2000, all seating will be carpet squares.

How to Plan the Event: One to two months in advance of our event we sent an informative invitation to all the elementary schools in the area. At first we were worried about not having enough participants, but it turned out that we were forced to put a limit on the number of students that could participate in RSD and had to start a waiting list.

We felt it was important that students and their classes not just wander around the zoo looking at different booths. We wanted them to have structured programs. In order to do this we divided the students into groups of around 30 and designated each group to be named after an animal found at the zoo. The children were able to remember which animal they were and/or each had a nametag in the shape of the animal of their group (we provided the stencil for each animal group). This allowed us to reunite any lost children quickly with their groups. These groups then had a set schedule of workshops to visit. Because of time constraints students were not able to see every workshop but all did attend workshops with similar themes.

With a total of more than 800 children at the zoo, we decided to have classroom buddies accompany each group. A local middle school's seventh and eighth graders volunteered to escort the children around

throughout the daylong event. This was a tremendous help by keeping everyone on his or her schedules (see Appendix I). Classroom buddies visited the zoo before RSD to acclimate to the areas and go over schedules.

Each group rotated to a different workshop every 25 minutes for a total of six workshops. Our goal was for each group to visit at least one workshop that dealt with culture, animals, and the environment. Each presenter was given a timer to set so they would know when it was time to switch and the classroom buddies helped make sure that students went from workshop to workshop without wandering through other workshops who were wrapping up. The timer seemed to be a very good tool to keep each workshop on schedule.

Because Sunset Zoo is not very large, there were several concerns about how to handle a large number of people participating in scheduled workshops. First, where would we put all the workshops? We decided to divide the zoo into thirds and place the children in those sections according to their grade level (Appendix II). We believed this decision to be a time saver and it also helped to keep everyone on his or her schedule. Second, where were all the kids going to eat their lunch? We solved this problem by staggering the times of when the students would eat their lunch. A third problem for us to think about was where are all these buses going to park? The zoo has a field located to one side of it, so we would park all the buses there. However, in our case very few buses stayed at the zoo throughout the event.

To find workshop presenters we sent flyers to individuals and groups that had participated in past events held in partnership with the zoo. Other avenues used to find presenters included the local university, junior high and high school science clubs, Boy and Girl Scout groups, Wildlife and Parks, and local businesses. Of course much time was spent on follow-up calls after the initial flyers were sent out and on confirmations of those willing to participate. We had outstanding community support for RSD and had a variety of workshops such as African storytelling, Wal-Mart Green Team, The Children's Bookstore, and Kansas State University Horticulture Club, just to name a few (see Appendix III).

RSD 1999 was such a great success that we have decided to make it an annual event at our zoo. However, we have learned from the first year and are going to try a few things differently in 2000. The first year of the event all the buses arrived with their classroom's animal group pictured in the bus window (we provided this) so that we could match them up with their classroom buddy. Unfortunately we could not unload the children quick enough. So for our second RSD we will try to have the buses arrive at staggered times that we schedule in advance.

We have also decided to break RSD into two separate days. One day will be for kindergarten through second grade and the second day will be for third through sixth grade. This way we will be able to accommodate more children for the event and focus the workshops on the appropriate age level.

A few weeks before the event we sent teacher packets to all the participating classrooms so that they could become familiar with chimpanzees. The problem with this was that only the fifth and sixth grades were located near the chimpanzee exhibit, therefore not everyone was able to see the chimps. The 2000 Teacher's Packets will focus on the goals of the Roots & Shoots program: the environment, animals, and culture. We will also send these packets out as soon as the teachers register.

By the time we will be presenting this paper we will have just completed our RSD 2000. Statistics and other pertinent information comparing RSD 1999 with RSD 2000 will be made available at the presentation.

Conclusion: RSD is a wonderful way to incorporate a large special event into your educational programming. Three areas that need major emphasis are inviting schools, finding presenters, fundraising, and logistics. If three separate people take one area each and work as a team, RSD will be an exciting fun-filled day of educational opportunities for your community.

Contact Information

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Appendix I

Roots & Shoots Day Classroom Animal Groups

Animal Group Name (total number in group)

School Name

Teacher Name - # in class

Kindergarten – Second Grade

Peacocks (31)

Lincoln Elementary Pearson - 31

Titi Monkeys (30)

Lincoln Elementary Mayberry - 16

Riley Co. Elem. Sheperd - 14

Red-tailed Hawks (31)

Rural Center Dunlap - 13

Lincoln Elementary Echevarria - 18

Llamas (32)

Lincoln Elementary Testa - 16

Lincoln Elementary Reynoldson - 16

Canada Geese (32)

Manhattan Catholic Nilges - 17

Riley Co. Elem. Buseman - 15

Macaws (29)

Manhattan Catholic Ott - 10

Rural Center Snitker - 19

Mallard Ducks (31)

Lincoln Elementary Cink - 17

Rural Center Jones - 14

Pond Turtles (21)

Manhattan Catholic Shea - 20

Amanda Arnold Najjar - 1

Fruit Bats (34)

Riley Co. Elem. Ryan - 20

Riley Co. Elem. VanNevel - 14

Meerkats (30)

Manhattan Catholic Shepek - 30

Third and Fourth Grades

Cranes (30)

Alma Elementary Altevogt - 17

Manhattan Catholic Saxer - 13

Tufted Deer (23)

Lincoln Elementary Holzer - 23

Silver Gulls (34)

Manhattan Catholic Diederich - 17

Manhattan Catholic Murphy - 17

Coati (21)

Lincoln Elementary Williams - 21

Bald Eagles (22)

Lincoln Elementary Witt - 22

Black Swan (34)

