



NEWS RELEASE

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Zoo Announces Next Chapter in Monty the Penguin's Rise to Stardom: "Monty's Marvelous Adventures"

Penguin's pandemic quarantine adventures captured in a new book about differences and acceptance

(January 15, 2020) Santa Barbara, CA - Monty, one of the [Santa Barbara Zoo's](#) penguins has had quite the year. Beginning on March 17, 2020, the Zoo closed to the public due to the global pandemic. Three days later, little Monty started to make a big difference.

A hand-raised Humboldt penguin, this curious bird loves to explore with his keeper Ellie Cullip, and although the Zoo was empty of guests, it was filled with the adventures of Monty. The brave little penguin left his familiar penguin habitat to discover the rest of the Zoo, meeting Bangori the Western lowland gorilla, Michael the Masai giraffe, HoneyBun the rabbit, the leopard tortoises and more, always making sure to find a favorite leaf along the way. Monty's adventures were shared virtually through the Zoo's social media channels, and with each new video, Monty brought more and more joy. People of all ages and from all around the world proclaimed their love for the little bird that brought smiles to their day.

These adventures have been captured in a new book, "Monty's Marvelous Adventures," written by Dori Edwards, the Zoo's Marketing Coordinator and a lifelong animal lover. She was fascinated by watching Monty explore the world outside his comfort zone, meeting so many different animals he'd never laid eyes on before. And while people were quarantined in their homes and disconnected from one another, she watched how Monty connected everyone through their shared love of his love for the world around him, and was inspired to tell the story through Monty's eyes.

"I feel so lucky and grateful to watch the positive impact Monty made on so many," shared Dori Edwards, author of "Monty's Marvelous Adventures." "He offers daily reminders of the beauty in sharing this planet, and I wanted his story to be told. I wanted people to be able to have something from 2020 that reminded them there's always a hope to hold on to, even when it feels like there's not. Monty and Ellie taught us about acceptance, curiosity, open hearts, and intentionally and consciously loving beyond and because of differences. They taught us about the importance of connection with everything and everyone. I had

this incredible opportunity to watch Monty better people's lives, to read the thousand of comments about him bringing smiles, and I also had the experience of my life being changed. Being around his energy of open curiosity reminded me to show up to the world the same way. To look at life with new eyes, to have fun, to love, to learn, to find the biggest joy in the smallest leaf.”

Monty’s keeper Ellie also plays an important role in this story. Ellie began working at the Santa Barbara Zoo approximately five years ago, and raising Monty was one of the first animal care relationships she cultivated. While the Zoo was temporarily closed in the spring, Ellie and the other keepers continued their important work, ensuring the health and welfare of the animals who reside at the Zoo. The Zoo’s keepers are always looking for enrichment activities that help increase an animal’s physical and mental activity levels, as well as remind them of natural behaviors, leading to a happier and healthier animal. With no guests around, Ellie took this opportunity to explore with Monty.

“Monty is such a special penguin, with a heart and spirit for adventure!” shared Ellie Cullip, Santa Barbara Zoo Keeper. “He may be small, but he showed such braveness and curiosity throughout all our adventures. It’s been a really rewarding experience for me as well, seeing him continue to thrive and bring so much joy to so many people, myself included!”

When discussions about the book began, [Montecito Bank & Trust](#), who sponsor Monty (and Cito Jr.), loved the idea and generously offered to sponsor the publication of “Monty’s Marvelous Adventures.” Thanks to their sponsorship, all proceeds from the book will directly support Monty and all of the animals at the Santa Barbara Zoo.

From the comfort of his rocky island to the jungles, savannas, and deserts of the Santa Barbara Zoo, Monty met some of the tallest, strongest, and slowest animals. As he learned that being different is beautiful, he taught an important lesson about what it means to accept oneself and others.

“Monty’s Marvelous Adventures” is on sale through the Zoo’s [online retail shop here](#), and the first 100 copies sold will include a free "autograph" card personally “signed” by Monty himself, with his painted flippers.

Support the Flock!

The Zoo needs the community’s help now more than ever! The public can also help support the penguins by becoming a Foster Feeder sponsor of the penguin flock. A donation of \$50 or more helps with the cost of feeding the flock. New Foster Feeders will receive a digital certificate, and recognition on the Zoo’s Foster Feeder board. For information or to become a Foster Feeder click here:

<https://sbzoo.pivvit.com/humboldt-penguin>.

About the Author, Dori Edwards

If Dori could be anywhere, it would be in the great outdoors, breathing, healing, and loving life. Hiking with her parents and learning from her dog “siblings” inspired her to commune with wild things, listening to what they can teach us. After graduating from UCLA, Dori followed her love of teaching and nature to lead kids on wilderness adventures. She became Marketing Coordinator at the Zoo, where all her loves

came together when she was introduced to a new friend – Monty the penguin. He lived, she listened, she watched how he taught people about joy, love, acceptance – and she wrote.

About the Illustrator, Ryan Carr

Ryan Carr earned his BFA in Illustration from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and his artistic interests lean to more natural subjects with an emphasis on drawing and fine line detail. He has shown his work in New York, L.A., Sacramento, Minneapolis, and Seattle, and has been featured in *Beautiful Decay* and *New Art Review* magazines. Ryan works as a freelance illustrator and muralist in southern California and is currently artist-in-residence for the Romero Foundation in Pittsburgh. He recently became the first artist-in-residence for the Museum of Ventura County.

About The Santa Barbara Zoo

The Santa Barbara Zoo is currently closed due to coronavirus concerns. Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the Santa Barbara Zoo is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to more than 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Masai giraffe, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. As a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements. Visit sbzoo.org.

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