



best innovative event—\$100,001-\$200,000 Kirkpatrick Foundation presents the ANIMAL Conference

... where animals fare well, people fare well

On March 30 and 31, 2015, the Kirkpatrick Foundation hosted the first ANIMAL Conference of Ideas, Impact, and Inspiration at the Skirvin Hilton Hotel in Oklahoma City. The vision behind this triennial conference was to bring together individuals to learn, discuss, and connect on current animal wellbeing topics in Oklahoma and throughout the world. From the pre-conference tour to the final keynote speaker, downtown Oklahoma City was alive with ANIMAL 2015 participants, alongside a few dog and cat voices that added to the attending choir. Based on attendee feedback, we believe the conference was successful in promoting the client's vision.

going wild for animal wellbeing

- The **preconference tour of Mindy's Memory Primate Sanctuary** allowed attendees to visit a sanctuary founded 22 years ago with the sole mission of providing the highest level of care to monkeys in need of refuge.
- A special **VIP tour of the Joan Kirkpatrick Animal Hospital** at the Oklahoma City Zoo gave attendees an unprecedented look into a suite where exams, surgeries, medications, and treatment procedures are taking place. This was a unique education experience as they observe veterinarians at work, live, and up close.
- Sunday evening **pictorial talk from National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore** began the conference in a moving and inspirational direction. This event was free, open to the public, and hosted by the Oklahoma City Museum of Art.
- Over the next two days, the over 300 registered attendees from sixteen states, as well as a number of drop-ins and volunteers, heard from stockmen, **critically-acclaimed journalists**, members of Oklahoma legislature, national officers of animal grantmaking non-profits, and many others.
- Numerous book signings took place in the **pop-up Cat Café & Bookstore**, located in the hotel prefunction space. Special appearances were made by celebrity cat from **America's Next Cat Star finalist**, Sauerkraut. Community agencies partnered for cat and dog adoptions.
- Throughout the conference sessions, attendees visited **animal wellbeing booths** and could even **adopt a cat or two** from local animal shelters. **Therapy dogs** were on hand for petting, relaxing, and comforting attendees.
- At our closing plenary, attendees **honored the service dogs** and ANIMAL 2015 closed in much the way it started: with a moving keynote talk from Tim Hetzner of the Lutheran Church Charities' K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry.
- The foundation's philanthropic support of animals continues with Safe & Humane. This twenty-year visionary effort includes recognizing personal and professional achievement with the inaugural **Kirkpatrick Honor for Animal Wellbeing, a \$25,000 cash prize** and medallion that acknowledges lifetime achievement in the arena of animal welfare.
- A **VIP dinner** was hosted by chairman Christian Keesee at the Park House, where an all vegan meal was prepared and served.
- The **High Flying' Disc Dogs**: Skyhoundz World Champion Lee Fairchild and Multi-Time World Qualifier Chris Meyers for a lunchtime demonstration on the Great Lawn at Myriad Gardens in downtown Oklahoma City on Tuesday, open to the public, free of charge. Local pet vendors and food trucks added to the festivities.
- The group also released the **Oklahoma Animal Wellbeing Study**, a two-year effort by the Kirkpatrick Foundation. The report, highlighted during two sessions at ANIMAL 2015, is the culmination of 104 interviews, extensive data review, and literature research regarding the status of animal wellbeing in Oklahoma.

safe & humane

Challenges included marketing to a very diverse audience and gaining momentum for attendees to engage in the conversation. This was overcome by positive press coverage, world-class presenters, engaged community leaders, and a dynamic program. Also, all meals involved working with hotel and restaurant chefs to source local food as well as humanely-raised and slaughtered meats. This also contributed to our green efforts by sourcing and involving local vendors and food producers.

The conference, though held just once every three years, is a key to achieving the Kirkpatrick Foundation's Safe & Humane mission to make Oklahoma the safest and most humane place to be an animal by 2032. We encourage conference attendees to use the positive conference energy to inspire others throughout the state and nation, by helping to facilitate the mission of improving animal wellbeing. Our team assisted in all aspects and management of this multi-day program including registration, exhibitor/sponsor management, meeting management, speaker coordination, audiovisual production, stage design, décor, offsite events, tours, transportation, VIP arrangements, and hotel contract negotiation. Since this was the first time this client has produced an event of this magnitude, we were instrumental in managing all logistics and helping consult on all aspects of the program.