Manhattan Catholic Wilkens - 14

Riley Co. Elem. Conrad - 20

Red Kangaroo (20)

Riley Co. Elem. Walson - 20

Wallabys (34)

Lee Elementary Schmidt - 16

Lee Elementary Mathews - 16

Emus (18)

Rural Center Reiff - 18

Ducks (22)

Lincoln Elementary Hudson - 22

Fifth and Sixth Grade

Chimpanzees (30)

Manhattan Catholic Titus - 15

Manhattan Catholic Larkin - 15

Blue Monkeys (33)

Eugene Field Bietau - 10

Paxico Elementary Capon - 23

Colobus Monkeys (33)

Riley Co. Elem. Doyen - 15

Riley Co. Elem. MacDougall - 18

Cheetah (32)

Riley Co. Elem. Shoreman - 14

Riley Co. Elem. Troyer - 18

Box Turtles (31)

Manhattan Catholic Hammerschmidt - 31

Prairie Dogs (32)

Riley Co. Elem. Haas - 14

Riley Co. Elem. Copeland - 18

Bobcat (22)

Alma/Maple Hill Nider - 7

Paxico Elementary Cook - 15

Swift Fox (25)

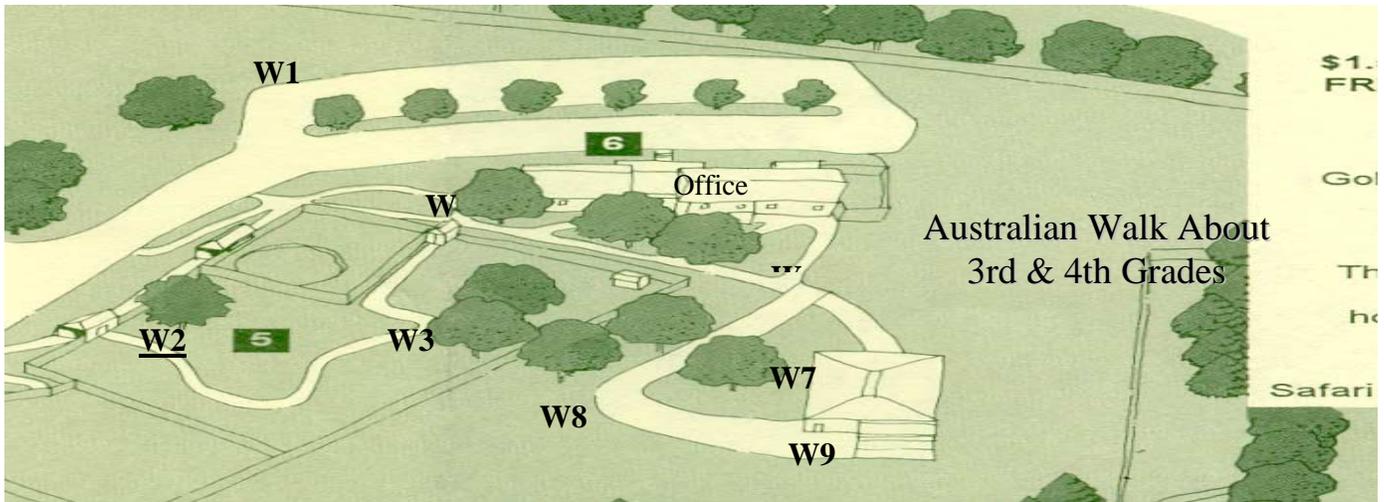
Woodrow Wilson Soweil - 5

Lee Elementary Eberle - 20

Snowy Owl (22)

Lincoln Elementary Ziegler - 2

Appendix II
Roots & Shoots Day Maps



Appendix III

Roots & Shoots Day Presenter Stations

South American (K-2 grade)

- S1 Wide Horizons
Storytelling, ethnic foods
- S2 KSU College of Education
Birds and Worms
- S3 KSU College of Education
Habitat Rummy
- S4 Riley County Humane Society
Pet Care
- S5 The Children's Book Shop
ABC Animal Book – storytelling
- S6 Manhattan Parks and Recreation
Puppets
- S7 Craft Station
African culture and masks
- S8 Sunset Zoo Horticulture
Composting is Cool
- S9 ChimpanZOO
Animal Observation
- S10 Eisenhower Middle School
Ladybug game

Australian Walk-About (3-4 grade)

- W1 Deep Creek Rehabilitation
Wildlife Rehabilitation
- W2 KSU College of Education
Habitat Lap Sit
- W3 ChimpanZOO
Bird Behavior
- W4 Milford Nature Center
Prairie Animals
- W5 The Children's Book Shop
Storytelling
- W6 Sylvan Learning Center
Butterflies
- W7 Night Spirits
Native American Dance
- W8 KSU Horticulture
Cultural crops
- W9 KSU College of Education
Oh Deer
- W10 KSU German Club
Culture

African Forest Trail (5-6 grade)

- A1 Wal-Mart Green Team
Habitats and Pipe Cleaner
Animals
- A2 Wonder Workshop
African Storytelling
- A3 KSU College of Education
Classroom Carrying Capacity
- A4 Riley County Conservation District
Water Quality
- A5 ChimpanZoo
Chimpanzee Behavior
- A6 KSU College of Education
Wild Edible Plants
- A7 KSU Foods and Nutrition Interest Group
Ethnic Foods
- A8 Tuttle Creek Corps of Engineers
Skins and Skulls
- A9 Clean Cities
Clean Cities Program

Lunch programs:

- Wamego Science Club—Habitats and Oil Spills
- Blue Valley Science Club—Rolly Pollys

Opener for Dr. Goodall:

- John Stark—Red Wold Productions