applying-empathy-practices-to-...ollections-related-programming

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SPEAKERS

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo)

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 00:15

Hello, everybody. Well, welcome. Thank you for taking some time to join us today. Just try and get all my stuff set up. All right. Go ahead and give folks about a minute or so to join. Before we get started, I just have a couple introductory info slides for y'all, where we really dive into our conversation today. In the meantime, if you want to take some time and pop in the chat, your name, the organization that you're joining from as well. So you get a sense of who is all with us in the room today. That would be fantastic.

01:21

Hi, Paul. Hi, Alyssa. Hi, Sharon. All right. Looks like the waiting room has slowed down a little bit. So I'll go ahead and get started with these introduction slides to make sure y'all really have as much time as possible to hear from the folks who are not me today. So for all of you who have not met me before, my name is Emily Bernhardt, I use she her pronouns. And I'm the empathy network specialist at Woodland Park Zoo. And today we are having our learning group on applying empathy practices to Biofach collections and related programming. So if you are new to the network, or maybe haven't attended one of our learning groups before, I just want to start with a quick introduction of who we are as a network. So the advancing conservation through empathy for wildlife network is a learning network that creates and shares effective practices to foster empathy for animals and people eating to conservation actions. We are currently made up of 27 AZA accredited zoos and aquariums throughout the United States. And staff at those organizations, like the ones that we'll be presenting today are our network members. We also have over 100, affiliates at 70 Plus organizations worldwide. And as a network, we define empathy as a simulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand and care about the perspectives of another person or animal. And I can go ahead and drop a link to our resource library in the chat. Once I am done with these, in case any of you would like to peruse kind of more of those foundational resources that result in this definition a little bit more. Before we get started, I just wanted to plug we have some couple upcoming events in April that I wanted to mention. So we have another learning group in about

two weeks on animal factsheets and empathy practices. We also have the opening meeting for the steering committee on the 16th. And if this, again, is your first network event, or you're new to the network, and really want to kind of get a foundation under your belt, who the network is what we do and learn a little bit more about empathy practices. We will be hosting an introduction session at the end of April. And you can get a introduction to all of those sorts of things. And I'll drop the link to all of these in the chat as well in just a second. But you are not here to listen to me today, you are here to listen to our wonderful presenters. So we have three folks from across our network who are going to be sharing on their Biofact related projects. So we'll be hearing from Christine at the Minnesota zoo talking about the ivory lab program. And then we'll hear from Mackenzie at Woodland Park Zoo, talking about docent bioeffect guides. And then Shana at the Zoological Society of Milwaukee is going to bring us home talking about some biofact evaluation tools. After we hear from all of our presenters, we're going to go into some small group discussions where you can select the speaker that you kind of want to chat with a little bit more and have discussions in these three individual breakout rooms. And then before we close, we'll come back and do some shout outs q&a for everybody. If you have any questions at any point during the presentations, feel free to drop them in the chat. And this recording will be shared out with anybody who registered as well as the general network, typically within a week. But I'm going to go ahead and stop screen sharing and pass it over to you Christine to talk about the ivory lab.

