



**FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026
BOSTON MARRIOTT NEWTON**

**7:30 AM GRAB your morning beverage and breakfast ...
start your Meetups with our VENDORS and COLLEAGUES**

7:40 AM WELCOME! ... ON BEHALF OF THE MSMR AND THE 2026 ENRICHMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE ...

GINA SAVASTANO, PhD
DIRECTOR, CLINICAL SERVICES
MERCK RESEARCH LABORATORIES BOSTON

DANIELLE ELBIRT DVM, MS, DACLAM
GLOBAL ANIMAL WELFARE OFFICER NA/IL
MILLIPORE SIGMA

**7:45 AM THE VALUE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR NONHUMAN PRIMATES: TO ENHANCE WELFARE AND
REFINE RESEARCH**

LYDIA M. HOPPER, PHD
DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH ANIMAL RESOURCES
DIRECTOR OF PRIMATE BREEDING OPERATIONS, RESEARCH ANIMAL RESOURCES
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, MOLECULAR AND COMPARATIVE PATHOBIOLOGY
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Hopper's research explores the ways in which an individual's behavior and decision-making is influenced by their social environment. Dr. Hopper studies how different species, including humans, innovate and learn from others. Taking a comparative research approach allows her to assess both within- and between-species differences in order to examine the underlying mechanisms and functions of observed behaviors. Dr. Hopper applies her understanding of behavior and cognition to enhance captive animal care and welfare, and to help improve research model validity.

Throughout her career, Dr. Hopper has studied animal cognition and welfare in a variety of settings, including research facilities, zoos, and sanctuaries. For her graduate and postdoctoral training, Dr. Hopper was based at UT MD Anderson Cancer Center's Michale E. Keeling Center for Comparative Medicine and Research, where she studied chimpanzees, rhesus macaques, and squirrel monkeys. The findings of this work offered new insights into primate social learning, cooperation, and responses to inequity. From 2012-2021, she worked at Lincoln Park Zoo's Lester E. Fisher Center for the Study and Conservation of Apes. There, she directed studies of primate behavior and cognition through a public-facing research program run with chimpanzees, gorillas, and Japanese macaques. Through her work at Lincoln Park Zoo, and via a collaboration with Chimp Haven, Dr. Hopper and her colleagues developed and evaluated a number of novel techniques for assessing primate welfare, which can be applied across settings and species.



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8:25 AM INSIGHTS INTO SLEEP IN LABORATORY DOGS

CAROLYN ALLEN BS, RLATG, CMAR

MANAGER, BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
COMPARATIVE MEDICINE
ABBVIE

CAREY ALLEN is the Senior Manager of AbbVie’s Behavioral Management Program. She has been a behaviorist in the lab animal industry working at various CRO’s, academia and pharma for 28 years, and for ten of those years she has been with AbbVie. Carey’s passion and area of expertise has always been non-human primates, but she truly enjoys working with all species and the challenges each one presents!

8:50 AM DID YOU KNOW? REDUCE ... REFINE ... REPLACE ...

TBA

KARENA THEK, MBA, CMAR

NATIONAL SALES MANAGER
BIO-SERV

9:00 AM RAFFLE! RAFFLE! RAFFLE!

9:05 AM ZOO OVERNIGHT

ELIZABETH (BETSY) HERRELKO, PhD

ANIMAL WELFARE & RESEARCH MANAGER
SMITHSONIAN’S NATIONAL ZOO AND
CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, ANIMAL CARE SCIENCES

Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Herrelko is the Animal Welfare and Research curator at the Smithsonian’s National Zoo. She focuses on advancing animal welfare science with an emphasis on animal management and how animals think. Betsy leads the Animal Welfare and Animal Care and Use Committees to ensure compliance with regulations and facilitate best practices for all species at the zoo, is responsible for overseeing research within Animal Care Sciences, and consults across animal care units on applied practices. She joined the Zoo in 2012 as the David Bohnett Cognitive Research Fellow studying cognitive bias (a measure of emotional affect) in apes. Prior to the Smithsonian, Betsy earned her master’s degree from Hunter College (New York) and her PhD from the University of Stirling (Scotland). In addition to traditional dissemination of information methods in academia, Betsy also communicates her science story through natural history documentaries. Her work with primates has been featured on the BBC, Animal Planet, and Discovery Channel.

