

Meet Alejandro Grajal

Introduction by George Twiss

Alejandro has been in his current position almost a year. He comes to us from the Chicago Zoological Society where he was Senior Vice President for Conservation and Education. He earned a BS degree in Biology at University Simon Bolivar in Caracas, Venezuela, and a Ph.D. in Zoology at the University of Florida.

The Woodland Park Zoo has 320 full time staff, 1000 volunteers, and an annual budget of \$38 million (only 25% from public funds). They host 1.35 million visitors annually, including 70,000 school children.



Alejandro considers it the Zoo's mission to provide a portal to nature and a path to the conservation of our planet. To work towards this he collaborates with his peers at Pacific Science Center, the Aquarium, Burke Museum, and the Museum of Flight.

Why join Seattle Rotary, I asked. Alejandro's reply was that while he was familiar with all the good works Rotary does in the community, it was our dedication to the eradication of polio that really impressed him and encouraged him to join us.

An interesting, multi-faceted individual, Alejandro speaks four languages and has visited every country and most regions in South America, sometimes as the only non-native. And he was at our podium on May 10 to thank the Seattle Fire Department for their outstanding support during a fire at the Zoo.

His wife, Helena Puche, holds a Ph.D. in Biology and teaches at the UW. Their 25 year old son is also a biologist and lives in Denver; while a daughter is a student at Edmonds Community College. They live in Lynwood.

So let's welcome Alejandro Grajal, President & CEO of the Woodland Park Zoo to our Seattle Rotary!