



FRIENDS
OF THE
ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

2024
ANNUAL
REPORT

Providing a level of excellence
that makes the Rosamond
Gifford Zoo a national leader in
animal care, conservation, and
visitor experience.

A JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



Carrie Large
Executive Director
Friends of the Zoo



Terry Hopkins
Chair
Board of Directors

To our beloved zoo family,

2024 was truly an outstanding year of progress, opportunity, and transformation for the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo! With your invaluable help, we’ve accomplished many of the goals we aimed to achieve and created new goals to shape our future. In 2024, we championed our mission of ensuring the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is a leader in wildlife conservation, animal welfare, and public education. We are beyond grateful for our board’s and team’s tireless work, innovative insights, and continued commitment to advancing our cause.

Perhaps our most significant achievement of 2024 was renewing our accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). As an AZA-accredited zoo, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo has proven itself, once again, to be a facility that upholds the highest standards of animal welfare and care! Accreditation is no easy feat. To earn this much-coveted seal of approval, our zoo underwent a thorough review and multiple site inspections by a team of animal care experts from across the country. The Friends of the Zoo directly contributed to this important goal, providing integral funding support to optimize our animals’ habitats, grounds, and facility. Because of your unwavering support, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was able to meet the AZA’s high standards. Our zoo has continuously held AZA-accreditation since 1987, further underlining the extraordinary work that goes on every day at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo’s work extends well beyond the property line. As an AZA member, we inspire our community to care for and to protect biodiversity everywhere. Not only do we provide exceptional care to our animals, but we support research endeavors to benefit wild animals and deliver inspirational, empowering education that encourages our guests to learn about and to connect with the natural world. With financial support from the Friends, this year, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo participated in a vital research project on Asian elephants in an ongoing effort to develop a vaccine for elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV), which is fatal in elephants.

Demonstrating and promoting the connection between humans and animals is a critical focus that drives our mission of conservation. We empower our guests through engaging education to urge conservation consciousness. 2024 saw a host of sustainability initiatives on zoo grounds, each one helping to protect our planet. Through our accurate and frequently updated signage, educational classes and experiences, and consistent digital engagement, the Friends of the Zoo conveys the story of sustainability to all.

Despite the progress we’ve made, our work isn’t done. As we look towards 2025, we will continue to seek new and exciting opportunities to improve upon our already-stellar record. The Friends of the Zoo will help establish future trends of sustainability, accessibility, and technological integration for our community, and for zoos around the world.

On behalf of the Friends of the Zoo team, especially our devoted Board of Directors, we extend a wholehearted thank you to all who have helped sustain our mission in 2024. Let’s work together to make 2025 even better and even brighter for animals, plants, and humans alike.

Wishing you the best day ever,

Carrie Large *Terry Hopkins*

Carrie Large
Executive Director

Terry Hopkins
Board Chair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 Friends Board of Directors
- 5 Key Achievements in 2024
- 6 Development and Fundraising
- 12 Education and Community
- 14 Dedicated Volunteerism
- 15 Our Growing Membership
- 16 The Curious Cub Gift Shop
- 17 Philanthropy
- 18 Food and Beverage
- 19 Catering at the Zoo
- 20 Marketing and Communications
- 22 A Fresh Perspective
- 23 Investments
- 25 Animal Updates
- 33 Statement of Operating Finances
- 34 2024 Donor Roster
- 41 In Memory of Ryan Wood



10,968
people joined us to participate in
conservation education programs.



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RECOGNIZING THE FRIENDS OF THE ZOO BOARD

The Board of Directors of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is a supportive group of community members who advance the zoo’s mission. By attending monthly meetings, serving on planning committees, providing creative insights, and engaging in collaborative innovations, the Board of Directors ushered in a variety of exciting enhancements and achievements during 2024. The Board of Directors collectively functions to help sustain our organization, and we couldn’t be more grateful to them. We extend massive thanks to our entire board for their guidance, expertise, and support.

2024 Board of Directors

Terry Hopkins, *Chair*
Megan Thomas, *Vice Chair*
Natalie Scavone, *Secretary*
Jamie Card, *Treasurer**

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Dr. Zina Berry | John Harris | Ryan Lynch |
| Debra Cody | Melissa Hicks | Dr. Jody Manning |
| Susan Cole | Amanda Hull | Deborah Messina |
| Tim Crosby | Daniel Jenkins | Kathy O’Connell |
| Joanna Dennis* | Beth King | Melissa Oliver |
| Amanda Foster | Steven Lickstein | Austin Philleo |
| Savannah Gibbs | Susan Lobdell | Sabrina Webster |

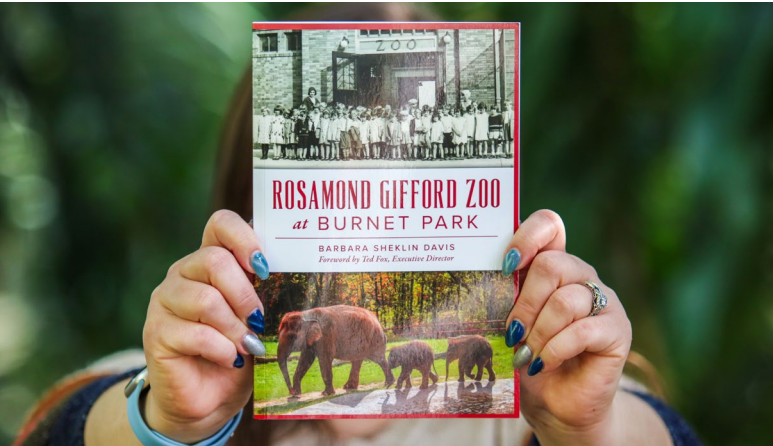
** Indicates an outgoing board member. We thank these two devoted individuals for their heartfelt service.*

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

2024 was a year marked with achievement, excellence, and innovation for the Friends. We saw a plethora of progress and continued to distinguish the Rosamond Gifford Zoo as a national leader of animal care, wildlife conservation, and visitor experience. A handful of highlights include:

- The Friends of the Zoo supported multiple animals’ habitats renovations, grounds improvement, and facility updates to ensure the **The Rosamond Gifford Zoo earned reaccreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)**, continuing its 37-year streak as a top-tier facility.
- The Friends of the Zoo provided **\$92,229** to support the multifaceted care of our elephant herd, including **\$3,240** for a serology research project to advance the constant battle against **elephant endotheliotropic herpesviruses (EEHV)**. Miracle two-year-old eletwins **Yaad and Tukada took part in a groundbreaking EEHV vaccine trial**, making them two of the first elephants in the world to receive a vaccine aimed to combat a strain of the potentially fatal disease.
- **10 giant, animatronic dragons descended** upon the Rosamond Gifford Zoo from April-October, delighting guests of all ages and providing imaginative fantasy as part of our Dragons Reign! gate driver.
- Scholar Barbara Sheklin Davis, Ph.D. completed her **manuscript of Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park**, a monograph chronicling the century-long history of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo from humble beginnings to conservation leader.
- In the realm of technological advancement, the Friends lead the charge, **installing new projection boards across the ramp** that welcomes guests to the zoo and offers engaging video messaging, with the help of Board Member Ryan Lynch.
- Committed to spreading the word of wildlife conservation at the zoo, the Friends began two new communication initiatives: In February, we began to distribute **MyZooEXTRA, a monthly newsletter** to provide members with recent updates of zoo news. In November, we **revived our blog**, with articles that discuss engaging and exciting topics so readers can learn more about what’s happening with the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the Friends of the Zoo.
- **Sustainability and technological advancement** were at the forefront of the Friends’ capital investments, which included installing new garbage and recycling bins throughout the zoo to enhance waste sorting and informative signage regarding recycling practices and their positive impact on our planet.
- To ensure guests experience the **best day ever** from the moment they set foot inside our doors, we **replaced the lobby carpet**.





DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

FANTASTIC FUNDRAISING AND EVENTS

The Friends of the Zoo continued to be the host with the most fun (and fundraising!) events in 2024. Throughout the year, droves of guests visited the zoo to take part in a variety of special events that each aim to celebrate our diverse zoo community, highlight the amazing animals living at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and support the zoo's mission and operations. The Development team's coordination and planning paid off well, resulting in providing our guests with the **best event-days ever** and raising an impressive **\$210,147** for the zoo!

SUSTAINING OUR MISSION WITH EVENTS ALL YEAR LONG

Zoo Run Run — On April 14, 2024, **694 participants** ran like the wild at our annual Zoo Run Run event, which was an increase of 145 participants from the previous year. As a tie-in to the Dragons Reign promotional event, the event included the Dragonling Dash, a 1K fun run for those 7 years old and younger. **Countryside Credit Union, Community Bank, Empower FCU, Blink Fitness, and Cumulus Media provided sponsorship support that made this event possible.** In total, the Zoo Run Run raised **\$42,766** for the zoo!