05:04

All right, well, thank you. And so we had a lot of people online. So that's awesome. I'm going to try and share my screen now. So hopefully you guys can see the big elephant. Yes. Yeah. I was, I was telling Emily, we had some internet issues out here today. And it wasn't working. So. But yeah, so my name is Chris Ness. And officially here at the zoo. I am the biofact coordinator. And I also teach classes here. So I kind of pulled double duty. One of the things that we recently kind of created was something called the ivory lab. And just for a quick background, because I know every zoo kind of classifies bio facts a different way. And so for us at the Minnesota zoo, when we say bio fact, we are talking about a biological artifact. So basically, a remain something that was part of, or in the case of a bird nest was built by a living animal. And we as of today, we just counted, we have 3126 pieces in the system of real biological artifacts. So we don't count plastic skulls or anything like that those are in a separate a separate bin. And are, when we were looking at our ivory collection, we have about about 56 pieces at the zoo, most of them are elephant, we have a couple walrus pieces, and a couple of sperm whale teeth that are screwshot and are really, honestly very beautiful. And we were looking at, you know, how do we use these items in a meaningful way? And how do we make sure that, you know, we're being respectful to the fact that they are remain right there, their teeth, and we want to make sure that we're being respectful in that in that way. And we created the lab, because we have really two zoo camps. One is called wildlife heroes, and one is called wildlife agents. And they both look at the animal trafficking problem. And unfortunately, historically, the ivory was not being used in a very meaningful way, it was kind of like a poaching is bad, pass this around, look at it, now you're done. And there wasn't a lot of context, and there wasn't a lot of anything for it. And things developed a little bit. And then they started using it as a substance to test fingerprinting on which you can fingerprint anything, I don't know why they chose to use an ivory bracelet to practice fingerprinting on the way that they were doing it using clear tape to lift the print off of the surface was not exactly from a museum setting, not the best thing to do with ivory. And my lights just went off. So that was not the best way to treat the ivory. And so we didn't want to damage that ivory we wanted to make it meaningful. And so we created the lab situation. So one we could use the collection and use it more effectively. And to kind of

recreate an experience that maybe a wildlife agent would have. That's what these camps were basically focused around is, is combating wildlife crime. And rather, the agents don't just pass around an ivory bracelet, you know, how do you figure out that it's actually ivory. We wanted students to think about different careers with wildlife we didn't want them to just think of because everybody's like our be a keeper Well, there's so many other ways to go that you can help wildlife and so this was a bit of an eye opening for a lot of ours or a lot of our students because they didn't know why really like art. Okay, let's talk about how you could draw this and this, you know, art and and make it a forensics class on how to draw ivory or something like that. And so it kind of really expanded what the students were thinking about when they talk about animal careers. And then probably the hardest side you know, you talk about the people on both sides of the ivory trade. Right? It's not just it's not just the good guy, the bad guy that the elephant the not elephant. There's a lot of different sides to it and how deeply Do you want to go into that? So the gist of how it works is actually pretty easy. We ordered a bunch of plastic, get them on Amazon jewelry trays with the you know the nice velvet liners And we not only with our ivory pieces that we had, and we did choose pieces that were, you know, if it was a little elephant figurine, we gave them the ones that already had a broken leg that already had some nicks and stuff. And we didn't give them the museum display pieces. But we gave them the jewelry trays. And then we had the ivory pieces, we had different pieces of bone from our collection that maybe busted off or something, we didn't know what to do with them anymore. Hey, let's put in them out. We had other teeth, we probably all have a drawer of random teeth, somewhere. We had plastic, we use those vegetable ivory, the tigernuts. And then when it came time to, to kind of do the lab, we had UV blacklights magnifying glasses. And then we had a bunch of other educational materials and visuals that kind of help support the kids. And they they basically get a tray with six to seven pieces in it. And it is important for the teacher to set it out in the way that it's pictured. Because that definitely helps the students because if it gets mixed up. Sometimes our teachers aren't real good at being able to identify it if it's their first time teaching it. So to put it you know, on the tray, they can kind of look to see which which pieces or which. And we have a couple of different ways that they can test for ivory. But the two biggest ones are here on on the slide. They look for those schrager lines, which are the the cross hatching lines and the ivory. Some of them are extremely easy to find. Some of them when we get to our older kids are extremely not easy to find. And we have one piece that I think we gave it to college because I think like half of them figured it out. Because it's a tiny little piece, it doesn't fluoresce, like the others do under that UV light. That UV light test. You know, of course, you got to make sure with fifth and sixth graders that they're not shining at each other's eyeballs. But it is really cool to go into a closet, a black room, and they get to shine that light about 12 inches from their tray. And yeah, the ivory usually lights right up. Unfortunately, sometimes, so does the different teeth you put in there, because what are what's every tooth. And so sometimes the other teeth light up as well. So then they have to use steps two and three and look for the trigger lines and look for the other things. And so sometimes it's super easy, sometimes it's not. We have had the ivory lab has kind of had a little spin off already where we have a wildlife age. And we have vanishing animals, which is a school based program. So these other programs were based through our zoo camp where we had you know, they're here for a week, we had a little bit more time. But the ivory lab spun off into a vanishing animals class, like schools come class. And where they get to the students break off into groups of I think like five or six, and they get to unpack a piece of luggage that's been flagged at TSA. And some of them have, you know, I have ivory in it, some of them have fake, you know, fake pangolins and fake animals being smuggled across the border. Some of them have, you know, is it legal leather is illegal leather. And so they get to kind of go through it all. And one of the steps is yeah, they think they find a piece of ivory, they take it back to the lab, and check it for its for its reality. And then here are some of the questions that we're working on. And if you guys have great answers, share, please. One of the big ones is how do you when

