



### Summer camps

Children ages 2 to 14 can spend the summer learning about amazing animals, Zoo-related jobs and more at ZSM Summer Camps. Registration starts Feb. 4 for Zoo Pass members. See the brochure packaged with this issue of Alive for more information, or visit [zoosociety.org/summer](http://zoosociety.org/summer).

Intern Ana Suson helps Tyler B., 9, learn about goats during the "What's Up, Doc?" summer camp.

Intern Catherine Purdy assists camper Maya S., 9, with a goat health report.



# Learning by Teaching at Zoo Camp

When Ana Suson interned for the Zoological Society of Milwaukee's (ZSM's) Summer Camp program, she liked to end each day by asking the children about their favorite parts of the day. She'll always remember when a child responded, "Helping the elephants."

"She was referring to a coloring project we did for the 96 Elephants campaign to help with elephant conservation efforts," Suson recalls. "It touched me that I was able to show her that she could make a difference. Despite all the cool projects, songs and games we did, helping speak for the elephants was still her favorite part."

It's this type of experience that inspired Suson and fellow intern Catherine Purdy, both 20, to get up at 6 a.m. each weekday last summer to work at the ZSM's camp programs. "Every day was such a great experience," Purdy says. Purdy and Suson have been attending Zoo camps since they were 6 years old. They later served as high school assistants, and they were first-year college interns last year. Both say those experiences helped set them on the path to their future careers.

"Zoo camps sparked my initial interest in animals," says Suson, a Pewaukee native studying ecology, evolution and animal behavior at the University of Minnesota. She hopes to eventually teach children about animals, conservation and the environment in a museum or zoo setting. For Purdy, of Merton, being a high school assistant and college intern confirmed her desire to teach young children. She's studying music education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. "I love leading tours and singing songs with the kids," she says.

The ZSM runs one of the largest Zoo summer camp programs in the country for children ages 2 to 14. Interns lead Zoo tours and camp activity stations, assist with class preparation, help supervise high school assistants and keep a journal of their experiences, says Patty Trinko, assistant director of conservation education. Purdy and Suson were two of 20 interns hired out of an applicant pool of 180.

The program teaches career skills such as interviewing, writing resumes and cover letters, and getting beyond your comfort zone. The staff educators become long-term mentors. "As interns, we learn how to deal with workplace conflict, accept and give constructive criticism, be effective supervisors and build relationships with our own supervisors," Suson says. "We do a lot of self-reflection to identify areas for improvement."

"We encourage interns to use the experience as a learning lab," Trinko says. "This is a place where they can stretch themselves professionally, and the staff will support them along the way. Catherine and Ana worked collaboratively with their supervisors to identify and develop specific career-related professional skills.

Both excelled at this process, which in turn helped them grow to an exceptional level."

Purdy hopes to return this summer as a second-year intern, while Suson hopes to continue her education with an internship in another city. "One day a camper told me that she loved everything about camp and her favorite part of the day was having me as her teacher," Purdy says. "It always brings a smile to my face knowing I was part of that wonderful experience."

*By Stacy Vogel Davis*

## Internships

Applicants for the ZSM's paid internship program must be college students or recent college graduates. To apply, send a resume and cover letter to [pattyt@zoosociety.org](mailto:pattyt@zoosociety.org) with the subject line "2015 Summer Internship" by Feb. 10. For more information, including a short video about the internship program, visit [zoosociety.org/intern](http://zoosociety.org/intern).

## A Lifetime of Memories

Catherine Purdy and Ana Suson share their favorite childhood memories from Zoo camps:

**Catherine Purdy:** My best memory as a Zoo camper was getting to learn about the birds, because the Zoo used to have a huge bird-house with a bald eagle and snowy owl in the front of the building. I loved coming back to the Zoo and showing my parents the different birds and telling them facts about the animals. I also loved going to the bird show and watching the hawk fly above the crowd.



Photos provided.

Young Catherine Purdy enjoys her lunch at the Zoo. Last summer, she worked as an intern helping teach Zoo camps.

**Ana Suson:** I remember absolutely loving the chance to go behind the scenes to clean enclosures in "Senior Zookeeper" and getting to practice using a syringe to inject "medicine" into an orange for "What's Up, Doc?" I vividly recall participating in camps that I now get to help lead.



A young Ana Suson smiles from ear to ear while at the Zoo. She started attending Zoo camps at age 6.