Tee Off FORE the Animals — **64 golfers** hit the Bellevue Country Club course on June 24, 2024 for the Tee Off FORE the Animals charity tournament! During the 18-hole captain-and-crew style game, participants enjoyed a tasty breakfast and lunch on the course, followed by a post-tournament dinner in Bellevue's luxurious clubhouse. The event even included a raffle and an auction to help **drive up support** for the zoo's mission. With the help of 9 volunteers, **the event raised \$43,818.** **Both our tournament sponsors (Nave Law Firm, Coca Cola Syracuse, CNY Business Journal, and Shaughnessy's Irish Pub) and hole sponsors (1 World for All - Laura & Rick Iorio, Affordable Benefit Concepts, Akl and Associates, CenterState CEO, Cintas, Hancock Estabrook, OneGroup Retirement Advisors, Practice Resources, RJ Caruso Tax & Accounting, Scicchitano Law, and Tompkins Trust) made this tournament a hole-in-one event!**

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

Brew at the Zoo — Not even a storm could stop over **2,000 guests** from attending our renowned Brew at the Zoo event on August 2, 2024. **Brew at the Zoo raised \$125,730 for the zoo!** Over 160 regional craft beers, wines, and canned cocktails were available at 68 pouring stations throughout the zoo grounds. Not only that, but local food trucks were on site to offer a wide variety of cuisine. Live music by local musicians Hold the Air, Dennis Veator, Peg Newell, and Taking Back October set the party mood as guests enjoyed animal demonstrations. Many took part in the NBT Bank Silent Auction and Raffle for the chance to win one-of-a-kind items such as animal artwork, sports memorabilia, and vouchers for various experiences in the Syracuse area. For those seeking an elevated experience, a VIP ticket allowed guests to skip entry lines and have access to the exclusive indoor Hayden Jewelers VIP Lounge with complimentary gourmet fair. This experience **SOLD OUT.** **Our event sponsors, Hayden Jewelers, Construction Associates LLC, Melo Roofing, NBT Bank, Community Bank, Grossman St. Amour CPAs, T.J. Sheehan Distributing, A.L. George, Cumulus Media Syracuse, The Central New York Business Journal, C&S Companies, Tops Friendly Markets, and Syracuse Haulers, made the event a rousing success.**

Fall Conservation Bash — On September 12, 2024, **174 guests** attended the Fall Conservation Bash to celebrate all the zoo's achievements in the past year, including the animal care team's major accomplishment of hand-raising patas monkey babies, Sisu and Mushu. **The bash raised \$40,024.** The outdoor dining experience included a chef-crafted menu of fall-themed cuisine, live music by Steve Laureti, and even a flyover demonstration by Harris hawk Anakin. A raffle and auction generate additional funds to support the zoo's mission, featuring a one-of-a-kind diamond elephant pendant donated by Hayden Jewelers. **Friends of the Zoo extends our deep gratitude to our sponsors Constellation, C&S Companies, Cumulus Media Syracuse, Hayden Jewelers, Scicchitano Law, PLLC., Tito's Handmade Vodka, and Visual Technologies.**

Zoo Boo — During three weekends in October, **4,125 guests** purchased tickets to take part in Zoo Boo, a kooky-not-spooky Halloween delight across the grounds of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Guests of all ages donned their costumes and brought along their bags as they traveled from station to station, receiving a variety of treats and learning more about incorporating conservation and sustainability into their daily lives. Each day was filled with critter chats, crafts, costumes, and conservation messaging! **Zoo Boo raised \$41,158, approximately a 25% increase from last year! The event wouldn't have been possible without support from our sponsors, Community Bank, Countryside Credit Union, Energy Savers, Girl Scouts Troop 60500, New York Life, Springside Farm, and Tops Friendly Markets.**

Holiday Nights — During the first three weekends of December, over **4,825 guests** enjoyed a series of magical nights that brought together the giving spirit of the season, the festive mood of winter, and the year-round joy of supporting wildlife conservation. **The event raised \$75,272.** Holiday Nights featured a variety of dazzling light displays, photo ops, roving performers, meet-and-greets with Santa, and more. Two of those lighting displays were designed by Syracuse City School District students through the Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) program. With \$1 of every hot chocolate sold at the event going towards United Way of Central New York through the Zoo United Campaign, the Friends donated over \$1,800 to this community-centered cause. New this year, the Friends also partnered with Make-A-Wish Central New York by joining forces with Alayah Green, former recipient of a Wish and founder of Alayah's Carousel Rideathon. Friends of the Zoo donated a portion of all bear stuff-a-plush purchases to Make-A-Wish Central New York, totaling nearly \$100. **Many thanks to our sponsors for their generous support: Berkshire Bank, Community Bank, Cumulus Media, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, New York Life, Visions FCU, and Wegmans.**

Noon Year's Eve — **2,740 guests** rang in 2025 in wild style! Noon Year's Eve is our kid-friendly, daytime celebration of the new year that has quickly grown into an annual tradition for so many families. The zoo grounds filled with children of all ages, excitedly watching their favorite animals as they counted down the 12 p.m. ball drop in the courtyard. The event even included a dance party and ginger ale toast so that everyone welcomed the new year with all the pomp and circumstance it deserved. **We are grateful to our sponsor, Tops Friendly Markets.**



DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

A PLACE FOR EVERYONE: EVENTS TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

Novelis Party for the Planet/Earth Day Clean Up — On April 20, 2024, our annual Novelis Party for the Planet brought 843 guests to the zoo to celebrate our shared environment! Engaging and educational exhibitors gave guests a chance to enjoy eco-friendly activities while learning more about how to take care of the planet that we all call home. Many thanks to Novelis and supporting sponsor Equitable for making this celebration possible. Before the party, the zoo hosted an **Earth Day Clean-Up** event that saw 370 volunteers work to beautify zoo grounds and to further the zoo's conservation goals. **Several community groups participated in this effort, including M&T Bank, National Grid, BNT Mellon, Target, Intivity, Equitable, Visions FCU, McClurg Remodeling and Construction, NY Life, NBT Bank, Home Depot, Empower FCU, BHG, Turner Construction, Berkshire Bank, Syracuse Mets, and several groups from Syracuse University.** Volunteers helped clean up the Wildlife Trail hillside, weed garden beds, paint exhibit fences, build blue bird boxes and screech owl boxes, pick up trash, and much more – all while taking joy in working alongside other eco-enthusiasts!

LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility presented by Pride and Joy Families — To celebrate the many colors that make up the rainbow of our zoo community, the Friends of the Zoo hosted the LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility presented by Pride and Joy Families on May 5, 2024. **669 guests** braved the rain to enjoy educational offerings, entertainment, animal enrichment demonstrations, food trucks, and exhibitors. Fostering inclusiveness is of the utmost importance to the Friends as a community presence, and we are proud to hold an event that spotlights all kinds of families. **In addition to presenting sponsor Pride and Joy Families, supporting sponsors Advocates, Community Bank, Fair NY, Girl Scouts of NY Penn Pathways, and the Q Center at ACR Health helped bring this event to life.**

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

Senior Citizens Appreciation Day presented by Hill Insurance, LLC — 387 senior citizens visited the zoo for an early-morning celebration designed exclusively for those 62 and older on May 8, 2024! Guests were treated to complimentary admission to the zoo and a continental breakfast before attending creature chats that focused on geriatric animal care and browsing on-site senior-specific vendors. **In addition to presenting sponsor Hill Insurance, LLC, the Friends hosted this splendid spring celebration thanks to Aetna, Alzheimer's Association of CNY, Empower Parkinson, Energy Savers, Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield, Hearing Aid Consultants, Hearing Life, The Nottingham, UnitedHealthcare, and WellCare.**

Dreamnight — 832 guests participated the zoo's Dreamnight event on June 7, 2024. Dreamnight is an incredibly special event that aims to give children and families with healthcare needs and disabilities a night of dreams come true. Upon arrival, families received stuffed animals, and everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner with snacks throughout the night. Despite the rain, Dreamnight featured a sensory-inclusive after-hours stroll of the zoo, critter chats, games and performances. Originating in the Netherlands at the Rotterdam Zoo in 1996, Dreamnight is an inclusive, educational, and cost-free evening for children with special health care needs and disabilities to enjoy the zoo. Every year on the first Friday in June, more than 100,000 participants and their caretakers celebrate Dreamnight on six continents and in 23 countries around the world. **This dream of an event was made possible by Tops Friendly Markets, Jim and Juli Boeheim Foundation, Mohawk Global, The O'Donnell Family, Pathfinder Bank, and The Petting Zoo.**



