

An insider's view of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

My Zoo Magazine

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SISU AND MUSHU!**

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A Message from the Friends Executive Director

As the leaves turn and we welcome the crisp air of fall, I was filled with gratitude and excitement when we recently gathered for our annual Fall Conservation Bash. This event has become a cherished tradition, bringing together our community to celebrate the incredible

conservation work happening right here at the zoo. It's a chance to reflect on what we have achieved together, recognize the remarkable dedication of the team, and look toward our future with hope and enthusiasm.

One of our most anticipated projects is the upcoming transformation of our zoo courtyard into a vibrant garden. This beautiful new space will replace our pond that is failing, providing a stunning environment that fosters learning, conservation, and enjoyment. It's a project that will reflect our commitment to creating sustainable, inspiring habitats – not only for our animals but for our guests and the community. We can't wait for everyone to experience the beauty and serenity this garden will offer.

This season is also a time of remembrance and celebration of our dear colleague and friend, Ryan Wood, Friends graphic designer who recently passed away. Ryan was more than just an incredibly talented designer; he was a light to everyone around him, his work always had creativity, passion, and a love for this zoo that was truly inspiring. From logos to exhibit sign designs, Ryan's artistic vision has left a lasting mark on the zoo. His work helped bring our message to life in a way that was both beautiful and impactful, and his presence will be deeply missed by all of us who had the privilege of working with him.

As we celebrate our accomplishments in conservation, we also remember the importance of each individual in our mission to protect the natural world. Ryan's legacy will forever be a part of this organization and our community, reminding us of the power of passion and creativity in our shared mission of the zoo.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Together, we're making a difference every day – for our zoo, for conservation, and for the future of our planet.

With gratitude,

Carrie Large

Carrie Large
Friends of the Zoo Executive Director

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OF THE
ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO



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Please direct questions regarding this publication to editor@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

ON THE COVER:

Sisu and Mushu the Patas Monkeys
photo by Camille Murphy



A Word from the Board

Upon having children, I found myself visiting the Rosamond Gifford Zoo on a regular basis. It is a magical place for my family - whether we are visiting for Boo at the Zoo, Holiday Nights, or a visit with friends. When I was asked to join the Zoo Board, I felt so lucky. Being on the Board has been an incredible honor, and also a lot of fun! The team's talent never ceases to amaze me and I love having input on their great ideas.

Megan Thomas
Friends of the Zoo Board Member



A Tale of Two Sisters

Two patas monkeys gave birth to babies within a month of each other at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

In both cases, these monkey mothers, Iniko and Kasi, struggled to demonstrate the maternal instincts necessary to raise their young. Three-year-old Iniko gave birth to female Sisu (See-sue) on April 26, and her older sister Kasi gave birth to female Mushu (Moo-shoe) on May 11. The baby half-sisters are fathered by the sole male of the patas troop, Mac. The patas monkey troop at the zoo mirrors this highly social species' natural composition in the wild, in which one adult male and several females, with their young live together in a group.



Scan the QR Code for a fun video of Sisu and Mushu!

continued on pg. 6

ANIMAL UPDATES

In Memoriam

We are saddened to announce the passing of our male North American River otter, Johann. He was born at the Dickerson Park Zoo in Springfield, MO, and came to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in 2007 based on a recommendation by the Species Survival Plan (SSP). He was 18 years old. While some otters prefer to be solitary, Johann preferred to live with other otters and was housed with his son, Monterey. Visitors were able to tell the two apart thanks to the little "mustache" under Johann's nose.



CREATURE FEATURE: MEISHAN PIGS

Sus scrofa domestica

AT THE ROSAMOND GIFFORD
ZOO: 2 FEMALES
HAKU AND AKIO



Female patas monkey Sisu was born to parents Iniko and Mac on April 26.

Male Humboldt penguin Lima was sent to Moody Gardens on May 10.

Female patas monkey Mushu was born to parents Kasi and Mac on May 11.

Oakley the male San Clemente island goat was sent to the Lake Superior Zoo on May 13.

On May 15, **ten red-bellied piranhas** were sent to the Shedd Aquarium.

Two male and one female Von der Decken's hornbills were sent to Bird Kingdom in Niagara Falls on May 21.

Two female Black Welsh mountain sheep Eunice and Priscilla were born to parents Blackberry and Bryson on May 28.

Two female meishan pigs Haku and Akio arrived from Blue Hill Acres Farm in Pennsylvania on June 5.

A male Black Welsh mountain sheep Ord was born to parents Saga and Bryson on June 7.

Male grey wolf Remus was humanely euthanized on June 28. He was twelve years old.

On July 13, **patas monkey Etta** was sent to the Buffalo Zoo. She joined a young male from Zoo Tampa and two young females from the Topeka Zoo.

On July 22, **a female violet turaco** was sent to the Atlanta Zoo.

On July 23, **a male roseate spoonbill** was acquired from the Florida Aquarium.

Fifteen dwarf seahorses arrived from the Steinhart Aquarium on August 6.

On July 8, the **female roseate spoonbill Babs** was sent to the Buffalo Zoo.

Johann the North American river otter was humanely euthanized on September 3. He was 18 years old.

On September 24, the **male Victorian crowned pigeon Motley** was sent to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo.

