



## DECO conference speaker bios

### **Jim Wharton** *chair*

Jim Wharton is the director of conservation engagement and learning at the Seattle Aquarium, a conservation organization whose mission is *Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment*. Empathy has become a key driver and strategy in this work, connecting people to animals and ecosystems and encouraging them see the ocean as a source of hope, wonder and belonging—not to mention essential to their survival. The Aquarium has shared effective practices and strategies for fostering empathy through publications and workshops with over 60 zoos and aquariums with a combined attendance of more than 69 million annually. The Aquarium has recently partnered on a children's book, *Catastrophe by the Sea*, that encourages readers to empathize with less traditionally charismatic animals.

### **Jessica Luke, Ph.D.** *facilitator*

Dr. Jessica Luke is an educator, researcher, facilitator and learning scientist, and she currently serves as the director of the Museology Graduate Program and senior lecturer in the Information School at the University of Washington. Before coming to UW, Dr. Luke spent 15 years—first as a researcher and later as vice president—at the Institute for Learning Innovation, conducting research and evaluation of informal learning environments. She is deeply interested in how people make connections in museums and other free-choice learning spaces, and how our experiences in these spaces help shape us. Group facilitation, in addition to research and teaching, is an area where her curiosity, values and strengths intersect. She is inspired by what is possible when people come together to

wrestle with important questions and big ideas, and she believes skillful facilitation can amplify this work. As a facilitator, Dr. Luke provides the structures to help groups tap into their own wisdom, elevate their thinking and create something new. She sees the key work of facilitation as intentional planning, authentic listening and the ability to synthesize ideas and help people move from imagination through discernment toward action.

### **B.N. Horowitz, M.D.** *featured speaker*

Dr. B.N. Horowitz is on the faculty of Harvard Medical School, the Harvard Department of Human Evolutionary Biology and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Her research focuses on the natural world as a source of insights into human pathology and developmental challenges. The New York Times bestseller *Zoobiquity*, which she co-authored with Kathryn Bowers, was a finalist in the American Association for the Advancement of Science Excellence in Science Books Award, a Smithsonian Top Book of 2012 and a *Discover Magazine* Best Book of the Year. It has been translated into seven languages and has been chosen as Common Read at universities across the country. The Nobel Assembly selected *Zoobiquity's* theme of bio-inspired medicine for its 2019 Nobel Conference. Invited as keynote speaker, Dr. Horowitz opened the conference with her address at the Nobel Forum in Stockholm, Sweden. She is the founder of the Zoobiquity Conference series and president of the International Society for Evolution, Medicine and Public Health. Dr. Horowitz and Bowers' newly published book, *Wildhood*, uses the lenses of evolutionary biology, neuroscience and animal behavior to explore the species-spanning challenges of growing up.



## **Kathayoon Khalil, Ph.D.** *interviewer*

Dr. Kathayoon Khalil is the conservation impact manager for the Oregon Zoo. Prior to joining the zoo, Dr. Khalil was the principal evaluator for the Seattle Aquarium. She received her doctorate in learning sciences and technology design from Stanford University, studying the use of social network analysis to understand how innovation spreads among the zoo and aquarium community. Through over a decade of work in zoo education, Dr. Khalil has implemented authentic approaches to evaluating visitor learning, including attitude and behavior changes that may have resulted from their visit. She has consulted on education and evaluation for a variety of zoos and aquariums throughout the world and serves as the champion of the AZA's educational research and evaluation initiative. Dr. Khalil is also a researcher for Fostering Empathy for Animals, a joint project among the Seattle Aquarium, the Woodland Park Zoo and the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. As such, Dr. Khalil participates in publications and public speaking engagements, and she guides workshops on empathy development and measurement.