Total Sponsors: **77**
Total Raised: **\$210,147**





DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: EVENTS TO SPOTLIGHT OUR ANIMALS

Penguin Palooza! presented by Tops Friendly Markets: On July 7, 2024, 2,215 guests enjoyed a day celebrating some of our cutest (and perhaps, most dramatic) residents—our **Humboldt penguin colony**. In addition to free ice cream and root beer floats for guests, the event featured an array of fun activities, including yoga at our Penguin Coast habitat, Chilean music performances by Carlos Gutierrez, sustainable fishing education by fishery biologist Tom Hughes, and penguin demonstrations with the bird care team. Palooza-goers even had the chance to craft mosaic masks inspired by Chilean artist Isadora Paz López’s work and to paint pebbles given to the penguin colony so they can use for courtship and building nests. The Conservation Crew, a youth volunteer group at the zoo, gave presentations on the different kinds of penguins found across the world and the efforts of penguin conservation. Art painted by the Rosamond Gifford Zoo’s penguins was auctioned off, with the proceeds going towards penguin conservation. **This project was made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by CNY Arts.**

Asian Elephant Extravaganza — 2,522 guests wished Siri and Romani, the two leading ladies of our Asian elephant herd, a **happy birthday!** Romani turned 49 and Siri turned 57. Romani (along with the rest of the herd) enjoyed a spectacular birthday cake prepared by our very own Catering at the Zoo team. Although Siri chooses to remain behind-the-scenes, she got to enjoy a special treat of her own, too. In addition to marking the elephants’ birthdays, the event also celebrated the cultural traditions of South Asia, the elephants’ native habitat. Performances included traditional Bharatanatyam dance and a gamelan from the Eastman School of Music. Additionally, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo’s chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) held a silent auction of elephant-painted art and sold limited edition merchandise to benefit Asian elephant conservation. AAZK raised nearly \$7,000, making this year’s Asian Extravaganza a day of community, celebration, and conservation. **This project is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Re grants Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by CNY Arts.**

DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING

GATE DRIVER: DRAGONS REIGN!

During the months of April-October, a clan of magical and mystical beings stayed at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. For our Dragons Reign! Gate Driver promotion, **10 large animatronic dragons were installed throughout zoo grounds**, dazzling and delighting guests during their visits. The dragons were large, lifelike spectacles, most of which were motion-activated so that they roared, chuffed, or even spoke as guests neared their nests.

The dragons’ arrival at the zoo coincided with the **historic total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024**, reflecting the crossing over between science and entertainment that the Friends of the Zoo strives to create. Before and during their arrival, the Friends hosted scavenger hunts, video content, social media campaigns, and other interactive activities involving the dragons, encouraging guests of all ages to get in touch with their imaginations. The ever-popular “MyZoo Jr.” section of the Friends of the Zoo magazine publication, *MyZoo*, featured a series of comics by Alissa Creno about **Drazirahc**, a cute Syracusan dragon who went on fun adventures with the dragon clan visiting the zoo.

Always committed to **celebrating diversity and inclusion**, the Friends ensured that this gate driver aligned with our values. Each of the 10 dragons, ranging in height from 5ft to 20ft, hailed from a variety of cultural and mythological traditions, including a Meso-American Quetzalcóatl Dragon, Chinese Dragon, and more! All of the dragons that moved or emitted noise took a scheduled “nap” for a few hours each afternoon to ensure that anyone with special sensory needs could enjoy these magnificent beasts, too.

The hearty success of the Dragons Reign! Gate Driver is a testament to the collaborative and cohesive nature of the entire Friends team. Whether it was dragon-themed merchandise in the gift shop, dragon-themed juice at the HoneyBee Café, a photo post on social media, or others, the Dragons Reign! promotion showed up throughout guests’ experience, offering an immersive, streamlined adventure for all!





EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

EDUCATION

To ensure that each one of the many educational outreach programs left a positive, informative impact on all students, the Education Department set out **to transform the Rosamond Gifford Zoo into a living classroom that connects diverse audiences to the natural world, providing an inclusive atmosphere for conservation education.** Our all-female team of conservation educators designed and delivered a variety of courses, camp programs, and interactive curricula that delighted and inspired the next generation of conservationists and community members.

Grounded in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) principles, the team tailored classes to students' needs, fostering inclusivity and authenticity. In 2024, the education team reached nearly 11,000 students across more than 500 programs held during the year, empowering these curious individuals to put conservation practices into action and understand their responsibility to make our planet a better place together.

Young guests had lots of fun in the **Jr. Vet Clinic, located in the Animal Health Center.** We partnered with Syracuse University Soft Goods to create lovely face masks, e-collars, casts, a stretcher, and felt anatomy books about elephant and frog physiology for children. Having access to these unique toys enhances children's understanding of animals in a fun, engaging manner.

In addition to the animal facts and conservation practices that took centerstage inside (and outside) the classroom, the Education Department also helped students explore the array of career opportunities and the pathways that lead to these careers. **The inaugural Wild About STEAM! Day** connected students to higher education and employment opportunities in CNY. Additionally, the **Teddy Bear Clinic**, held during Wild About STEAM! Day, provided important "healthcare" to youngsters' stuffed animal pals. Teddy Bear Clinics foster children's imagination, encourage empathy for animals, promote good animal husbandry practices, and even give children a window into a possible career as a veterinarian or technician. Today the plushies, tomorrow the wildlife!

A new collaboration with the Canastota Central School District that aims to highlight the many types of jobs required for zoos to operate (such as animal care specialists, maintenance laborers, education professionals, grant writers, and more) is currently underway, to be completed in 2025.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

One of the most exciting outreach education initiatives this year resulted in the creation and installation of Critter Corners. Working with ERIE21, the Keenan Center at Lemoyne, and Budmen Industries, teens designed a series of interactive activities and signage stationed throughout the zoo. The Critter Corners provided educational messaging about a variety of topics, including specific species conservation, the importance of AZA accreditation, and more. Not only did students get to see their hard work come to life at the zoo and remain visible throughout the year, but this partnership also established key community ties for the Friends of the Zoo. Based on this exciting project, **Budmen Industries invited Director of Education Kim Arnold to present at the Collaborative Education Summit.**

Despite their success, the Education Department continually pushed to innovate through program evaluation. One important means of conducting these evaluations included surveys to gauge satisfaction with program topics, depth of knowledge gained, interactions with the team, and degree of inspiration to make conservation-minded choices beyond the classroom. The team then thoroughly analyzed this qualitative data, **using the feedback as a guideline to revise programs based on the community's needs.**

Led by Mary Rice, our Conservation Crew (a volunteer group made up of almost two dozen children and teens aged 10-18 years) logged a collective 457 hours learning and creating key educational materials for the zoo, including info-boards and games. Conservation Crew's crowning achievement was **a project dedicated to conserving the piping plover**, an endangered bird species. The group collaborated with our animal care team to learn more about the species, what challenges they face in the wild, and how to inspire the public to help these rare birds survive.

Highlights:

- Began a new partnership with Beyond Powered by Girls Scouts of NYPENN Pathways
- 9 ZooGuides communicated conservation messaging and animal facts to guests during the July-October season to garner real work experience and life skills.
- Hosted Onondaga Community College's Micron Chip Camp for 120 students
- Received grants from the Shineman Foundation to work with the Fulton YMCA, where we facilitated field trips for almost 80 students in July and began an ongoing series of monthly programs for the Girls Rock! Program.
- Received additional funding to continue our Tadpole Academy in Jowonio, MANOS, & Northside Learning Center, reaching 639 Pre-K students
- Held 52 Zoo to You programs
- Most popular class topics: Ooky Spooky, Myths Busted, Wild About Careers, Winter Warriors, and Connecting to the Zoo (Why AZA Accreditation Matters)





Zoo volunteers worked over
8,419 hours in 2024.

12 active volunteers have over **1000**
lifetime hours of service.

Over **140** volunteers joined our ranks.



DEDICATED VOLUNTEERISM

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers are the heart of the Friends of the Zoo. Our team of **350 active volunteers** lends their time, talents, and voice to make a difference in our community and to inspire others to do the same. This year, **volunteers collectively provided 8,419 hours of service.** Volunteer activities are as varied as our zoo's offerings, including event-related roles, animal diet preparation, animal observations, beautification, and guest experience-related roles.

