



Kohl's Wild Theater Teacher Packet

Bullies and Bonobos



Photos by ZSM/Richard Brodzeller

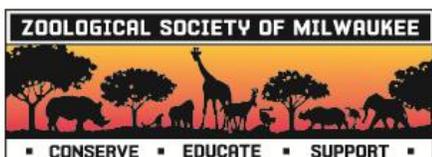


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What is Kohl’s Wild Theater?

Kohl’s Wild Theater (KWT) is made possible by a partnership among Kohl's Cares, the Milwaukee County Zoo, and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. This program provides conservation-themed theater performances using drama, songs, and puppetry to children and their families both at the Milwaukee County Zoo and within our community.

The KWT outreach program, a division of the Zoological Society’s Conservation Education Department, offers 4 different shows about a variety of topics. Our plays and musicals are approximately 30-45 minutes long, are performed by professional actors and include stories about animals and environmental conservation. KWT performances are very similar to attending a play at a traditional theater, but there **will** be many times when the audience can be a part of the show through group participation. There **will not** be time during the performance for the actors to go over curriculum or to review information. After the performance, if time permits, the actors will take a few minutes to answer questions from the audience. **Please note, there are no live animals in KWT shows.**

All of our performances are developed for an elementary school audience. Elements of our shows are entertaining for adults and younger children, but the educational information presented is targeted for a specific age range.

Bullies and Bonobos

Summary

Meet Molly, a 4th-grade “conservation agent,” in a show about caring. When Molly is confronted by a bully before a trip to the Zoo, she is unsure of what to do. Luckily, she’s helped by a bonobo -- an amiable ape that shows her the importance of empathy and cooperation. Join Molly and her classmates for this 40-minute play about friendship and one of the most fascinating primates in the world. Information in this full-length play is meant to supplement class conversations about interpersonal relationships and care for the natural world.

Target Age Range

Most appropriate for grades 2-6 in a school setting.

Theater Etiquette

Before the performance, please take a moment to review good theater etiquette with your students. It is important that students are respectful to the actors during the show. It is a good idea to remind students not to talk during the performance but encourage them to participate when directed to do so by the actors.

Educational Concepts (vocabulary presented in the show is in **bold**)

- **Bonobos** are unique **primates** that have the ability to express **empathy**.
- **Empathy** is the ability to identify with another individual’s feelings or emotions.
- African great apes are partly at risk due to the mining of a mineral called **coltan** near the animals’ **habitat**.
- **Coltan** is a mineral found in small electronics such as computers, cell phones, and mp3 players.
- One way to help African great apes is to recycle products with coltan instead of throwing them away. This reduces the amount of coltan that needs to be mined from the ground.
- **Recycling** other items, such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and paper are all great ways to help animals and the environment we share.
- Kids can work together to help endangered animals by joining a conservation organization. There are many kid-friendly organizations that focus on a specific endangered species. Some examples are listed at the end of this teacher packet. Joining a conservation organization can help protect animals around the globe.

Important disclaimer – while this show includes a character that is considered a bully, and the main character realizes that she herself acts like a bully at times, this show does not directly address appropriate methods for children to deal with bullying behaviors. It is acknowledged in the show that bullying can hurt people’s feelings. The characters in this play discuss the idea of empathy and it is through this discussion that a positive resolution is found.

About the Artists

DAVE MCLELLAN (Director) is theater coordinator for the Zoological Society of Milwaukee and serves as the producing artistic director of Kohl's Wild Theater. Prior to starting his work with KWT, Dave spent a year working as a conservation educator for the Walt Disney Company in Orlando, FL. Before moving to FL, he was a company member and assistant director with the Wildlife Theater, performing regularly at the Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo and Queens Zoo in NYC. Other selected theater credits include the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Ford's Theater, and Universal Studios Florida.

NEIL HAVEN (Playwright- *Bullies and Bonobos*) is a playwright and actor based in Milwaukee, WI. His work has been seen at various theatres and universities in Milwaukee, New York City, Chicago, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Denver, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas and more. Neil holds a MFA in playwrighting from the University of Las Vegas and a BA in Theatre Performance from UW-Whitewater.

STEVE BARNES (Set/Props Designer) is a Racine-based set designer who has designed for the Milwaukee Rep, First Stage Children's Theatre, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theatreworks, In Tandem Theatre, as well as Lawrence University and the Racine Theatre Guild. Steve holds an MFA in Scenic Design from Purdue University.

ANDREA BOUCK (Costume Designer) is a recent MFA graduate in costume design from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She manages the Costume Shop at First Stage Children's Theatre in addition to designing costumes for other area theaters.

BRANDON KIRKHAM (Puppet Designer) received his MFA in Costume & Scenic Design at Ohio University, and works as a Props/Crafts Artisan at First Stage Children's Theatre in Milwaukee. Brandon's Puppets have been seen in venues across the country.

JOHN TANNER (Sound Designer) is one of the principals of Tanner-Monagle, with years of experience in scoring, arranging and music composition for television, radio, industrial video and theatre. His commercial music has won numerous awards, including Golden Reel Awards; Telly Awards; national, regional and local American Advertising Federation "Addys", He has written original scores and designed sound for theatrical productions at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Yale Repertory Theatre, American Player's Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, First Stage Milwaukee and many others.

