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SEATTLE



## Co-Designing Programming with Community

Updates on the Woodland Park Zoo Empathy Collaborative Project

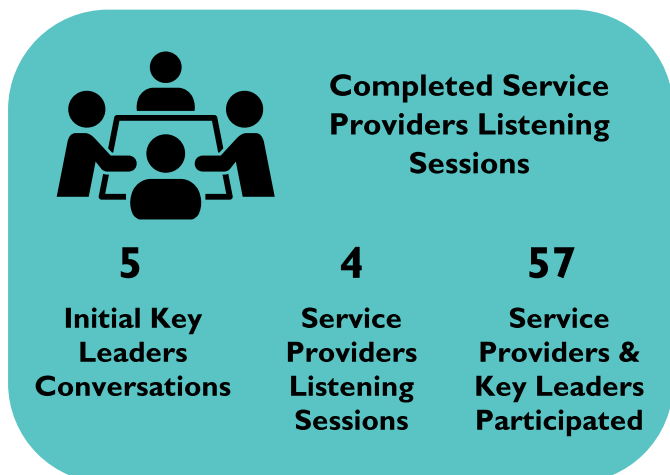
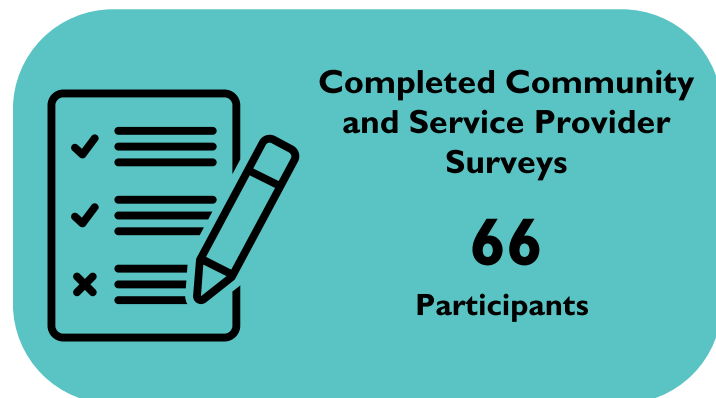
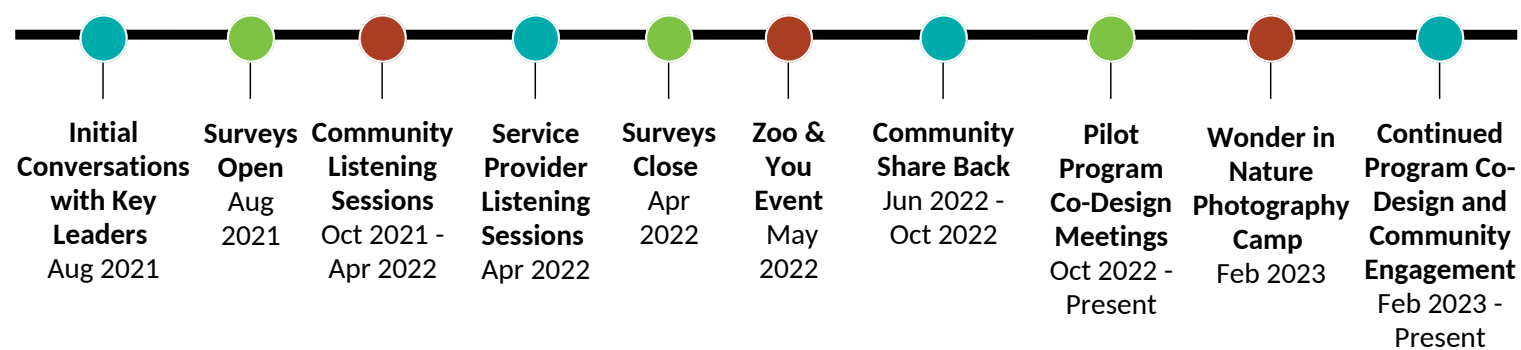
**Antioch University Seattle | June 2023**

# CO-DESIGNING PROGRAMMING WITH COMMUNITY

In July 2021, Antioch University Seattle and Woodland Park Zoo began engaging with the South Seattle community through a series of listening sessions to understand priorities and interests, past experiences with the zoo, as well as what a meaningful partnership between the zoo and the community should look like. In early 2022, key leaders and service providers joined facilitated discussions with Woodland Park Zoo and Antioch University Seattle staff to explore how the zoo can meaningfully partner with the community and organizations to support the community-identified priorities.

*What did we hear? A meaningful relationship with Woodland Park Zoo looks like being part of the community, inclusive of culture and representation, providing meaningful multicultural learning experiences and by making the zoo more affordable and accessible.*

Our goal is to be accountable for what we heard and work together to ensure programming that is relevant to the community. To reach this goal, in October 2022, Woodland Park Zoo, Antioch University Seattle, and community partners began meeting to co-design the first pilot program of the project. This program, a nature photography camp for middle and high school youth, took place during mid-winter break in 2023. Planning for the second pilot program--which will take place in 2023--also began.





## COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS: FALL 2021 THROUGH SPRING 2022

*What does a healthy, thriving and strong community mean for the Southeast Seattle Community?*

**HEALTHY, THRIVING, & STRONG COMMUNITY: A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY WITH POSITIVE ACTIONS, WELLNESS, AND EMPOWERMENT.**

*From a young age bringing kids to the zoo, I feel like you set them up for having a better connection with nature. In the sense, if you understand someone better – if you understand an animal or plant or anything better, there is more significant to that thing [relationship]. (Community Listening Session Participant, 2021)*

- **Diversity/Holistic:** A connected community is a feeling of belonging through shared interests, common goals, and values.
- **Education:** Increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to equitable education. Programs available to help youth thrive and build confidence to become community organizers.
- **Environmental Justice:** A healthy ecosystem or community is one, where basic needs are met, and everyone feels a responsibility to each other.
- **Relationships:** Where voices are heard.
- **Policies:** Equitable access -- consideration for diversity, multilingual populations, and all socioeconomics.

*What are community priorities for the Southeast Seattle Community?*

**COMMUNITY PRIORITIES: ADVANCING FOR CHANGE AND UNITING THE COMMUNITY; AFFORDABLE, ENGAGED, SUPPORTIVE, AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY.**

*More bonding between cultures, not just mine. [If] I know yours...it is really infused in everything we do. (Community Listening Session Participant, 2021)*

- **Access to Basic Needs:** Having the resources to be able to live in place. Community programming for stability, services, and support. Accessibility to healthy food, to create a community more disability-friendly, and inclusive of the elderly population.
- **Community Commons:** A collaborative process of bringing together diverse stakeholders that work together to co-design and co-produce shared, common goods and services at different scales.
- **Neighbor:** To see and know each other, to know the community, to be part of a neighborhood...to have heart.
- **Environmental Justice/Safety & Health:** To begin a healing process for the land, environment, and community; Listening to the community who are experiencing environmental injustice and acknowledge that they know their community best and are in the best position to provide leadership in change.

*What do meaningful relationships mean for the Southeast Seattle Community?*

**MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT, AND REPRESENTATION.**

*Whenever I went to Woodland Park Zoo, I never really saw anybody that looked like me. I think that's a big part of the kind of disconnect. (Community Listening Session Participant, 2021)*

*What does it look like to take kids from this community and give them access to those kinds of opportunities so that they become spokespeople, they get to develop their interest and naturally share it with the people they're in a relationship with? (Community Listening Session Participant, 2021)*

- **Part of the Community:** Inclusive community conversation that engage diverse groups including age and ethnicities; sustained communication with leaders in the community to support initiatives that will better address and support issues.
- **Inclusive:** Ongoing concerned and intentional efforts to reach BIPOC communities; be inclusive of culture and representation while creating a familiarity of culture.
- **Accessible:** Make the zoo more affordable, accessible, culturally responsive, and inclusive; accessibility includes the ease of information and reducing the existing barriers.
- **Education & Multicultural Learning Experiences:** Partner with community organizations to develop programming with immersive, inclusive, and multicultural learning experiences that meets the needs of all children.

# **WONDER IN NATURE** **PHOTOGRAPHY CAMP:** **SPRING 2023**

## **YOUTH PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

*I think that taking pictures of plants and animals and nature on my camera definitely got me closer to plants and animals. I was amazed at how good my photos came out and seeing how good the photos came out made me wanna take more photos of everything! I feel like I got closer and closer to wildlife/nature from doing this camp. (Youth Camp Participant, 2023)*

## **PARTICIPANT GUARDIAN FEEDBACK**

*Thank you for the intentional efforts engaging with the Southend. We noticed the hard work and how respectfully you approached the community. Placing the camp in our neighborhood and providing food, transportation, and equipment really helped the kids feel loved and supported. (Community Member, 2023)*

### **Positive Youth Outcomes from Program:**

- **Increased Empathy**
- **Increased Comfort in Nature**
- **Increased Skill/Comfort with DSLR Cameras**
- **Interest in Follow-Up Camp/Zoo Experiences**

### **Room for Growth/Follow-Up Programming:**

- **Need for better bathroom options for non-binary youth**
- **Interest in more career mentorship opportunities**
- **Request for clearer communication about program logistics in subsequent programming**
- **Interest in learning more about animals/wildlife ecology**

**Photos taken by Wonder in Nature  
Camp Staff**

**For questions, please email  
[CommunityCollaborative@Zoo.org](mailto:CommunityCollaborative@Zoo.org)**