Beyond their initial orientation training, volunteers attended specialized trainings throughout the year to prepare them for their duties. To accommodate our volunteers, event-specific trainings were offered both in-person and online. Beyond event trainings, volunteers learned how to navigate the Zoo Monitor app to track individual bird behaviors as they observed birds in our outdoor Weathering Yard, best practices for food safety and sanitation to prepare animals' diets in the main and bird kitchens, and monitoring the Jr. Vet Clinic. Several volunteers opted for training to serve as educational docents for tours and animal encounters, the latter requiring shadowing as part of their training. We are beyond proud to have a robust, dedicated volunteer team that shows up to help support our mission all year long!

Community Comes Together! 35 different organizations from corporate, community, and student groups lent their time and effort to the zoo, clocking 2,123 collective hours. In addition to the Earth Day Clean Up teams, representatives from E&Y, Amazon, Hidden Level, National Grid, BJ's – Clay, M&T Bank, Grossman St Amour, Leadership Greater Syracuse, MONY Protective Life Insurance, Bonadio Group, ProAct, Pyramid Management Group, Lockheed Martin, Lotte Biologic, Verizon, Side Arm Sports, Eastern Security, and a variety of Syracuse University, SUNY ESF, and high school student groups contributed!

In addition to event-related roles, volunteers assisted with Animal Diet Prep (1320 hours), Docent Shifts/Tour Guiding (515 hours), Outdoor Bird Observation (54 hours), Junior Vet Clinics (638 hours), Teddy Bear Clinics (20 hours), Solar Eclipse Animal Monitoring Project (33 hours), Animal Encounters (114 hours), CATZ Events (320 hours), Office Affairs (61 hours), Membership (22 hours), Guest Services (126 hours), Youth Conservation Crew (457 hours), Gardening (707 hours), and last but not least, Dragons Reign! Installation/Takedown (174 hours).

Volunteer Molly Fulton achieved
8000 hours of lifetime service!

&

Volunteer Ellenrose Galgano achieved
5000 hours of lifetime service!

OUR GROWING MEMBERSHIP

ADMISSION AND MEMBERSHIP

Overall attendance at the zoo continues to hold steady. In 2024, we welcomed 330,547 guests through our doors!

Membership Mania

In 2024, we welcomed 2,274 **new members** to our zoo, bringing our total active membership households to 10,041 and generating **\$667,709 in revenue!** 408 members even chose to upgrade their level of support, suggesting that the value of our membership is evident to our community. With 25% of our member database made up of new members and 75% as renewed members, it's safe to say our membership program is a robust part of our success.

Beloved Benefits:

- Over 4,000 member-exclusive T-Shirts featuring our tiger cubs were redeemed, and over 450 members even purchased additional shirts.
- Members made up over 70% of program and event registrants.
- We offered 6 "Early Bird" member mornings, granting early entry for a special treat to members.

Our annual **Spring Acquisition and Holiday Gift Membership** (both of which encouraged membership with special offers) saw great response, each campaign bringing in over 1,000 new/renewed memberships and generating a combined total of \$184,751.

Commitment to Inclusion: Mobility for All

In April 2024, we increased our accessibility for zoo guests by launching an Electric Chair Vehicle (ECV) rental program overseen by the Membership Department – the first of its kind at Rosamond Gifford Zoo! Thanks to the Jewish Federation of CNY's generous donation, guests can rent one of these motorized wheelchairs at **NO COST**. During 2024, we saw a **total of 387 ECV rentals**, averaging 45 ECV rentals per month!

To accommodate growing demand, we expanded our fleet of stroller rentals. Over 1,000 strollers were rented during 2024!

Remembrance:

- To honor Rosamond Gifford Zoo employees who have passed away, we introduced a Lifetime Membership program, which were granted to the families of Ashley Sheppard and Ryan Wood.



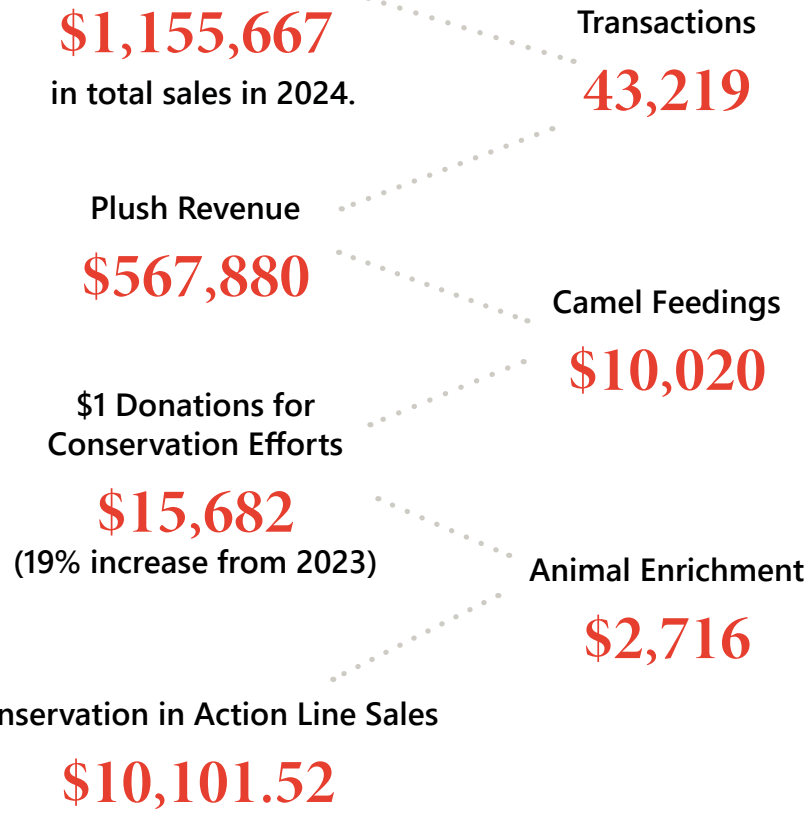
Overall renewal rate: **67%**

Of our total 25 Organization members
15 were new!

Our most popular membership level:
Family (35%)



BY THE NUMBERS
The Gift Shop generated



THE CURIOUS CUB GIFT SHOP

THE GIFT SHOP

During 2024, the Curious Cub Giftshop boasted an impressive accomplishment: **generating over \$1,000,000 in total revenue across more than 43,000 transactions!** The Curious Cub Giftshop gives guests the chance to take a small part of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo home with them. More than a store, the Curious Cub Giftshop is another way the Friends of the Zoo lives our mission and spreads our message, committed to offering high-quality, eco-friendly products and partnering with groups who share our conservation values. A purchase from the Curious Cub Giftshop goes beyond the moment of visiting the zoo. It's a deliberate action that strengthens our shared goal of creating a more sustainable future for our planet.

Telling Our Story: To ensure that guests understand how meaningful their purchases are, we installed and designed new signage that informs customers that all profits from purchases directly support the zoo. Customers have expressed gratitude for this transparency, which has encouraged more purchases. Signage also highlights the specific conservation efforts supported by the Conservation in Action line and the \$1 donations at checkout, further fostering customer engagement and awareness from browsing to buying.

In 2024, the Curious Cub expanded with new product offerings:

- The **Stuff-a-Plush** machine debuted during Holidays Nights, giving children the chance to bring their chosen stuffed pal to life right before their eyes.
- We introduced the **Buddy Box** package, which allows guests to ship a themed box including an 8” animal plush and greeting card nationwide.
- Our new product line of T-shirts, stickers, Rocks Glasses, and stainless-steel tumblers celebrate our **ever-popular Andean bear, Bjorn**.
- To keep up with guests' demand for all things **Eletwins**, we supplemented their product line with updated hoodie and sweatpants sets, picture frames, snow globes, bobbleheads, baseball caps, socks (adult and youth), and bibs.
- To support our community's local business economy, we established a new partnership with **Dutch Hill Maple**.

Our plush product line continues to be our most popular, garnering \$567,879.83 in revenue. This year, the 8” **fennec fox plush** took the top spot, generating \$9,298.15 in profit across the 818 units sold. Close behind last year's most popular plush was the 8” red panda (791 units sold, generating \$8,765.55).

A portion of proceeds from this line supports both local conservation efforts at the zoo and global wildlife conservation organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, Snow Leopard Trust, Red Panda Network, and many others.

Ongoing Partnerships with Conservation and Sustainability Organizations:

- International Elephant Foundation (IEF)
- Ocean Sole: Artisans in Africa recycle flip-flops washed ashore to create sculptures.
- Spectacled Bear Foundation
- Fahlo Tracking Bracelets

PHILANTHROPY

PHILANTHROPY EARNED OUR COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

Total Contributions and Grants **\$564,215**

It is through the generous support of our community that the Friends of the Zoo can continue striving to fulfill our conservation mission. The Philanthropy Department engages in transparent, authentic outreach initiatives to establish and to maintain meaningful connections with our community.