we're talking about empathy, how do you talk about wildlife conflict, trafficking, illegal trade or whatever, without making it an us versus them situation? Some of this stuff is very culturally focused. How do you you know, how do you talk about Tiger trafficking in Southeast Asia without making it a cultural? Us Them? How do you acknowledge traditions and ceremony in the modern world? You know, sometimes, how do you do that? This is one we talk about a lot with even some of the younger kids, but is it okay to have empathy for the people who participate in the illegal wildlife trade, but no empathy for the actions that they take? Watching fifth, and sixth graders argue about that has been they have some big conversations. And then you know, the last one is nothing happens in a bubble. And we need to figure out the reasons why. You know why these things are happening. And the thing we give to the kids all the time is like this is a complicated issue. It's not black and white. And so that is

15:06

and there's all of our, our critters that give us our ivory. When we do the bigger program, it's usually when we do the zoo camp version of it, it can be about a half an hour because we go through all the different kinds of where ivory comes from and talk about where the ivory comes from. And then we talk about, you know, the different animals and then how like, elephant trafficking has changed to push other animals into situations of being trafficked as well. And so, yeah, it's the stuff that we've been able to. To do so far, has been really fun and really amazing. We're not we haven't run this program, a ton yet to know exactly what's working and what's not. But it's definitely got a very good start.

16:01

That's all I have for right now.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 16:04

Awesome. Thanks, Christine. All right, Mackenzie, I will pass it off to you next.

16:16

Yeah, all right. Hi, everybody. Um, I want to apologize firsthand for my dog. She will be making appearances. Today, I'm going to share this document with everybody

16:46

All right, does that look okay?

16:48

Yes, we can see the document. Beautiful. Alright,

16:51

so what we're doing here, this is a project in collaboration with my advisors at the university, as well as with the volunteer engagement department at Woodland Park Zoo. So the what and why of this project is the development of a guide to to give docents and the individuals educators that are hands on working directly with these objects, the tools to create in very positive, effective, long lasting interactions, that further empathy for the objects themselves, the animals that are connected to these objects, the living counterparts, so on. So, namely, this guy has developed in response to questions, I call them the hard questions capital H, capital Q, things like, why did it die? And how? How did you die? Why did you kill it? The things that the 5678 year olds are asking us on a daily basis. And that also branches into other sensitive topics like spirituality, religion, ethics, morality, some of the things we've already talked about today. So what this project is rooted in is going to be inquiry based learning IB L, which essentially is put, in most simplest terms, student lead learner lead. So what we're doing is we're setting up these foundations for effective interactions, where we are guiding the learners through, but they are asking the good questions themselves, they are coming to the conclusions themselves, and we are just guiding them gently in the right direction. These hard questions, things like like I said, How did you die? And why did you kill it? Are these questions that these little kids are asking us all the time, but also things like when it died, did it go to heaven or other questions that are in no way our place as scientific educators to align with one way or the other. These guests are coming to us from with their own backgrounds and their own unique experiences. Which speaks to a couple other things that we're incorporating here a couple other foundational principles is going to be social emotional learning. And of course, the constructivist learning theory which is a big deal for me personally. And that this is where the equity for the learner comes in, where they are going to be coming to us with these past experiences, previous knowledge they've already built through their, their lives, through school, camps etc. And we are going to interact with these previous Honor them honor their pre existing knowledge and add to it and build upon it with them. There's a few other principles we're looking at here. Namely, Woodland Park, zoos, empathy bridge. So of course that goes from when you're having this interaction with people. And this applies to the living animals at zoos, aquaria, etc. You're going to start with assuring welfare well being introducing the animal, as an individual highlighted their autonomy and choice and forming the audiences of the animals, unique story traits, getting to know almost personify the animal a little bit. But not too far to anthropomorphize. invite the audience to observe, take perspective, and encourage care for its species. And all of these things can be molded together into what we're calling Visual Thinking Strategies and sciences is a principle that is, has been developed by a few different organizations across the nation. But it's still in its infancy, how it's being applied. And I found an opportunity to apply it really beautifully with docents at zoos that are working firsthand with these objects. So what we're doing through this workshop where we're training the docents interacting with them. Again, this guide was originally developed after a focus group with Woodland Park Zoo docents, asking what it is that they could benefit from what it is that they were looking for help with support with et cetera. So this is a response to that. And Visual Thinking Strategies is an inquiry based learning framework that incorporates all the great things about social emotional learning, and constructivism and all those big buzz words that I already mentioned earlier. So in traditional Visual Thinking Strategies, we're looking at these three questions, we set up a piece of artwork, we say, what's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that what more confined, and that is all highlighted with pointing and paraphrasing, and, essentially, we create this space for learners to be open, vulnerable,