## **Sara Konrath** *Lightning Talks speaker*

Sara Konrath is a social psychologist who directs the Interdisciplinary Program on Empathy and Altruism Research (iPEARlab.org) at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Her research explores changes over time in social and emotional traits among American young people. Other research examines implications of these traits for individuals themselves and for other people. For example, she has published extensively on the health and happiness benefits of giving. She also creates and evaluates empathy-training programs for various groups, including young people, teachers, doctors, museums and

other organizations. Dr. Konrath writes a popular *Psychology Today* blog (*The Empathy Gap*) and is regularly featured in media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, NPR radio and BBC news. Her forthcoming book is called *Culture of Burnout: American life in an age of increasing expectations* (Oxford University Press). She is currently a visiting professor at the Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study (2020–2021).

## **Susan Clayton** *Lightning Talks speaker*

Susan Clayton is Whitmore-Williams Professor of Psychology at the College of Wooster in Ohio. She has written or edited six books, including most recently *Psychology and Climate Change* (2018; co-edited with Christie Manning). Her Ph.D., from Yale University, is in social psychology. Her research focuses on the human relationship with nature, how it is socially constructed and how it can be utilized to promote environmental conservation. She has written extensively about the implications of climate change for human well-being.

Clayton is a fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), the Society for Environmental, Population and Conservation Psychology (SEPCP), the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). She is a past president of both SEPCP and SPSSI and currently a member of the APA's governing board of directors. In addition to serving as the editor of the Cambridge Elements series in applied social psychology, she is on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *Social Justice Research*, *Sustainability and Social Psychological* and *Personality Science*. She is a lead author on the upcoming 6th assessment report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



## **Jerry Luebke, Ed.D.**

### ***Lightning Talks speaker***

Dr. Jerry Luebke is an independent consultant specializing in the zoo and aquarium industry. Previously Jerry was on the staff of the Chicago Zoological Society–Brookfield Zoo for 16 years. He served as a senior manager of audience research and was responsible for conducting various visitor studies, exhibit evaluations and education program assessments. While at Brookfield Zoo, Dr. Luebke conducted collaborative research over a four-year period with the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago investigating adult visitors' empathic reactions to their animal experiences. Recently Dr. Luebke was a research advisor for Woodland Park Zoo's Advancing Conservation Through Empathy (ACE) for Wildlife Network. He is currently serving on the steering committee of AZA's Social Science Research and Evaluation Scientific Advisory Group.

## **Louise Chawla, Ph.D.**

### ***Lightning Talks speaker***

Dr. Louise Chawla is professor emerita in the Environmental Design Program at the University of Colorado Boulder. She remains an active member of the university's Community Engagement, Design and Research Center. With a doctorate in environmental psychology and a master's degree in education and child development, her research areas are children and nature, children in cities and the development of committed action for the environment.

## **Nette Pletcher**

### ***Lightning Talks speaker***

Nette Pletcher is the founder of Beez Kneez Creative and brings over 20 years of experience in developing, delivering and evaluating science content for learners of all ages, predominantly in informal settings focused on wildlife conservation and conservation-conscious behaviors. She has extensive

experience working on the ground with zoo practitioners to apply theories of learning based on empirical research. Nette has an academic background in conservation education, with practical application in the zoo/aquarium setting, including design, implementation and evaluation of programs, exhibits and interpretive activities. She also has led nationwide education initiatives, oversaw the professional development program at the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and worked for five years as a frontline educator at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park. Nette holds a Master of Arts in education from American University and a Bachelor of Arts in biology from Swarthmore College; she earned a teaching certificate in secondary science and taught middle school science for three years.

## **Autumn Russell**

### ***case study speaker***

Autumn Russell is the director of education at the Akron Zoo, whose mission is to connect people to wildlife while inspiring lifelong learning and conservation action. Building connections between people and the natural world is a key component to increasing value and awe of wild places and wildlife. Empathy is a powerful tool to making these connections.

## **Inger Lerstrup, Ph.D.**

### ***case study speaker***

Dr. Inger Lerstrup is a postdoc researcher at University of Copenhagen in the Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management. Her research is concerned with children's activities in relation to the landscape—urban as well as “natural.” The aim is to inform planning, design and management in order to make more inspiring outdoor areas for children. Dr. Lerstrup's dissertation compared the affordances of traditional playgrounds with forest sites used by children age 3–5. Now she is focusing on children age 10 and 11 and the impact of open-space development and management on the affordances of urban spaces for this age group.