Inspiring Tomorrow's Board Members: In addition to seeking donations through fundraising, appeal letters, and earning grants, the Philanthropy Department also inspires the next generation of change-makers with **Youth Advisory Board (YAB)**. YAB members have the opportunity to gain real board experience by learning exactly what it means to serve as a board member to a nonprofit while supporting the Friends of the Zoo. Gina Rapasadi, Director of Philanthropy, leads the group, offering her guidance and philanthropic expertise to YAB during monthly meetings, projects, and brainstorming sessions. In 2024, 10 teens participated in YAB, during which they volunteered at multiple events hosted by the Friends of the Zoo (Zoo Run Run, Party for the Planet, Holiday Nights, and Zoo Boo). YAB members also assisted with creating animal enrichment activities.

Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is proud to support the zoo's commitment to excellence in animal care, conservation, and education through its Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation. This critical funding, provided through our restricted funds, reflects our dedication to maintaining the highest standards in animal welfare and visitor experience, ensuring the continued success and impact of the zoo within our community. Here are some of the areas we supported last year:

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Red Wolf | Komodo Dragon | Amur Leopard |
| \$2,419.26 | \$569.21 | \$2,822.02 |
| Red Panda | Asian Elephant | Animal Health Center |
| \$2,683.99 | \$92,229.49 | \$141,085.65 |
| Antiquities Tunnel | Humboldt Penguin | Infrastructure Support |
| \$2,149.95 | \$5,012.44 | \$43,289.74 |



above: Youth Advisory Board Members



Nurturing Our Community: The Friends of the Zoo offers a variety of ways to celebrate donations made to honor someone during and after their life journey. These forms of support all represent vibrant ways to **celebrate someone by letting their memory live on** through the conservation mission of the Friends. For those who seek a tangible marker of their memorial gift, guests can opt to dedicate a leaf on our Tree of Life (a ten-foot-long, multi-colored tree display that spans the wall in our HoneyBee Café seating area) or to dedicate a bench on zoo grounds with an engraved plaque.

Because Elephants Never Forget: The Friends of the Zoo is deeply grateful for those guests who have chosen to join the Elephant Society, our planned legacy program. By remembering the Friends of the Zoo in their wills, these guests help create a stable and secure future for the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.



THE WAY TO THEIR HEARTS

FOOD AND BEVERAGE/CONCESSIONS

Our Food and Beverage Department cooked up a storm in 2024, earning a **record-breaking revenue of \$1,699,449!** Exceeding 2023's revenue by over \$796,000, this is the first time the department surpassed \$1 million.

Whether at our cafés, a private/corporate event, or our seasonal snack food spots, (the Hofmann Dog Haus and Trunk & Tusk Cantina), technology and eco-friendly sustainability are always on the menu at our zoo's Food and Beverage Department! To limit customer wait times, the **HoneyBee Café offers convenient online ordering.** To ensure we live our mission to leave the planet a better and cleaner place, we continue to remove all plastic single-use straws, maximize aluminum container options over plastic, and exclusively use compostable paper products.



On-site HoneyBee Cafe: generated **\$778,875**

Skaneateles HoneyBee Cafe: generated **\$47,553**



CATERING AT THE ZOO

Catering at the Zoo (CATZ) brought in **\$873,021 in revenue**, serving a wide range of delightful dining experiences that included exquisite sit-down meals, casual picnic lunches, tasty hors d'oeuvres, and more. Led by Executive Chef Allison Walts, their skills as a full-service catering team earned the zoo our stellar reputation as THE place to host events. CATZ even has the awards to prove it. After an incredibly successful 2024, CATZ was named The Knot's Best of Weddings Award for 2025! As a wedding venue, the zoo also boasts a 5-star rating.

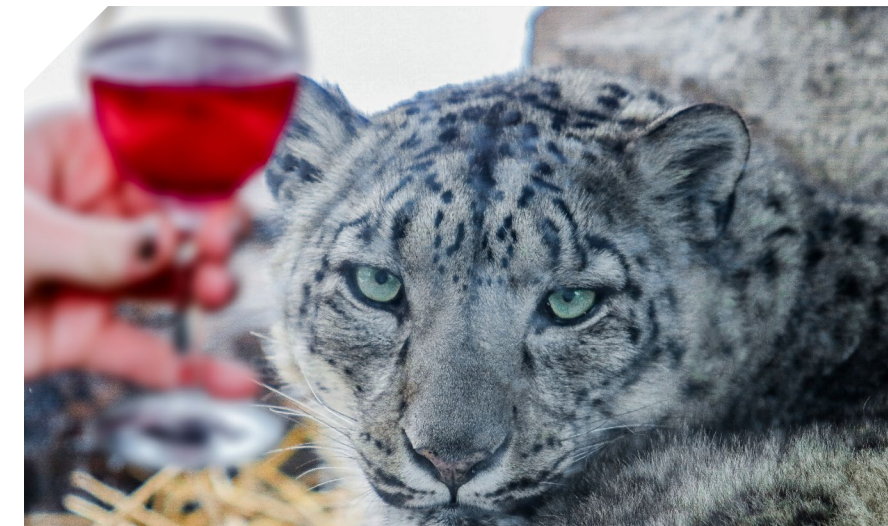
Hosted **168** private events

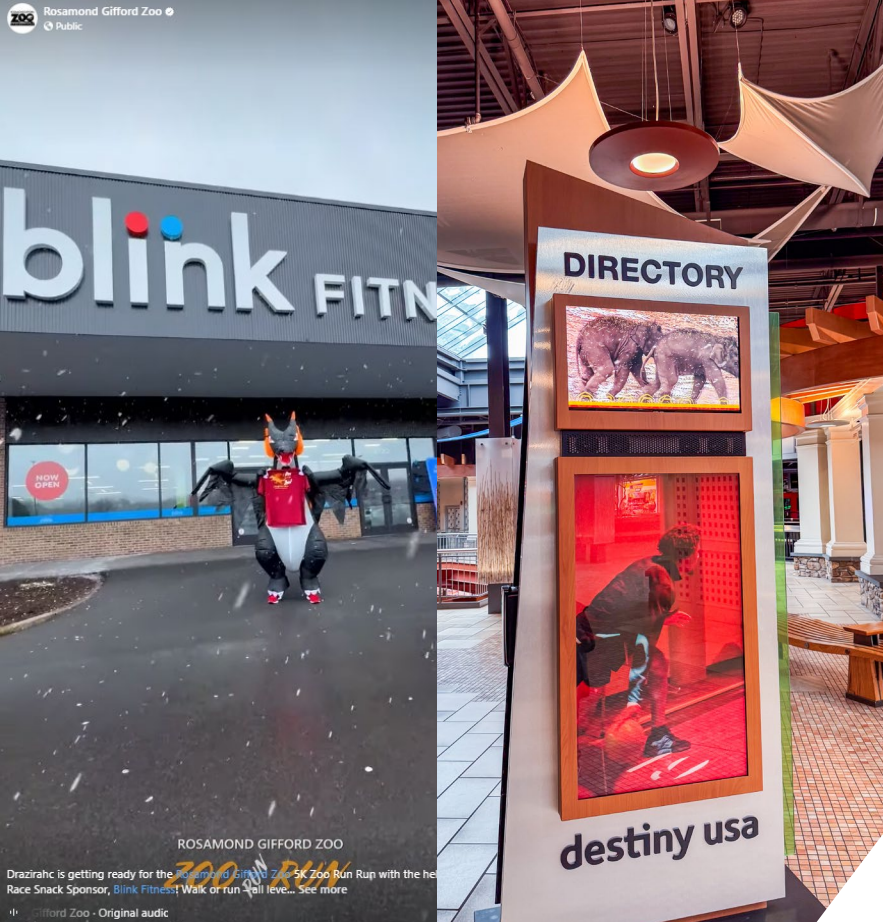
564 attendees enjoyed our monthly Gourmet Dinner

Pairing events, many of which **SOLD OUT**



CATERING AT THE ZOO





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

STORYTELLING SUCCESS

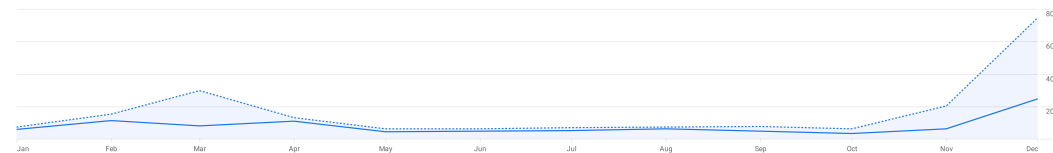
The Marketing and Communications Department of the Friends of the Zoo tells the story of our zoo across a variety of platforms, **crafting compelling messages to our diverse audience.** By striking that difficult balance between factual data, heartfelt empathy, and educative empowerment, the team visually and textually represents the zoo's multifaceted work.