accepted, welcome, safe. And there is with art, there is no right or wrong answer. Of course, with science, there are some right and wrong answers. Things like when we're looking at a bio fact. And it's let's say

22:49

we're looking at a lion or wolf and the child says that's a bear. That is factually incorrect. But with BTSs, these ignore these ideas are acknowledged and addressed. Instead of correcting saying, well, actually, this is a, we're gonna say things like, what do you see that makes you say, this is a bear the child, what we're doing here with this child is we're honoring the connections that they've already built. Because they saw a skull, they saw that belonged to an animal, they saw it belong to an animal that probably had sharp teeth is large. And they already made all these connections and jumps to it's a large, carnivorous mammal. And it's really, really easy to jump completely over that and go, Well, that's not actually a bear, it's a lion. And here's why. Instead, I want to know the connections, I want to know more about the connections they already built with this object. And by doing this, the idea is that we are allowing learners namely children to interact with these objects on a personal level, to explore their stories in a way that already makes sense for them because these learners are setting up their path themselves. And what we're doing as facilitators, what our job is, as facilitators is to listen, to watch to understand and to accept these processes. And this workshop, we also walk through some some scenarios here, about what it looks like to invite inquiry, what it looks like to talk about complicated issues like death and dying. And then of course, we're going to end the workshop with a series of guided questions on what do we like about this? What is working what isn't working

24:55

and that is where We will do that sorry, guys, did I finish my screen sharing,

25:11

we no longer see your screen. Beautiful. Okay.

25:14

So that is where we are entering this, this world of inquiry based learning. And that's the point of this project here is to give those into tools to talk about these hard questions that always come up when we're working with bio facts. And this is something that can be overlaid on other programming to practice, how to teach and how to learn in ways that are accessible for everyone, and that are effective in developing empathy and care for not just these objects, and the animals that they belong to, but the living counterparts and even further using this development of empathy, to inspire conservation action, and so on and so forth. So you can see where the empathy bridge plays, comes into play. And you can see where the, the these other really wonderful principles are enacted in order to reach a wide audience. And install care and still care and compassion. And so this project is still about halfway complete. It's going to be

complete in June and published. So I'm really open to any questions or queries about that. But yeah, so that's what I'm working on. Personally, I'm really happy to share it with you and talk more about Visual Thinking Strategies and Visual Thinking Strategies in science.

26:55

Awesome, thank you, Mackenzie. All right, we will hand it over to Shanna to take us home with the final presentation. Before we slip a little bit into our breakout rooms with the individual presenters.

