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**Brevard Zoo celebrates Volunteer of the Year**

MELBOURNE, Fla., February 13, 2020 — Sandy Meierer has a lot to celebrate. At its Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Wednesday, February 5, Brevard Zoo announced Meierer as its 2019 Volunteer of the Year.

Prior to the event, Zoo staff and volunteers were prompted to nominate candidates for the award. Meierer received nods from a record-breaking 21 people—including every member of the Zoo's facilities and housekeeping crews.

Starting in the Paws On Petting Zone, Meierer soon moved to landscaping because she "loves getting dirty!" Her duties include planting, weeding, trimming and operating equipment; and she periodically helps make animal enrichment items and assists with special events. In addition to these roles, Meierer prepares a meal for the Zoo's facilities and housekeeping staff once a week.

Meierer has been volunteering at the Zoo for five years and dedicated nearly 2,000 hours of her time to the institution. Prior to retirement, she worked for Niagara County Sheriff's Office in New York state.

"Despite commuting to the Zoo from Sebastian for every shift, Sandy is one of our most dedicated, hard-working volunteers," said Kathleen Nichols, director of volunteer programs. "We are so lucky to have her and thank her deeply for her service."

In 2019, 806 volunteers donated a total of 106,802 hours—saving the Zoo \$1.28 million in salary expenses.

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*Brevard Zoo is home to more than 900 animals representing 195 species from all over the world. As a not-for-profit organization, it is a leader in the fields of animal wellness, education and conservation. More information is available at [www.brevardzoo.org](http://www.brevardzoo.org).*

*Treetop Trek features five aerial obstacle courses that whisk guests above parts of the Zoo and through lush Florida landscapes. More information is available at [www.treetoptrek.com](http://www.treetoptrek.com).*

*The Aquarium Project is a plan to construct a world-class aquarium and conservation center at Port Canaveral. More information is available at [www.theaquariumproject.org](http://www.theaquariumproject.org).*