THE ACTORS - KWT employs numerous professional actors that perform many different roles in our various shows. Casting changes with each performance, but if you want to learn more about each individual actor you can see their bios at

<http://www.zoosociety.org/Education/WildTheater/Cast.php>.

What is a bonobo?



Top: Bonobo Bottom: Chimpanzee

The bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), pronounced “Buh-NO-BO,” is a great ape most closely related to the chimpanzee. It is the least known of the great apes because it lives in a remote rain-forest region of central Africa, and was only identified as a species in 1933. Compared to the chimpanzee, the body weight of the bonobo is proportioned differently; the center of gravity is lower, making it possible for the bonobo to stand up straight and walk on two feet. The facial skin of a bonobo is dark and the hair is black, usually parted in the middle of the head with bushy sideburns on both sides of the face. The bonobo's vocalizations are high-pitched squeals.

Because bonobos and humans have similar characteristics, some anthropologists consider the bonobo to be the best living prototype for the common ancestor of humans. While this controversy is unresolved, it has been established through genetic analyses that bonobos and humans share approximately 98% of the same genetic identity.



Range and Habitat:

Bonobos are confined geographically to a small region in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Congo River Basin south of the Congo River. Unlike the chimpanzee, which lives in a variety of

habitats, the bonobo is found primarily in lowland rain forests. Bonobos spend more time in the trees than other African apes.

Diet:

Bonobos primarily feed on fruits and leaves found in the trees. They are known to eat insects and hunt small mammals on occasion. Bonobos also have been observed to slap water up from a stream and eat the invertebrates or fish in that water.

Social Organization:

Bonobos are most frequently found in mixed groups with adults, juveniles and infants of both sexes freely associating with each other. One special feature observed in bonobo society is the low level of aggression between individual bonobos. Bonobos are less apt to engage in physical conflicts and confrontations with other groups of bonobos. Their generally peaceful society is attributed to the evolution of a highly complex social system.

Bonobos mature at about 7 to 10 years old in captivity, and at about 12 to 14 years old in the wild. Captive females give birth to one infant approximately every five years, and gestation lasts around eight months. While the infant is dependent on its mother for the first four years of life, its father and siblings are strongly associated family members.



Photo by Mark Scheuber of the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Conservation Status:

Bonobos are currently endangered and it is unknown how many bonobos are left in the wild. Wild populations have been reduced greatly by deforestation and human encroachment.

Post-Performance Discussion Questions:

Conservation:

- 1) Why didn't the conservation station work for Molly when she set it up on the playground? What do you think is a good way to encourage others to recycle?
- 2) Molly was only able to find success as a "conservation agent" when she could work together with Michael and Jane. How can working together help people protect our environment? What can a group of people do that an individual can't?
- 3) What could you do at your school to make it more environmentally friendly?

Bonobos:

- 1) How are bonobos similar to people? How are they different?
- 2) We know that bonobos are capable of expressing empathy. We don't know exactly what bonobos think about. What do you imagine a wild bonobo thinks about? Do you think a bonobo can dream? Do you think they have an imagination?
- 3) Why do you think it is important to protect bonobos? What actions can you take at home or school to protect bonobos in the wild?

Bullying:

- 1) Who was the bully in this play? What did that character do that made him/her a bully? Did other characters act like a bully?
- 2) When Michael first saw Molly being bullied by Jane, he immediately went to her side and showed friendship. Has there ever been a time when you stuck up for someone that was being bullied? What are some good ways to show friendship?
- 3) When Jane was bullying Molly, she was using her words to make Molly feel bad. Bobo and Michael were able to use words to make Molly feel better. What is the best way to talk to your peers? How can we use language to show each other respect?
- 4) During the play, Molly had a conflict with Michael and they both got mad. Michael said that Molly was acting like a bully. How was Molly's behavior similar to Jane's? How was it different? (Note to teachers, this discussion can lead to an explanation of the difference between bullying and conflict. For more information on these definitions, please see <http://www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm/bullying-prevention/interrupting-bullying/simple-strategies/is-it-conflict-or-is-it-bullying-whats-the-difference>)
- 5) Have you ever been picked on by a bully? How did it make you feel?
- 6) If you saw someone being bullied by one of your friends, how would that make you feel? What would you tell your friend who was doing the bullying?

More Information:

Suggested conservation organizations to join or support:

- The Zoological Society of Milwaukee (including the Bonobo and Congo Biodiversity Initiative): www.zoosociety.org
- Wisconsin Humane Society: www.wihumane.org/
- National Wildlife Federation: <http://www.nwf.org/Kids>
- Polar Bears International: www.pbi.org
- Orangutan Outreach: www.redapes.org

More resources about bullying:

- HRSA's Take a Stand! Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!: www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov
- Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use: www.cyberbully.org
- i-Safe: www.isafe.org
- PBS In The Mix Stop Bullying: http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/educators/lessons/bullying_guide.pdf
- Committee for Children: <http://www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect.aspx>
- www.education.com. Enter "bullying" into the search bar for many different resources.

For more information on Kohl's Wild Theater, you can see our website at wildtheater.org or email us at kwt@zoosociety.org.