27:14

I'm having some major connectivity issues. So if I drop off, or audio drops out if someone could give me a little sign. So I thought I would split my time between two major topics involving bio facts, one being the evaluation piece, and how we are doing some light evaluation around a biotech use with our classes, and then our outreach events. And then I thought I would talk about the other piece that I have mostly focused on after our ACE for Wildlife grant concluded. And that is the care and maintenance of our collection and how that is related to empathy for wildlife and how we talk about the care and maintenance of that collection with other people. So I'm going to share my screen. We share this. So can everybody see the document? Okay. Yes, we can. Yes, perfect. Okay. So, what I did was I took our MECAP tool that we use for live animal encounters. And I modified it to, um, to include more of the questions that we tend to see from from kids when they're interacting with biotechs. And sometimes adults, I the some of the things that McKenzie, you were saying like they ring real true, like did you kill it? One kid asked our, our manager of innovation and community engagement, did you rip this things bones out, which is a really horrific way of asking if we were the culprits behind the death of the animal. But what I did was I kind of made it a form where people can just take this anywhere, like we take a lot of bio facts off site for our innovation and community engagement, things that we do out in the community. So I wanted this to be something that was a little shorter than the traditional kneecap that people could receive just a little bit of training on but still do on the fly because we only have one evaluator on staff for for public programming. So I shortened a couple of the categories, but the ones that are specific to filofax are. Let me scroll down here expresses concern for an individual animals well being after viewing the Biofach particularly we found that animals with faces tend to to generate this kind of questioning and this kind of concern for animals. If we're bringing out like a sample of cheetah fur, we tend not to get that question, but if we bring out the full pelt, we tend to get that question a lot. And taxidermy as well provokes that question. So anytime someone expresses an animal's well being, asking if we personally, are the the people responsible? That's where I would, I would check that off. And I'm Mackenzie, you're like, do they go to heaven? I don't have anything on here for that, because I have not heard that one yet, but I can't believe I haven't. Because at the museum, I used to hear things along that line. So I might have to go back and add something to this form. And then demonstrating care behavior or beneficial action. Even though the animal is not alive. I still wanted people to be able to mark those things down. Because when I show you the next piece of what I want to talk about, having kids interact with the bio fact gently, is an important way of showing whether they understand the importance of the animal even after it is as passed on. So making sure that like if we tell them, the tiger pelts, you want to brush against the or not against the grain of the fur with it, like you're petting a cat at home, if they're just kind of like running their hands all over it, or if they're like throwing like

a piece of a skull, you know, like the top part of it to their their teammate, we want to make sure that we are recording that. And we've had, you know, unfortunately, some instances where we have taken things like off site that have returned broken, because kids were not being careful with them. But to me, that's valuable information, because it demonstrates how they, you know, how they are currently feeling about the value of that object. And that's like a tougher nut to crack, I think. But right now, gathering data on that I think is important. And then recognition of the animal as an individual. So this to me is important, too, because it seems like this type of thing can transcend whether the animal is alive or not. And that is indicated by we take these animals, these taxidermy pieces off site, and students really want to give them a name. And we, you know, we don't anthropomorphize we don't do the taxidermy were like, our like grey squirrel or has like a little hat on or something like that. But we do ask the kids like, what do you think their name would be? So we have like Dr. Sol, the skunk that lives in our office, and kids named him as such, and we voted on it. And now when we take him out, we say like, that's his name, because some kids, you know, at an event thought that that fit his personality, like how he's posed and everything, so, but we would have kids reading the animal as such, like saying, Hi, Dr. Sol, bye Dr. Sol. So I think that that's important too, because even though it is now an object and not a living thing, we are still seeing empathy output, where they're like speaking to the taxidermy as if they would, to an animal that was moving around inside of its habitat. So, again, I'm using this to just capture some very preliminary data about that on our off site excursions, I have used it occasionally in classes as well. But we are just now like evaluating our increased bio fact usage, based on the fact that we are no longer taking animals off site, like live animals off site because of empathy reasons. So I imagine this document will see an increase in usage. And then I might have more data to report back on. And I'm happy to share this as well post meeting. And if anyone has any feedback on things that they think belong on here, I would love to hear it because it is a working document. Emily, how am I doing on time?

34:01

You got a couple more minutes if you want to keep going? Sure.

34:04

Okay. The next thing I'm going to pull up is the talking about the care and maintenance of objects. Can everyone see the smushed Tiger? We still see the MECAP tool. Alright, let me stop sharing. Start sharing again. Picture of a tiger. Does everyone see this?

