
I am going to visit
Aaron and Carolynn
Frankel Stingray Cove
at the Detroit Zoo

Today, I am going to visit Aaron and Carolynn Frankel Stingray Cove inside Fred and Barbara Erb Discovery Trails at the Detroit Zoo!

Frankel Stingray Cove is an interactive experience where I can get close to stingrays and bamboo sharks. There is an additional cost to enter Frankel Stingray Cove and to feed the animals.



Before I enter the Frankel Stingray Cove building, I should know about an important safety rule: If I have an airborne shellfish or shrimp allergy, I should not enter the building.

This is because the animals are fed with shellfish products, including shrimp.







I can find Frankel Stingray Cove by following signs for Erb Discovery Trails inside the Zoo.

If I need help finding the building or entrance, I can look for staff in blue shirts or volunteers in red shirts.





When I enter Frankel Stingray Cove, I may notice a strong fish smell because of the food that the animals eat. I might also notice a humid or wet feeling, like being near a pool.

If the sensations become too much for me, I can move outside for some fresh air.



There is a statue in front of the building where I can practice touching the animals by touching a sculpture of a stingray.

It does not feel the exact same as the animals inside Frankel Stingray Cove, but it will show me how large a cownose ray is.



Staff will direct me to a hand-rinsing station where I will rinse my hands and forearms with water so that I can touch the stingrays and bamboo sharks with clean hands.

The water is room temperature or warmer. Even if I do not touch the animals, I will rinse my hands.





I can place items like beverages on a table located in the front of the building by the hand-rinsing station.

The table has numbered circles so that I know which spot is mine.

I will also ensure I remove any watches or jewelry to keep myself, the animals and my items safe. I can keep them in my pocket.



Frankel Stingray Cove has four skimmer boxes so wheelchair users may lie fully supported to interact with the animals. These skimmer boxes are located at the four corners of the touch tank.

Please note: Staff are unable to assist with transporting any guests from their mobility device to the skimmer box.



There is a small waterfall in the space that makes the water sound loud. I may also hear ambient noise from machines and people being excited in the space.

If the noise is too much, I can use noise-canceling headphones from a KultureCity sensory bag, available at the Customer Care Office at the front of the Zoo or at the Security Office near Erb Discovery Trails.



If I need them, nitrile gloves are available. Wearing gloves changes how the animals feel when I touch them, which might be more comfortable for me. The gloves are not made of latex.

I can request gloves from any staff member working in Frankel Stingray Cove.



When it is my turn at the encounter pool, a staff member will guide me on what to do.

I will listen to all staff instructions and follow any posted rules.



There will likely be other people at the encounter pool, and the space might be busy or loud.

If I feel too crowded, I can wait off to the side until there is space to interact with the animals.



Stingrays are flat-bodied fish who glide through the water. They have a wide body and a long, thin tail. Most are gray or tan. I can see both cownose and southern rays at the Zoo. Cownose rays are much smaller than southern rays.

The rays feel soft underneath the water but also slippery. Their mouths are on the underside of their bodies.



There are also bamboo sharks in the encounter pool if I look closely. Bamboo sharks are small sharks with long, slender bodies and short fins. Many are brown or yellowish with dark stripes or spots. These sharks are gentle and safe, so it's okay to carefully touch them in the encounter pool.

The shark in the front of this photo is a brownbanded shark, and the two at the back are whitespotted.



If I decide I want to touch or feed the stingrays, I can put only my arm into the water up to my elbow. The water is cool but not cold. For the safety of myself and the animals, I will make sure to not put more than my arm in the pool.

I can roll up my sleeves or remove jackets that might get wet. If I sit, perch or lean over the ledge of the encounter pool, I may get a little damp.



If I choose to feed the animals, a staff member will give me a cup to hold in my hand. The food in the cup might be shrimp, fish or small octopuses. The food might be slimy, cold or fishy smelling. I will not put the food or my fingers in my mouth.

I will keep the food tucked upright between my fingers so the stingray can suck the food out of my hand.



The stingrays in this encounter pool are safe to touch. I will make sure to only touch the top of the rays and avoid their undersides unless I am holding food for them.

When a stingray swims over my hand to eat the food, it might feel like a light suction or a gentle vacuum sucking over my skin. This feeling might tickle or feel unusual, but it does not hurt.





Sometimes, the stingrays might flap against the pool wall and splash water.

