

**BUTTERFLY PAVILION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Butterfly Pavilion Introduces Behind the Web, a New Guided Tarantula Encounter with Goldie

New Ticketed Experience Reflects Butterfly Pavilion's Continued Commitment to Welfare-First Animal Encounters

Westminster, CO — July 16, 2026 — Butterfly Pavilion announced today the launch of Behind the Web Tarantula Encounter, a new guided, small-group experience introducing guests to Goldie, a Chaco Golden Knee Tarantula and the nonprofit's newest animal ambassador. The 30-minute encounter is now bookable at butterflies.org, and marks the next chapter in Butterfly Pavilion's evolving approach to ambassador animal care — one that began with the retirement of longtime ambassador Rosie the Chilean Rose Hair Tarantula from public handling in fall 2025.

A Welfare-First Approach, From the Ground Up

When Butterfly Pavilion concluded Rosie's daily handling program last year, the decision was rooted in animal care science: as tarantulas age, reducing handling supports their long-term health and comfort. Rather than simply pause tarantula encounters altogether, Butterfly Pavilion's animal care and guest experience teams used that same welfare lens to design something new — a program built around a younger ambassador's needs and choice from day one, rather than adapted from an older model.

Behind the Web is intentionally different from the free, high-volume handling experience it succeeds. It's a private, guided session capped at five guests and led by an invertebrate educator, giving guests time to explore tarantula biology and biofacts, meet several species, and hear conservation stories — including Colorado's own wild tarantula mate-gration — before an opportunity for guided handling with Goldie, who is given full choice and control throughout.

“Animal welfare is our top priority at Butterfly Pavilion, and that doesn't mean stepping back from meaningful guest connection — it means building experiences through that lens from the very start. Behind the Web is what happens when we let the animal's wellbeing shape the design, not the other way around.”

— Ryan Welch, President and CEO, Butterfly Pavilion

Goldie participates in guided encounters for approximately 20 minutes total per week — a limit set by Butterfly Pavilion's animal care team to keep her participation sustainable and low-stress. Guests are never guaranteed hands-on holding; Goldie may choose not to participate on a given day, and the experience is designed to remain engaging either way.

Continuing a 30+ Year Legacy

Rosie, who introduced millions of guests to invertebrates over three decades, remains on view in a dedicated exhibit in the Crawl-A-See-Em, where guests can visit her at no additional cost during regular hours. Behind the Web builds on her legacy by giving a new generation of guests an even closer, more personal way to connect with tarantulas.

At a Glance

What: Behind the Web Tarantula Encounter is a private, 30-minute, guided program led by an expert invertebrate educator. Guests meet five tarantula species — including nursery (baby) tarantulas — explore biofacts like molts and fangs, learn conservation stories (like Colorado's own tarantula mate-gration), and finish with and an opportunity for guided handling with Goldie.

When: Thursday through Sunday at 9:15 a.m. (schedule subject to change). Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Where: Butterfly Pavilion, 6252 W. 104th Ave., Westminster, CO 80020, held in a private encounter room.

Tickets: \$45 per person, includes General Admission. Groups of up to 5 guests. Ages 3+; guests 3–18 must be accompanied by an adult. Book at butterflies.org.

About Butterfly Pavilion

About Butterfly Pavilion: Founded in 1995, Butterfly Pavilion is the first Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited, standalone, non-profit invertebrate zoo in the world. Located in Westminster, Colorado, Butterfly Pavilion is a global leader in invertebrate conservation, research, and education. From restoring pollinator habitats and conducting tarantula research to inspiring over 100,000 students each year, Butterfly Pavilion works locally and globally to protect the small but mighty animals that keep our planet thriving. Learn more at www.butterflies.org.

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