34:27

We now face much tighter. Yes. Okay.

34:30

So, one of the major things that I did as an offshoot of doing the work with our building crew grant with ACE for Wildlife, was I started to be interested in how we care and maintain care for and maintain our collection. So this is just one example of how lack of care for an item or lack

of maintenance can lead to damage to the item sometimes permanent sometimes irreparable. So this is a Tiger pelt this tiger did not live with us. This was a donation from from many, many, many years ago. But as you can see, like, I hope the photo does it justice, this face is completely squished in like this. And children found it disturbing, we generally would like fold it under, because it looks pretty bad. And to me, this seemed like it did not do service to the animal and is not the most empathetic way to display this animal and talk about this animal. So what I set out to do is to repair it, and see if I can, so you can see, it's pretty flat. And we use this in our program called JAWS, claws and paws. So this is kind of like the star of that program. And as you can see, like it's pretty damaged. But in the process of trying to find in the process of repairing it, what I wanted is to be able to have them show the full face to the students and talk about the adaptations of the whiskers. And like the eyes and all of that, which at the moment we were not able to do. So what I did was I built a model using the tiger skull. And then I cut that out and filled it. And you can see the sample model right there. And I wove more around it to accommodate for the musculature of the head. And here's it sitting on the model of a head, we soaked it in water, you can do like a combination of water or saltwater. But I laid it on top of this mold. And this is the after product, or you can see that it's now like a full Tiger face, it's no longer smushed. And we are able to now use that in our programs. And the the face is like holding its shape a lot better. In addition to doing things like repairs, we did a full inventory of our Biofact collections. So now, people are able to go into our storage area, and pull those items out and find them a lot easier, which has led to an increase in Biofact usage this past summer. So I tracked it last summer, and I'm going to track it again this summer. And I'm thinking that we are going to see at least a 30% increase in the use of our collection, because of how it is stored and maintained. At the moment we went through, we went through the Milwaukee Public Museum to get information on how to store our collection. And what I did was I took that and scaled it back a bit because we are obviously using a teaching collection. So at the at the end of the day, we don't need to store everything in like, you know, very, very specific boxes that you know have, like, you know, humidity controls in each of the cabinets. But we ended up doing that anyway, just because of the because of the location that the items are stored in. So I'm happy to share the like a sample of our inventory if anyone is looking to do that. And then also the care and maintenance guide that I used for restoring the tiger pelts. If anyone has the same conundrum, or they have like, you know, something that has been kind of switched beyond repair, it takes about a week, and it takes a lot of room. And you really have to soak, like you put an entire pelt inside of the head inside of water. And it's a little scary, but it turns out really nice. And that's I think I've probably gone over Emily, I'm sorry.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 38:58

No worries, that was a incredible restoration. That was really cool to see. All right, so we now have some time. If y'all would like to chat with one of the presenters more in depth about anything they discussed, if you have questions about the tools that they presented anything with their programs, if you would like to engage with some of the questions that each of the presenters posed, they're still wrestling with themselves. We'll be in these breakout rooms for about 10 or 12 minutes to start these discussions and make some connections. And then we'll come back into the main space for the last five minutes or so and see if there's any general q&a that maybe didn't get a chance to get asked in those breakout rooms. And yeah, if any guides or documents if folks are willing to share those. I can send those out to all of the registrants afterwards if y'all just want to send those to me, because I think there's a lot of control opportunity for some really cool stuff to be done with all This talks. So I want to go

ahead and open the breakout rooms. Shana, Christina Mackenzie, I've already placed you in your rooms, everybody else, you should be able to self select which room you would like to go to. And we'll be in there for about five or so minutes. And the rooms should be open now.

40:28

Everybody Oh, there we go. Welcome back, everybody.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 40:37

That's it, folks. Hop back in time for some general questions before we close. All right, welcome back into this main space, everybody, we have a little shy of 10 minutes left. Hope you all had some good conversations in the rooms that you went to. But I wanted to make sure folks had some time to ask questions of all presenters for a couple minutes. Before we close out the meeting today, feel free to raise your hand come off mute, or pop your question in the chat and then I can read it off. Oh, there's a question from Ben. And I'm assuming that this is for Shana. What do the numbers on the evaluation document mean?