**9:30 AM NETWORKING BREAK - VENDOR AREA!
SEE YOU in 30 minutes!**



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ALL CREATURES BIG & small

Enrichment for Laboratory Animals . . .

- 10:00 AM ENRICHMENT FLASH**
FUN WITH FERRETS- A PEEK AT NOVEL ENRICHMENT STRATEGIES
STEPHANIE LAU, ABBVIE
- IMPLEMENTING FOOD FORAGING ENRICHMENT FOR LABORATORY RATS**
COURTNEY TRESIDER, ABBVIE
- 10:20 AM TBA – NEAQ**
EMILY LAFONTAINE
SENIOR PENGUIN TRAINER
NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM
CENTRAL WHARF, BOSTON
- 10:45 AM DID YOU KNOW? REDUCE ... REFINE ... REPLACE ...**
LAB DIET
JOSE ESPINAL, CMAR, RLATG
LAB DIET
- 10:55 AM RAFFLE! RAFFLE! RAFFLE!**
- 11:00 AM WELFARE FOCUSED NHP CHAIR TRAINING- AN INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH**
MADDY ARNOLD
ABBVIE
- 11:25 AM DID YOU KNOW? REDUCE ... REFINE ... REPLACE ...**
INNOVIVE
ISAIAH MANSOUR
INNOVIVE
- 11:35 AM TBA?**
- 12:00 AM 2026 POSTER WINNER 1st Place ... TBA**
ERICA FINLEY, MERCK RESEARCH LABORATORIES BOSTON



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CHAIR, MSMR ENRICHMENT POSTER COMMITTEE

KARENA THEK, BIO SERV

MSMR ENRICHMENT POSTER SPONSER

POSTER WINNER

12:10 PM **RAFFLE!** **RAFFLE!** **RAFFLE!**

12:15 PM **LUNCH | BREAK & NETWORK ... VISIT VENDOR AREA!**

1:00 PM **SOCIALIZATION, HANDLING, AND LOW-STRESS TECHNIQUES FOR VETERINARY PROCEDURES IN LABORATORY DOGS AND CATS**

JACKIE WATSON, MLAS, ACAAB

MANAGER | ANIMAL SERVICES

IACUC CHAIR

MERCK ANIMAL HEALTH

Jackie Watson, MLAS, ACAAB, is an Associate Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist and Manager of Animal Care at Merck Animal Health. She has extensive experience in animal welfare, laboratory animal science, and equine behavior research, and holds a master's degree in laboratory animal science from Drexel University. Her work focuses on humane handling, socialization, enrichment, and applying behavioral science to improve animal welfare of many different species in both research and clinical settings.

1:25 PM **ENRICHMENT FLASH**
ADVANCING ANIMAL ENRICHMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AT ZOO NEW ENGLAND

LIAM KELLY

ANIMAL WELLBEING ADVISOR AT ZOO NEW ENGLAND

ZOO NEW ENGLAND

1:40 PM **RAFFLE!** **RAFFLE!** **RAFFLE!**

1:45 PM **DID YOU KNOW? REDUCE ... REFINE ... REPLACE ... MISPRO**

1:55 PM **CAGING | Mice**



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STEPHANIE BALESTRA (caging/viv ops)

KAREN CASPERSEN (species specific need s/veterinary perspective)

EMD SERONO

2:20 PM

HUMAN ENRICHMENT

Creating a Global Culture of Care

DANIELLE ELBIRT DVM, MS, DACLAM

GLOBAL ANIMAL WELFARE OFFICER NA/IL
MILLIPORE SIGMA

Local perspective

AYAHNA (YAYA) SANDERS

MERCK RESEARCH LABORATORIES BOSTON

ANGELA TORNBLOM

MERCK RESEARCH LABORATORIES BOSTON

Local perspective

ELIZABETH (BETSY) HERRELKO, PhD

ANIMAL WELFARE & RESEARCH CURATOR
SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL ZOO AND
CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, ANIMAL CARE SCIENCES

2:50 PM

RAFFLE!

RAFFLE!

RAFFLE!

3:00 PM

CLOSING REMARKS & QUESTIONS ... WRAP-UP & EVALUATIONS!



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