MyZoo Magazine reached over 10,000 households, full of long-form articles that highlighted the zoo's animals, conservation work, upcoming events, and more! The prestigious Syracuse Press Club awarded the team first place in the Best Magazine category of 2024. Social Media Coordinator Camille Murphy earned first place in the Best Use of Social Media Category.

With the help of Board Member Ryan Lynch, we helmed new projection boards across the ramp that welcomes guests to the zoo and offers engaging videos. The Marketing and Communications team frequently received compliments about these videos, but perhaps the most meaningful compliment can be seen as guests pause to watch with smiles on their faces.

EXTRA EXTRA: In February 2024, we launched MyZooEXTRA, a monthly digital newsletter to keep our community connected with and informed about the zoo. We have received overwhelmingly positive support for MyZooEXTRA, earning an average 5.5% click-through rating, meaning 5.5% of recipients click on the content of the newsletter for further engagement. For context, a 1-2% click rate is the average across all industries. MyZooEXTRA **outperformed the average newsletter by more than double!** MyZooEXTRA also boasts a 75% open rate, beating out the average rate for all-industry email marketing—merely 25%.

Best Blog Ever! Upon the hiring of our new Content Writer, Rose Zaloom, the Marketing and Communications team revived the blog hosted on our website. Blog articles provide a detailed look at the amazing work going on at the zoo. Before these revival efforts, the defunct blog page garnered fewer than 100 hits per month. Since November, the blog's average monthly view count has **spiked to nearly 500 hits!** That's a 400% increase! The Marketing team hopes to continue this trend by posting relevant, interesting blog posts that spotlight the zoo's fascinating and often-overlooked operations.



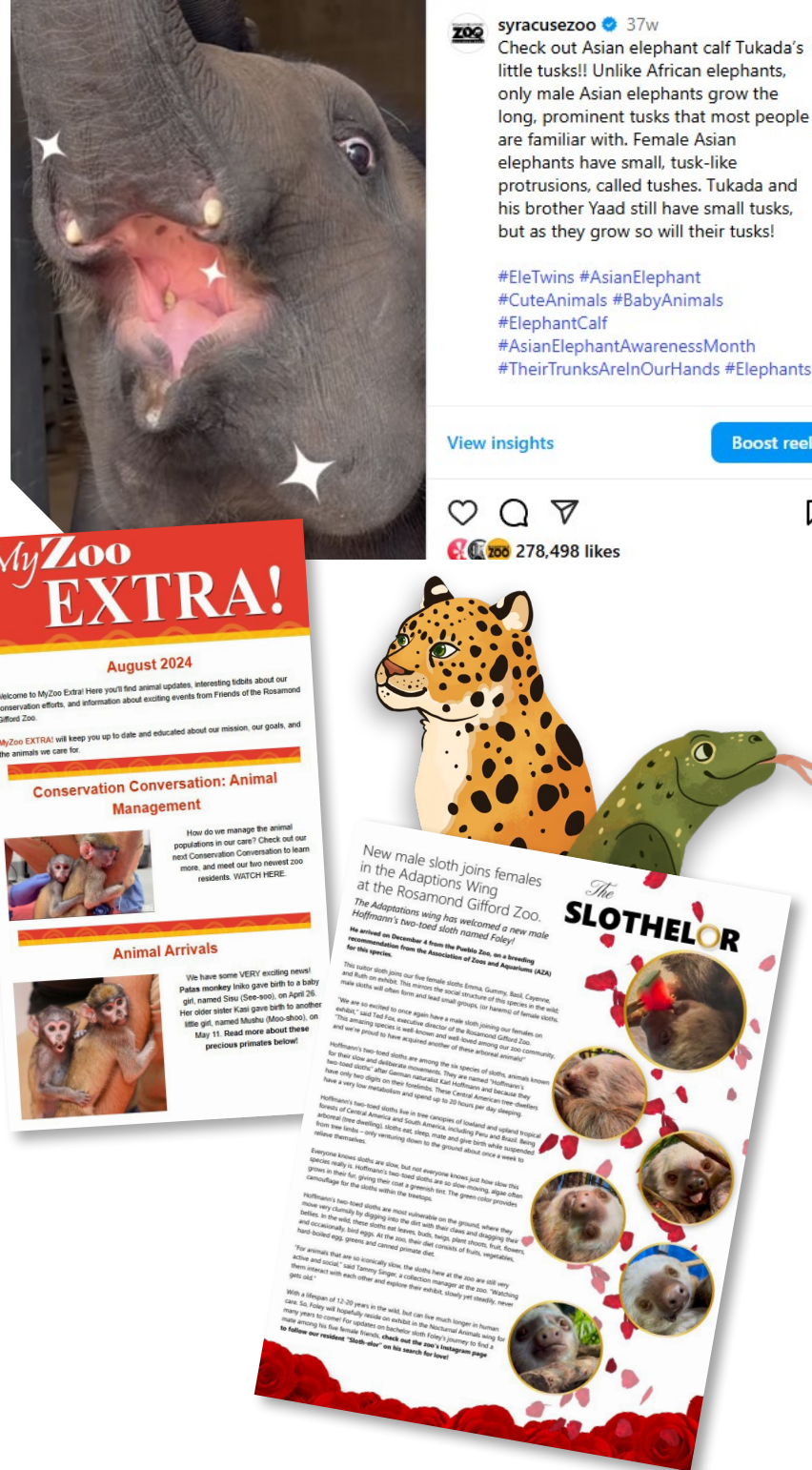
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

We See (and Design) the Signs: We built new and strengthened existing relationships with outside media and vendors, bringing our message far beyond the borders of our community. The zoo's logo continues to occupy space on the promotional screens of the world-famous DestinyUSA Mall. We also secured new position in Syracuse's Hancock International Airport for a sign installation of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's logo in 2025.

19.1% increase in social media followers
281,618 total subscribers across social media
(a 227% increase from 2023):

| Profile | Audience |
|--|----------|
| syracusezoo | 45,275 |
| Rosamond Gifford Zoo | 153,284 |
| Rosamond Gifford Zoo | 2,330 |
| Rosamond Gifford Zoo | 23,600 |
| Rosamond Gifford Zoo | 42,875 |
| Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo | 1,017 |
| Catering at the Zoo | 2,350 |
| Catering at the Zoo | 196 |
| @SyracuseZoo | 10,691 |

Refurbish and Refresh: We revamped our social media marketing strategy to include ads on our META platform to gauge success using real-time data analytics.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM, NEW FRIENDS!



Noelle DeMara, Conservation Education Manager
Noelle joined the Friends of the Zoo team’s Education Department as an Education Coordinator in May 2024. She has since been promoted to Conservation Education Manager. Noelle is a graduate of Loyola University Maryland, where she majored in Elementary Education and minored in Special Education.



Rebecca Eddy, D.V.M., Senior Veterinarian
Rebecca Eddy was hired as the Friends of the Zoo Senior Veterinarian in January 2024. She holds a B.S. in Applied Economics and Management as well as a D.V.M. from Cornell University.



Chryssanthi “Chryssa” Tzetzis, Senior Education Coordinator
Chryssa joined the Friends of the Zoo team as an Education Coordinator in March 2024 and was recently promoted to Senior Education Coordinator. Chryssa holds a B.S in Biology with a minor in Human Development and two micro-credentials in aquatic biology and science communication from SUNY Geneseo.



Dalcy Van Dee Myers, Gift Shop Senior Supervisor
Dalcy joined the Friends of the Zoo team as a Sales Lead in May 2024 and has recently been promoted to Gift Shop Senior Supervisor.



Rose M. Zaloom, Ph.D., Content Writer
Rose joined the Friends of the Zoo team as the new Content Writer in October 2024. Rose holds a B.A. in English from Utica University as well as an M.A. and Ph.D. in English from the University of Rochester.

TAKING CARE OF THE TEAM

The Friends of the Zoo Human Resources Department continued its **Employee Wellness Program**, offering a series of workshops and opportunities centered on promoting mindfulness and holistic health. Attendance for Wellness workshops has been high, and the team has provided positive feedback for having the opportunity to infuse their workday with a mindful moment. By providing Wellness, the Friends of the Zoo aims to support our team by destigmatizing stress/burnout and raising awareness about mental health. Practicing mindfulness is associated with **an increase in focus and cognitive function, better work-life balance, and improved physical health**. The Friends of the Zoo is proud to provide this outlet to our team members as we strive to ensure that everyone, including employees, has the best day ever at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.



CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

To forge our future, the Friends completed improvement projects and laid groundwork for continued innovation. From systems to security and carpeting to caretaking, we strive to improve the zoo at every level of operation.

- The Friends invested **\$90,115** towards the zoo **earning AZA accreditation**. This money provided support for hiring an AZA consultant, signage and educational material prints, a variety of habitat repairs and new installations, deep cleaning services, the animal care team’s participation in the AZA conference, Antiquities tunnel work and tape kit, furniture (such as office chairs and café tables), and other miscellaneous items.
- As part of AZA accreditation, the Friends **entirely replaced and cleaned the carpeting of the lobby**, ensuring that guests’ best day ever begins as soon as they enter our gates at **the cost of \$45,804.43**. This carpet keeps our ground cleaner and helps prevent disease from being carried into the zoo.
- As guests make their way through the lobby, new video ramp projectors, installed at the **cost of \$8,549**, now greet them. As a bridge between the science and art of conservation communication, these video projectors display seasonal messaging, graphics, and video content of our animals.
- The Friends invested **\$17,000 to update our finance system**, which included receiving an informative consultation.
- Walkie-talkies are essential tools that allow the animal care team to communicate with each other immediately and reliably. To facilitate that vital communication, the Friends purchased **\$4,936.90 worth of walkie-talkies for the zoo team**.
- The Friends **provided \$33,000 to support an overnight security contractor role**.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

- The Friends provided **\$3,240 for a serology research project** to advance the constant battle against elephant endotheliotropic herpesviruses (EEHV).
- The Friends invested **\$5,148 in stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine consult services** with Michigan State University to care for our elephants.



SAYING "YES" TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is not cheap, but the cost of generating unnecessary waste is far too expensive for our planet. To that end, the Friends funded our future through a collection of projects, initiatives, and commitments that advance sustainability.

- To enhance waste sorting, the Friends installed **new, visually accessible garbage and recycling bins** throughout the zoo grounds, costing **\$32,899.32**.
- To rid the hillside of dense, overgrown invasive plant species, the Friends **assisted with clearing the area and supporting healthier, native plant growth, costing \$8,900** and many volunteer hours.
- We transitioned from using plastic cups to **aluminum cups** at fundraising events to reduce the amount of plastic waste we incur. This change increases our initial material cost, but we are dedicated to the mission.
- Food and Beverage adopted **eco-friendly food service products** (plates made from recycled materials; compostable ramekins, lids, and silverware made from corn starch) rendering an increased material cost of \$5,145 per year. All paper products are compostable.
- The Friends **eliminated petroleum-based cleaning products**, replacing them with more environmentally friendly alternatives.
- The Friends have focused on **ESG Investing (environmental, social, and governance investing)** to align with our conservation mission. We will receive a full report detailing this update after a full year of investments with our new company.
- All plush items sold in the Curious Cub Giftshop are made from **recycled water bottles**, including the fabric, filling, and recycled thread for stitched eyes. Tags are printed with eco-friendly soy ink.

CONTRIBUTING TO CONSERVATION: DOING OUR PART

Conservation is not and never will be a solo activity. The Friends of the Zoo is proud to partner with many conversation organizations. In 2024, we supported:

- **International Elephant Foundation: \$10,000**
- **Amphibian Ark- \$3,000**
- **AZA SAFE-Asian Elephant: \$2,500**
- **AZA SSP-Komodo Dragon: \$5,000**
- **Columbus Zoo - SAFE Asian Elephant: \$2,000**





DOUBLE TROUBLE: HAND-REARING TWO PATAS MONKEYS

In the spring, we welcomed patas monkey half-sisters Sisu and Mushu into the world. Unfortunately, both newborns' mothers did not demonstrate the maternal instincts necessary to raise their babies, so the animal care team made the difficult decision to hand-rear the babies.

Raising two primates is an incredible and time-consuming feat, but the animal care team provided Sisu and Mushu with the round-the-clock feedings, medical care, supervised playtime sessions, and everything else they needed to survive and to thrive together as they stayed in the Intensive Care Unit of the Animal Health Center.

Despite being raised by humans, the goal is to do everything possible to preserve their natural instincts as patas monkeys. As the babies grew older, the zoo invited guests to special viewing hours twice a day to see the adorable, rambunctious babies. Each viewing session was staffed by a Friends volunteer who informed guests of Sisu and Mushu's story, educating everyone about the challenges of hand-rearing animals and their progress.

After months of these popular viewing sessions, Sisu and Mushu were deemed ready to begin reintroduction efforts so they could eventually be reunited with their troop. Animal care team members continue to work with Sisu, Mushu, and the rest of the patas monkeys to facilitate a smooth transition and unification process.

AZA ACCREDITATION RENEWAL

To earn AZA-accreditation, an institution must prove itself to be champion of wildlife conservation by adhering to high standards for animal care and working collectively to ensure that zoos maintain healthy populations of animals. Being an accredited zoo is integral to the zoo's trusted reputation, so the Friends invested a total of \$90,115 in various projects to ensure a successful reaccreditation process.

These projects included hiring an AZA consultant, construction and cleaning projects, gardening and grounds work, improving multiple habitat designs, replacing the lobby carpet, and other miscellaneous items. Only approximately 240 institutions across North America currently hold AZA status, which underscores the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's identity as a force for wildlife conservation.

Whether providing exceptional animal care to each and every creature who calls the Rosamond Gifford Zoo home, preserving animal populations through Species Survival Plans (SSPs), participating in research and fieldwork that seeks to better understand wild flora and fauna, or promoting environmental education through our robust public outreach programming, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo lives up to mission each day, and will continue to do so with the vital help its trusted partner, the Friends of the Zoo.

The Friends of the Zoo aided in the reaccreditation process by facilitating habitat improvements, grounds improvements, and other initiatives to ensure the zoo met the exceptionally high standards that merit AZA accreditation.



ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**



ONLY TWO YEARS OLD AND ALREADY HELPING THEIR SPECIES

Miracle two-year-old eletwins Yaad and Tukada celebrated their second birthday on October 24, 2024 and partook in a groundbreaking elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV) vaccine trial! The zoo has been involved in combatting this disease for years, as evidenced by the Friends of the Zoo providing financial support for a serology research project to advance the constant battle against EEHV.

Developed in Dr. Paul Ling’s lab at Baylor College of Medicine and in close collaboration with Houston Zoo, this first-of-its-kind mRNA vaccine targets the specific 1A strain of the potentially fatal virus. Similar to human vaccines, the calves will still be susceptible to EEHV after vaccination. The goal of the vaccine is to induce protective immunity and to decrease the severity of the symptoms and risk of death from the virus.

Yaad and Tukada were the fifth and sixth recipients of the new vaccine. While the boys were sufficiently distracted with treats and attention from their care team, Friends of the Zoo Senior Veterinarian Dr. Rebecca Eddy gave each twin an injection that lasted fewer than five seconds to administer. This unprecedented pair also hit some exciting growth and behavioral milestones.

At two years old, they transitioned to protected contact when interacting with the animal care team, meaning that the elephants no longer share the same space with their human caretakers. This is an AZA-wide policy intended to keep both elephants and humans safe and comfortable.

Yaad and Tukada are eager to train with the care team, learning important behaviors that allow the team to monitor their health, such as participate in trunk washes and voluntary blood drawings. Yaad’s and Tukada’s emerging tusks are becoming more visible as they continue to grow into healthy young bulls.

WELCOME HOME! ANIMAL ARRIVALS



On January 4, 2024, **female red panda Spring** arrived from the Sunset Zoo.

On March 14, 2024, **male southern tamandua Oso** arrived from the Dallas Zoo.

On March 28, 2024, **two San Clemente Island goats (female Magnolia and male Gingko)** were born. Current residents Herb and Lydia are their parents.

On April 26, 2024, **female patas monkey Sisu** was born. Current residents Iniko and Mac are her parents.



On May 11, 2024, **female patas monkey Mushu** was born. Current residents Kasi and Mac are her parents.

On May 28, 2024, **two female Black Welsh Mountain sheep (Eunice and Priscilla)** were born. Current residents Blackberry and Bryson are their parents.

On June 5, 2024, **two female Meishan pigs, Haku and Akio**, arrived from Blue Hill Acres Farm.

On June 7, 2024, **male Black Welsh Mountain sheep Ord** was born. Current residents Saga and Bryson were his parents.



On July 23, 2024, **a male roseate spoonbill** arrived from the Florida Aquarium.

On August 6, 2024, **fifteen dwarf seahorses** arrived from the Steinhart Aquarium.

On October 9, 2024, **female helmeted curassow Cabernet** arrived from the Brookfield Zoo.

On October 23, 2024, **male Sichuan takin Kai** arrived from The Wilds.