41:36

Sorry, I wanted to just quick look at the documents to see if I was missing any numbers. They're just the the number like in that particular category. So there's two subcategories in that category. They don't have any other deeper meaning, especially because they don't link exactly to the, the makeup because some of them are different or modified. So they're just for me to keep track like, so if I want to say on the bio fact thing, like 13 kids showed, like number one in that category. I know what that means. Yeah, sorry. It's not a scoring system, I tend to do because it's usually just me. And because we can see upwards of like, 1000 kids, sometimes with those. With those interactions, I do a presence absence. And if I can, like I will try and take notes. But if you have time, and you have multiple people that can like go around and use the document, you can certainly have them, like score every single person that they see that does that behavior. But we found that with, with outreach events like Juneteenth day, or family free day, you know, we're seeing like so many people, the volume is impossible, for one dedicated person to just sit there and like keep track of those things. And because their outreach events, the tabling tends to be such a short lived thing, that you're not following a kid around like an exhibit, or like a habitat you are, you're just kind of looking at them, like look at a wolf Pelt and go huh. And like maybe make a comment or two, and then they move on. So presence absence is usually a little better for that. But if you want to use it for a more extended thing, like a class, for example, then you could do where you would pick a kid or two and follow them throughout the the interaction. Sorry, that was a long answer.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 43:32

Thank you. I have another question. Curious what the training process for biofact uses, like other institutions? Do you have mandatory training? Do you have no training but optional workshops training for both staff and volunteers? I wonder if each presenter could give a brief

kind of overview of what that looks like. Or if folks across this Zoom Room want to pop it in the chat with their org looks like that would be great as well.

44:05

I can go real quick. We have training for both staff, education staff and volunteers. It looks a little bit different depending on what you're doing, if it's a classroom versus out in the main zoo grounds, just based on crowd control and things like that. But yeah, both get training. And then for that second question that popped up about language and what we call things. Um, we get we don't get real specific about that when I'm training people, I actually remind them that their physical remains of an animal, but that's only in training and that's kind of to boost their empathy and getting them to think about it's not just a thing, it's an actual, biological domain. I have found that that creates the staff to treat things better. It's not just a feather. It's a you know, thing, whatever, whatever our staff is comfortable, if it's a pelt if it's a fervor to skin, we're pretty loose with that.

45:11

I have found some times using monetary value of things or the cost of repair as a, as a gentle reminder to people to, you know, if they're not prone to treating objects with empathy. Thankfully, we haven't had, you know, many instances of that, but reminding people like, hey, please package the skull gently because it would cost us $800 To get another one. Or like, Hey, we should probably take good care of this pelts because we will not get another one. Like there will not be a tiger that dies on site that we will be able to retain itself. Just for, you know, the way things are now, with, you know, the exchange between the zoo like there are bigger fish that get those items before we do now. So taking care of our collection is not only empathetic, but it ensures that we have these items to interpret with, beyond, you know, the scope of our careers, hopefully, that these items will continue to serve, like even beyond that.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 46:16

Awesome. And then there's a message from Claire in the chat around Woodland Park Zoo, docent training. So for the docents. They participate in an eight week long training program, which covers general interpret strategies as well as how to work with and interpret bio facts with visitors. A lot of this is led by existing docents, docents, but we are currently exploring how to further incorporate staff and new best practices as we work with a broader docent community integrate myopathy usage amongst staff. So it looks like we have time for one more question. So Courtney, I'm going to use yours to close this out. Do we all use the word biofacts? Or are there more empathetic descriptors used? The one I use is still specimen, but that feels very sterile letter, one of the words that folks use to describe these sorts of artifacts.