If I feel uncomfortable, I can pull my hand out of the water at any time.



If I decide I do not want to feed or touch the stingrays, that is okay.

I can observe them at the encounter pool instead.



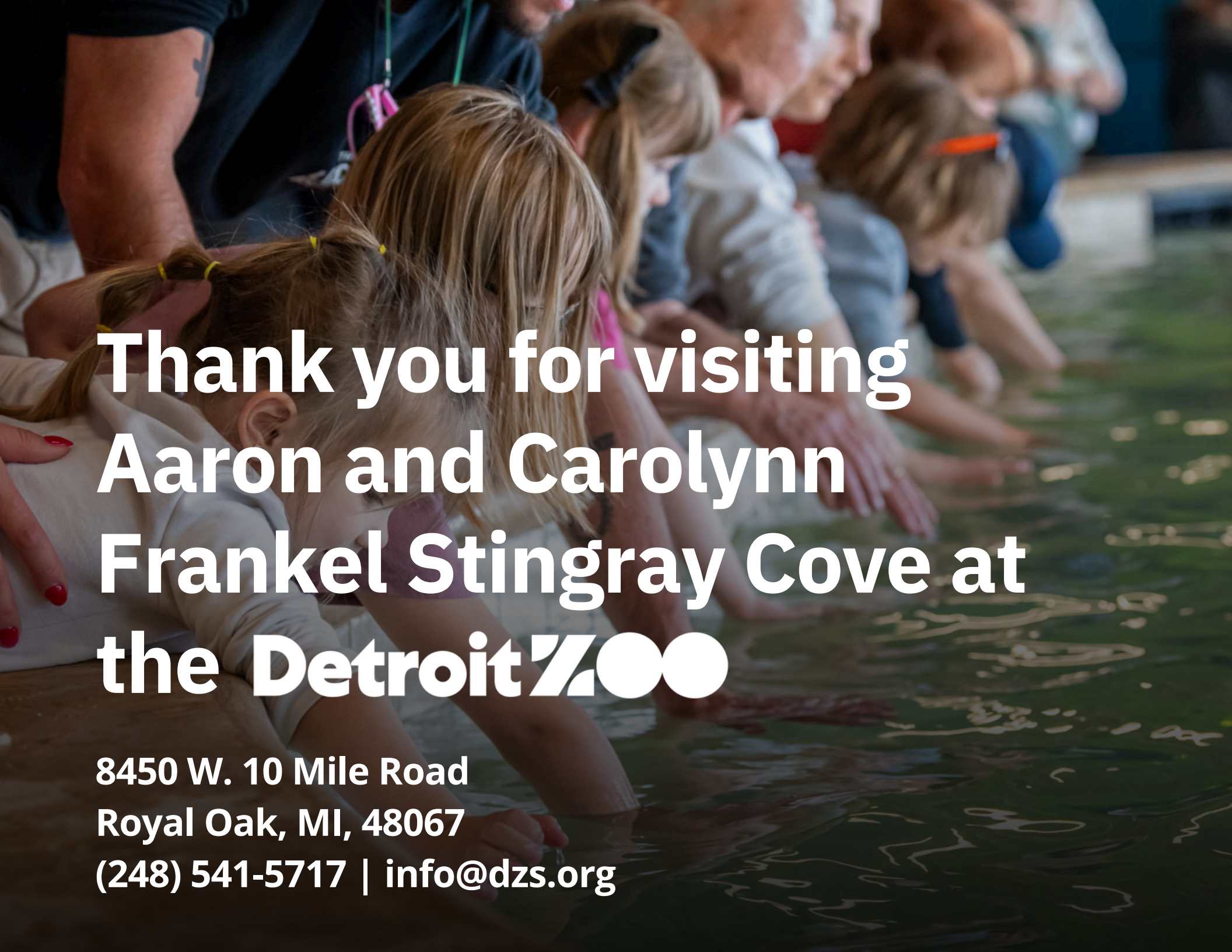
When I am finished at Frankel Stingray Cove, I will step away from the pool.

I can exit Frankel Stingray Cove and wash my hands in the restrooms near Woodward Slice or in Erb Discovery Trails. There is also hand sanitizer at the exit of Frankel Stingray Cove.



My visit to Aaron and Carolynn Frankel Stingray Cove at the Detroit Zoo was so much fun, and I hope to come back soon!




Thank you for visiting
Aaron and Carolynn
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