IN MEMORIAM

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

On January 16, 2024, female patas monkey Sara was humanely euthanized.

On February 1, 2024, female white-lipped deer Luan was humanely euthanized. Luan was the oldest recorded white-lipped deer in human care.

On February 22, 2024, female Humboldt penguin Rosalita was humanely euthanized.

On March 26, 2024, male Humboldt penguin José was humanely euthanized.

On June 28, 2024, male grey wolf Remus was humanely euthanized. He was 12 years old.

On September 3, 2024, male North American river otter Johann was humanely euthanized. He was 18 years old.

On November 4, 2024, female white-lipped deer Rosie passed away. She was almost 20 years old, making her one of the oldest white-lipped deer on record.

On December 26, 2024, female fennec fox Pink was humanely euthanized due to thyroid cancer.



ANIMAL UPDATES: COMINGS AND GOINGS

BON VOYAGE! ANIMAL DEPARTURES



On January 25, 2024, female San Clemente Island goat Fern departed for the Brandywine Zoo.

On February 21, 2024, 10 Northern seahorses departed for the Nashville Zoo.

On March 17, 2024, two female Ross's geese departed for the Livingston Ripley Bird Conservancy.

On March 27, 2024, male southern tamandua Dexter departed for the Dallas Zoo.

On May 10, 2024, male Humboldt penguin Lima departed for Moody Gardens.

On May 13, 2024, male San Clemente Island goat Oakley departed for Lake Superior Zoo.



On May 15, 2024, ten red-bellied piranhas departed for the Shedd Aquarium.

On May 21, 2024, two Von der Decken's hornbills (one male and one female) departed for Bird Kingdom.

On May 23, 2024, male Amur tiger Thimbu departed for the Omaha Zoo.

On July 8, 2024, female roseate spoonbill Babs departed for the Buffalo Zoo.

On July 13, 2024, female patas monkey Etta departed for the Buffalo Zoo.

On July 22, 2024, a female violet turaco departed for the Atlanta Zoo.



On September 24, 2024, male Victorian crowned pigeon Motley departed for the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo.

On October 2, 2024, male helmeted curassow Sangria departed for the Brookfield Zoo.

On October 8, 2024, female Black Welsh Mountain sheep Eunice and Priscilla departed for the Utica Zoo.

On November 13, 2024, three white-lipped deer, Stag (male), Tashi (female), and Kaila (female), departed for West Texas Wildlife Preserve.

On November 20, 2024, male red wolf Waya departed for Brookgreen Gardens.



STATEMENT OF OPERATING FINANCES

| | 2024 | | 2023 | |
|--|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| SUPPORT AND REVENUE | \$ | % | \$ | % |
| Membership | \$667,709 | 15% | \$651,644 | 15% |
| Retail operations | 1,232,030 | 27% | 1,338,097 | 30% |
| Program fees | 401,917 | 9% | 353,466 | 8% |
| Contributions and grants | 1,160,811 | 25% | 956,527 | 22% |
| Fundraising and events | 210,147 | 5% | 257,097 | 6% |
| Rental and catering income | 690,265 | 15% | 741,391 | 17% |
| Interest income | 219,659 | 5% | 150,507 | 3% |
| Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness | | 0% | | 0% |
| Total Support and Revenue | \$4,582,538 | 100% | \$4,448,729 | 100% |
| EXPENSES | \$ | % | \$ | % |
| PROGRAM SERVICES | | | | |
| Zoo support | \$1,576,935 | 34% | \$1,482,595 | 34% |
| Gift shop | 217,827 | 5% | 197,127 | 5% |
| Educational programs | 465,973 | 10% | 415,236 | 10% |
| Facility rentals/catering | 610,145 | 13% | 660,035 | 15% |
| Total program services | \$2,870,880 | 62% | \$2,754,993 | 64% |
| SUPPORTING SERVICES | | | | |
| Administration | \$867,411 | 19% | \$819,345 | 19% |
| Fundraising and Membership | 885,277 | 19% | 734,295 | 17% |
| Total supporting services | \$1,752,688 | 38% | \$1,553,640 | 36% |
| Total expenses | \$4,623,568 | 100% | \$4,308,633 | 100% |
| INCOME (LOSS) FROM OPERATIONS | \$(41,030) | | 140,096 | |
| Net change in market value of investments | 275,000 | | 49,871 | |
| Increase (Decrease) in net assets | 233,970 | | 589,967 | |
| Net assets at beginning of year | 7,243,838 | | 6,653,871 | |
| Net assets at end of year | \$7,477,808 | | \$7,243,838 | |

A full set of financial statements, including a report of independent auditors, is available for review during normal business hours at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

The commitment and generosity of the individuals, groups, corporations and foundations listed here help make the Rosamond Gifford Zoo a national leader in animal care, conservation and guest experience.
We thank you for your support.

2024 DONOR ROSTER

\$25,000-\$125,000

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THE ELEPHANT SOCIETY

In recognition of those who have left a legacy to Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo through a planned gift

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Carl Austin | Estate of Linda K. Massey | Debra Kuepper |
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| Estate of Ida L. Myers | Henry A. Panasci, Jr. | Edward Street |
| Estate of Irene L. Hunter | Charitable Remainder Trust | |

THIS DONOR ROSTER RECOGNIZES CUMULATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM JANUARY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2023. EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO LIST DONORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ACCURATELY. IF YOU SHOULD HAVE ANY CORRECTIONS OR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE AT (315) 435-8511 x8518.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

A memorial gift is a meaningful way to honor the memory of someone who has touched your life or recognize a life-cycle event or accomplishment.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| In Memory of Andrew Cowan Robin Cowan Susan P. Horn | In Memory of Harriet Freedman Nancy & Martin Skahen | In Memory of Priscilla Rogers Jill W. Stanton | In Memory of Stephanie Lessun Neurology Medical Service Group, LLC |
| In Memory of Angie Attili Constance M. Belsi Anne Bregande Donald & Anna Bridy Annette Cerrone John Cerrone Luanne Christensen Ann Difulio Bob & Delores Fennelly Ellenrose Galgano Leora G. Halpin William & Marian Kramer Mary Liccione Mary G. Mason Neal & Jean Mautz John & Carolyn Pardee Erica & Daniel Pigula John & Linda Sweeney Carole Taylor Carleton & Jacqueline Whittemore Cynthia Zammiello | In Honor of Jim Dillon Paula Bishop | In Memory of Richard W. Kane Pat Kane | In Memory of Ted Gill Susan Wonderland |
| In Memory of Ashley Sheppard John Kurtz Patricia Gehm Patrick Driscoll | In Honor of Jim and Jeanne Fleet David & Joan Boxall | In Memory of Rita Newton Cheryl Aupperle Jennifer Bednarz Lohr Deborah Bilello Paula Coleman Robin M Hillpot Helen KNIPP Sandra McGillis Margaret Newton Martha Stevener | In Memory of Timothy J Crofut Dominic Calabria |
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| In Memory of David Brown Carol Goldsmith | In Memory of Kyra Wonderland Susan Wonderland | | |
| In Honor of Elizabeth Wavle-Brown Lennon Ann Homer Sharon Stevans | In Memory of Loretta Corcoran Teresa Giarrosso Randall & Margaret Hoose | | |
| In Memory of Federick Wolf Janet Wolf | In Memory of Loretta Smyth-Bohemier Anna Behm Masozera Richard Maestri Cheryl Lafex-Maestri Susan Clement Jeanne Gabris Jay & Todd Hobbs Lynne & Paul Iamondo Pledgeling Foundation Marie & John VanAtta | | |
| | In Memory of Mary Frances Lewis Ashley Lewis | | |
| | In Memory of Penelope Talomie Robert Talomie | | |

OUR CREATIVE DESIGNER

We are heartbroken to share the passing of our colleague, **Ryan Wood**, on August 16, 2024. For nine years, the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was incredibly lucky to call Ryan Wood a teammate and friend.

As a graphic designer, Ryan held a key role on the Marketing and Communications team to promote the work and mission of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and Catering at the Zoo. With his love for animals and the creative arts driving him, he used his skills in art and design to spread awareness and to seek a better future for our community.





syracusezoo     RosamondGiffordZoo 

ONE CONSERVATION PLACE, SYRACUSE, NY 13204

315.435.8511 | INFO@ROSAMONDGIFFORDZOO.ORG | ROSAMONDGIFFORDZOO.ORG

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Megan Thomas, Vice Chair
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Jamie Card, Treasurer*

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| Amanda Foster | Steven Lickstein | Austin Philleo |
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** Indicates an outgoing board member.*

We thank these two devoted individuals for their heartfelt service.

Carrie Large, **Executive Director**

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