47:10

Um, I can speak, I guess I'll just speak on that, um, biofacts is obviously the term that we use in the institution, if I'm trying to communicate what's going on here with fellow staff, with docents, volunteers, et cetera. But a lot of people don't know that word. What that means they obviously

know, artifact they know. Drawing the difference between like biological artifact as opposed to other forms of physical specimens. In different indifferent. Yep, Karen said the exact same thing in different disciplines. But I'm I through this inquiry based learning. And I think transparency is so effective when you're talking about these sensitive topics, saying exactly what it is and encouraging the learners the audience to use the part of the body that it's representing, even using it as a, you know, a deeper learning opportunity for understanding like what things are called. So instead of a claw, maybe it's a Talon, or otherwise, for example. And I think that that's an amazing way to build empathy is to describe what it is what it came from, to honor the animal that it's coming from. But also use it as almost a learning opportunity and personalize it to the animal. It's not just a bone, it's a femur, it's a leg bone. With kids, that works really beautifully, because then they're also able to learn us language skills and learn about like the parts of the body and things like that. And they always love to be like, I know where the leg is where I know where the elbow is, like these little four year olds. And it can really personalize and build some really great connections, using those specific terms.

49:09

And I add to this a little bit to this conversation, especially what we know. And in terms of our empathy initiative that we're we're talking about our living animals here, you know, we want to use their pronouns, she, you know, he, they like each other, that kind of thing. And I think, I think maybe we should start down the path of doing the same things to bio facts. So you may have a piece of Tiger felt, right? There's no head, there's no tail, but it's a piece of Tiger belt, and somebody is exploring it and you'll get those questions like Where did you get there? I think it's a really important if you know, where this pelt came from. We have one case of Tiger felt, well, I know where that tiger came from. It was an animal that lived here about, I don't know 33 years ago, who passed it When he was 22 years old, a 22 year old Tiger when he passed away, and so I just tell kids that he was a tiger that lived here needs to pass away when he's very old 22. And so we have some of his fur, so that he can continue teaching kids about how amazing tigers are. In that sentence, I'm saying, See, now, if I didn't know that this tiger was from this pelt was from that tiger, I can still use the term he or she, because it really doesn't matter. It's a skull, it's a it's a tooth whatever. But we can extend our empathy towards animals and these bio facts by giving them a he or she pronoun designation. Most animals are a year see, the concept of de is a human concept. There's a few hermaphrodites out there in the, you know, the animal world, but for the most part, they're male or female. And that's another way that we can extend this empathy to an inanimate inanimate skulls, you know, kind of increasing the empathy that it was a living creature, a sentient being at one point. So that should I think, be maybe a part of philosophical change, if not it? Yeah. So she's still around and helping teach kids about how amazing animal is

51:28

I think one of the things too, and this is probably a much bigger conversation is, we sat down with some of our keepers and ask them how they felt about us using the names of the animals themselves. And some of them had quite a strong reaction to that. Because they, you know, they work with the animals every day, and they have like a relationship with them, that they one of them said it would be like putting my grandma on a table. And like, using her, like interpreting with her, which I thought was a very, I was not anticipating that reaction. But it seems like there's like a graph like, distance and time from like, the person's memory, it

becomes a lot more like acceptable to use the names and history of the animal. Like we have a wolf pelt from the 90s. And no one is like upset that we use like that Wolf's name and say, like in the 90s, they lived here, they lived a long life, and then they passed away. And we're still learning from them. Because you can't get close to a wolf like this in real life, or you shouldn't. But if a tiger or you know an animal or to die now, when we were to acquire that pelts, I don't know that we would use the animal's name, or that we would have to have a much bigger conversation about that. Because in living memory, like or in like employment, memory, people remember that animal. And it might be very upsetting to some people. We still need to do some digging on that. But it is an interesting viewpoint that we had not considered and I think needs a little more exploration. That's all.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 53:03

Yeah, I'm definitely I have something that came up at the summit as well as a topic of interest. So I'm kind of seeing this is like part one of the many parts Biofact interpretation series, which I personally am so in for. So be ready for for more of those coming down the pipeline. But I do want to be respectful of folks time, we've already kind of gone over our allotted hour, but this is a good conversation. Thank you all for staying over a couple of minutes. And we will share out those resources with everybody shortly. And thank you all for being here. I'm going to help with this leads to some further thought conversations and cool work down the line. Thank you all for coming and have a good rest of your day.