



## NEWS RELEASE



***For Immediate Release***

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### **Rosamond Gifford Zoo Receives AZA Quarter Century Award**

Syracuse, N.Y. (October 26, 2015) – The Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is a recipient of the new Quarter Century Award presented by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The award recognizes zoos and aquariums that have been AZA-accredited continuously for 25 years or more. Award recipients were announced during the AZA national conference held in Salt Lake City.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo was accredited for the first time in 1987 and has been granted accreditation continuously ever since. The zoo's most recent accreditation was granted by the AZA in 2013 and is in effect through September 2018.

“Accreditation is our guests’ guarantee that we abide by the highest standards in animal care, conservation education and visitor experience – a responsibility we take very seriously. We are pleased to be recognized by the AZA for our dedication to excellence and to our mission. Congratulations to the zoo and its staff for this achievement,” said County Executive Joanne M. Mahoney.

“AZA-accredited institutions, like ours, are leaders in wildlife conservation and animal care. Fewer than 10 percent of the approximately 2,800 animal exhibitors licensed by the USDA are AZA-accredited. AZA zoos and aquariums provide \$160 million in support of conservation projects every year and draw 181 million visitors annually – attendance greater than the NFL, NHL and MLB combined. We are proud that, as an AZA-accredited facility, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is part of North America’s largest wildlife conservation movement,” said Ted Fox, zoo director.

In order to be accredited, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo undergoes a thorough mandatory review every five years to ensure it has and will continue to meet rising standards in animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education and safety. The accreditation process includes a detailed application made by the zoo and rigorous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals to observe all aspects of the institution’s operation, including animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas.

Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, the non-profit organization dedicated to the zoo's mission through financial support of the welfare of the zoo's animals, educational programs and family-friendly facilities, is an integral partner in the zoo's AZA accreditation. During the accreditation process, the financial strength of the Friends is reviewed to determine its future ability to meet its mission of support to the zoo.

"Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is proud to have been a partner in this outstanding achievement since the zoo's very first AZA accreditation in 1987. Continuous accreditation is an assurance to our donors and members that they are not only supporting a cornerstone of our community, but a leading institution," says Janet Agostini, president and CEO of Friends of the Zoo.

The Friends organization supports educational programming for visitors and the community; marketing, fundraising, and development efforts; and operates The Curious Cub Gift Shop, Catering at the Zoo, and Jungle Café. Over the years, the organization has helped build new exhibits, improve existing habitats, upgrade facilities and provide zoo staff development.

Founded in 1924, the AZA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. The AZA accreditation logo is the public's assurance that they are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great guest experience and a better future for all living things. To learn more, visit [aza.org](http://aza.org).

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Founded in 1914, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is dedicated to connecting people to the natural world by providing engaging guest experiences, exceptional animal care, and unparalleled conservation education.

The zoo actively collaborates with Friends of the Zoo to provide its guests "the best day ever," ensuring experiences that excite, memories that endure, and knowledge that inspires worldwide conservation.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults (19-61), \$4 for youth (3-18) and \$5 for seniors (62+). Children two and under are free. For more information, call the zoo at (315) 435-8511 or visit [rosamondgiffordzoo.org](http://rosamondgiffordzoo.org).

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[www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org](http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org)

County Executive, Joanne M. Mahoney • Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bill Lansley  
Rosamond Gifford Zoo Director, Ted Fox • Friends of the Zoo President, Janet Agostini

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