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On Wednesday, we did it again. And my team is exhausted. We held an event for around 1,000 children from the Garden City community and the surrounding areas. It was stressful, it was tiring, it was worth it. Wednesday, we held Lee Richardson Zoo's 28th annual Earth Day Celebration. For zoos, this day is a major deal. This day encompasses the core values that modern zoos hold, connection to nature and teaching visitors how to help protect our world's natural treasures.

My favorite part about our Earth Day event is that the kids are fully engaged and learning. We combine the efforts of exhibitors from our community to spread various messages of conservation. Everything is connected and we need to help these upcoming generations realize that we need to conserve our resources for the whole world.

For me this event helps my drive and refuels my soul. Watching the excited faces and witnessing the full impact in these children fills me with profound joy. Many people have the misconception that those of us that are striving toward conservation only have a love for the animals and plants in our world. This couldn't be further from the truth. A true conservationist does not see boundaries between our human brothers and sister from the natural world, we are the natural world. Humanity is part of the fully linked ecosystems of the world and we cannot separate from them even if we had that desire. Conservationists don't put nature above humanity, we wish to strike a balance to save humanity. Nature can and will exist without humanity, it is humanity that needs nature to remain the same or similar. In particular, we need it for the children that Lee Richardson Zoo and community members entertained and taught on Wednesday.

Our world is going through drastic unnatural changes and we need to work together to slow these changes. From conserving resources, reducing greenhouse gases, and maintaining the water levels of the Ogallala Aquifer we need to work toward these goals for the children we are teaching. We do it now,

they continue it then. Look up carbon and water footprint applications online and find out how you can reduce your own impact on these issues. Research legislation and the science behind them to see what will truly help generations after us. My colleagues and I don't teach these practices for the animals or for ourselves, we do it for the young smiling faces that we see at each event and at every class.

These messages aren't new. The first Earth Day was held in Washington, D.C. in 1970 to call attention to the declining health of our planet. The zoo has made Earth Day celebrations an annual tradition since 1990 to help current and future generations learn how to be better stewards of the Earth. Lee Richardson Zoo partners with other facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums with the shared themes of Party for the Planet events all over the world. While we call attention to topics of conservation for Earth Day, we can't let the lessons only happen on Earth Day. We need to continue to strive to help our world every day. Make every day Earth Day.