Introduction

Zoo School is a part of Campus Calgary/Open Minds, a curriculum-based program comprised of 14 learning sites throughout the city of Calgary. This program, funded by the Chevron Corporation, is founded on a groundbreaking educational model that represents inquiry learning at its finest. Students from grades 2-12 are immersed for a week into the world of plants and animals at the Calgary Zoo. Through hands-on activities, animal encounters, careful observation and interactions with zoo experts, students are able to experience learning beyond the walls of their classroom. Each week is tailored to meet curriculum objectives as well as a 'big picture' idea for the class. This can encompass a year of learning which helps to generate a lasting impact on students.

In 2017, Zoo School was inspired by a class who took conservation action to a new level. They created a gorilla made out of cell phones! By connecting with their local community to ask for donations and raising awareness about the importance of recycling, reducing and reusing cell phones for gorilla conservation, they became changemakers. We wondered, how could we inspire more teachers to replicate this kind of conservation action and provide a platform to showcase their work? This led to the birth of the Conservation Champions Festival. This festival combines the values of CC/OM with the Calgary Zoos mission of inspiring people to take action to sustain wildlife and wild places. We provided the opportunity and the teachers answered, with projects ranging from creating community wildlife corridors to rallying for the reduction of single use plastics, students and teachers engaged wholeheartedly in conservation action. We hope this will be one of many Conservation Champion Festivals to celebrate the power of individuals to make a positive impact on our planet.
Vision: Each student experiences personalized learning within a connected community.

1st Conservation Champions Festival
18 classes, 13 projects, 10 schools, 402 students reaching 8200 people in the community
Mission: To transform teaching and learning by increasing student engagement through community, funder, and educational partnerships.

“My students have gained a greater sense of environmental awareness and concern for the environment since Zoo School. Being able to interact with experts and see and experience animal encounters, my students have a deep understanding and desire to help save wild spaces.” ~ Teacher
Our Year in Numbers

- Total participants: 1072
- Schools: 17
- CCSD: 2
- Teachers: 40
- CBE: 15
- Zoo Experts: 16
- Parent Volunteers: 325
- Students: 707
- Weeks of Classes: 29
## Historical Application Statistics

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<td>Total Weeks Accepted</td>
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Survey Results: TEACHER

Q1. Because of my participation in Open Minds, I have a better understanding of my role in the inquiry process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q2. Because of my involvement in Open Minds, I am more likely to practice inquiry-based learning/teaching on a regular basis.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Q3. My ability to identify and create relevant and authentic connections among disciplines has increased and deepened after my participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Q4. Personalizing learning comes from an awareness of students' strengths and needs. My ability to personalize learning has grown after my participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Q5. My practice of listening to student voice through journals, conversation and experiences and responding with flexibility as we co-design learning tasks, has grown since my participation in the Open Minds program.

Q6. The orientation, summer in-service, planning meeting and CC/OM workshops throughout the year have met my needs.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
“Zoo school has renewed my passion for the environment, conservation and animals. This week will be threaded throughout the school year.”

~Teacher

“I am VERY excited to now take all the learning I have done as a teacher this year and thread it through my class next year. I feel prepared to tackle big ideas and questions thanks to the support from Open Minds!”

~Teacher

Q7. My participation in Open Minds has renewed my passion for teaching and learning.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Q8. I am aware that the Calgary Zoo takes action to sustain wildlife and wild places. 1=Strongly Disagree/10= Strongly Agree

“For once, I truly felt like I was sharing my passion for animals 100% through my teaching. I try to include nature in my teaching throughout my school year but this year was phenomenal! I could see the twinkle in the students eyes when we were at the Zoo. What a breathtaking experience like no other.” ~ Teacher
Q9. Supporting the Calgary Zoo is a good way to support wildlife conservation. (1 = strongly disagree/10 = strongly agree)
Q10. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with this school program? (1= Poor/10= Excellent)

“Our students have become more aware of who they are and their impact on the planet. They have made strong connections to the Zoo and their observation animals. They are more inclined to take action to protect the environment intrinsically.” ~ Teacher
Q11. My students are likely to apply the knowledge and skills acquired across all academic disciplines since their participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Q10. My students have gained confidence as learners since participation in the Open Minds program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Q11. My students are more engaged as demonstrated by taking responsibility for their own learning since their participation in the Open Minds program.

Q12. My students have gained a greater sense of environmental awareness and concern for the environment since their participation in the Open Minds Zoo School program.
Q13. Through participation in this school program my students learned a conservation action that they can take to help sustain wildlife and wild places. (1=Strongly Disagree/10=Strongly Agree)

“Students still today talk about their observation animal, the connections they built with that animal will last forever. Every time the students will come back to the zoo, they will talk and share with friends and family about all the things they experienced.”

~ Teacher
Survey Results: PARENTS

I have an increased understanding of zoos and the role they play in wildlife conservation

I have a different perception of/attitude about the Calgary Zoo

I will visit the Calgary Zoo in the future

I have an increased knowledge of teaching and learning in the 21st century

Strongly Agree  Agree  Neither Agree nor Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
I see my child exploring learning in new ways.

I have new strategies to support my child’s learning.

This experience positively impacted my relationship with my child.

As a Calgarian, and Zoo Member for most of my life, I feel very strongly that the Calgary Zoo does an amazing job with education and conservation. The depth of this Open Minds program exceeded my expectations and the wide range of topics covered was grade-appropriate and relevant for the kids. My perception has evolved into experiencing that the Calgary Zoo is truly a leader. ~ Parent
I am aware that the Calgary Zoo takes action to sustain wildlife and wild places. (1=Strongly Disagree/10=Strongly Agree)

Supporting the Calgary Zoo is a good way to support wildlife conservation. (1=Strongly Disagree/10=Strongly Agree)
Through participation in this school program, I have learned a conservation action that I can take to help sustain wildlife and wild places. (1=Strongly Disagree/10=Strongly Agree)

“I didn’t realize the Calgary Zoo was involved in such an intensive learning opportunity. My perception of the Zoo previously was more related to entertainment and now I can appreciate the more comprehensive approach to conservation and education for our children and us, too!” ~ Parent
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with this school program? (1=Poor/10=Excellent)

“I have always thought the Calgary zoo was amazing but now I am even more impressed with what they do!” ~ Parent
Highlights of 2018/2019

Being granted the opportunity to travel to Kenya to witness first hand the incredible **community conservation** work with the critically endangered **Mountain Bongo** that our colleague Donna Sheppard is leading, was truly inspiring. This experience will provide **new opportunities** for the program to grow by fueling and authenticating new program development and providing additional learning avenues for years to come.
Collaborating with Indigenous Learning Leader, Lesley Tait, provided new growth for programming and the ability to meet teacher requests for Indigenous knowledge integration.
Thank you Chevron, for another wonderful year of learning.