Say Hello to Haku and Akio

These female Meishan pigs arrived from Blue Hill Acres in Pennsylvania on June 5.

The two underwent a standard 30 day quarantine before going on exhibit in our Contact Barn. Originally bred in China, this heritage breed is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, domesticated pig breed in the world. We specifically chose the Meishan because of their mellow nature and friendly disposition.

Akio has shorter "white socks" on her legs, and Haku has longer "white pants"! If you visit in the late afternoon, you might see the piglet girls romping about the barnyard and training with our staff. While still relatively small now, this species of pig can grow to almost 400 pounds, so learning different behaviors now will help with medical procedures in the future, and allow them to become great ambassadors for their species!

Meishans were imported specifically to be studied for their hyper-productivity. By their third farrowing, Meishan pig litter size is typically 14-16 piglets and occasionally 20 or more. Meishans typically have 16-20+ teats, allowing them to raise such large litters easily and successfully.

***Fun Fact:** Meishan pigs have been bred for over 5,000 years! While they are one of the oldest domesticated swine breeds, in 2018 the Livestock Conservancy declared them to be critically endangered. It's estimated that fewer than 2,000 animals are left. Originally, there were three different sub-types of pig: small, medium, and large. Currently, only small and medium Meishans exist, and only in the United States can you find the medium sub-type.*

They're named after the Chinese prefecture of Meishan, a region of lakes and valleys found in China's Jiangsu province. They are part of the Taihu group of pigs, which includes Fengjing, Jiaxing, Erhualian, and Hengjing, all from different districts of China.



A TALE OF TWO SISTERS *continued from pg. 3*

In the wild, the species has a comparatively low survival rate for births, with only around 62% of pregnant females having live births. It is common for wild young patas monkey mothers to be uninterested in or incapable of raising their young. Iniko and Kasi lack experience in raising babies, so their expert caretakers were on the lookout for signs that the mothers might need help. After careful observation, the zoo's veterinarian and specialists determined that the best way to ensure the health of both babies was to hand-raise them in the Animal Health Center ICU.

"Given the adversity that this species faces with reproduction, Iniko and Kasi's babies are an exceptional contribution to the zoo's patas monkey troop and the North American population," Zoo Executive Director Ted Fox said. "Since the babies are so significant, our primate specialists took action to protect these little patas babies and safeguard their health so we can reach our ultimate goal of having them eventually join the rest of our patas troop."

Hand-rearing patas monkey newborns is a large undertaking – but the process remarkably has precedence at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Iniko herself was hand-raised at the zoo in 2020 when her mother passed away during Iniko's delivery. As this was before the completion of our Animal Health Center and in the midst of quarantine because of COVID-19, Iniko had to be cared for at the home of our staff. Iniko's re-introduction journey took a very long time, with the added difficulty of losing both her mother and her father. We had to build a new troop for her from the ground up. We anticipate Sisu and Mushu's journey to go much more smoothly, as both their mothers and father are already a part of an established troop.

As the babies develop, their care team has begun to introduce them to the troop behind the scenes in the Social Animals Building of the zoo. This is a complex endeavor, given the extensive social structure of the troop. This slow process will include visual introductions between glass and mesh barriers, as well as introductions with individuals of the troop, before the half-sisters are fully integrated.

"Iniko entered the world with the odds stacked against her, but has thrived with the help of her dedicated care team," Fox said. "The experience of raising Iniko will prove invaluable as our team takes on twice the task, hand-rearing two baby patas monkeys at the same time. Because these two amazing creatures are so close in age they can be raised together, which definitely helps develop their social skills."

Patas monkey troops are matriarchal, but the sole male of a troop will act as a mediator between the females if a power struggle occurs, and as a protector from rival troops or predators. Their father, Mac, is still young and will not have any paternal involvement with Sisu and Mushu once they join the troop, but we do anticipate he will want to play with them.

Patas monkeys are not endangered in the wild, but there are only 13 accredited institutions in the United States that care for these primates, making the careful management of their population all the more important. Patas monkeys are social animals, so if a member is not accepted into the troop, there is a limited number of facilities that can accept them, especially in light of keeping breeding population genetically healthy between family units.

Our current patas troop are the descendants of a group of 20 rescued from extermination in Puerto Rico by the Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa in 2010. The monkeys had been captured in their native Africa and brought to Puerto Rico as lab animals, but either escaped or were released to run feral. They were targeted as an invasive species and agricultural pests when Lowry Park intervened. Sisu and Mushu's late grandmother, Becca, was one of those rescued primates.

Patas monkey half-sisters Sisu and Mushu are stealing hearts, and we want to share them with the public, but it is important to note that monkeys, and other exotic animals, are not pets.

As an AZA-accredited facility, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo has the experience and resources needed to provide these animals everything they need to thrive before being integrated into a larger family group, which mimics their natural, complex social structure.

Not only are the buying and selling of many exotic pets illegal, but the trade can lead to deadly zoonotic diseases and seriously harm the wild population of these species. When you engage with animal content online, please be careful that you do not unintentionally promote illegal activities or other harmful acts towards animals. Make sure the facility is AZA-accredited. One sign of exploitation is if the animals are wearing clothes.

Please consider donating to support future generations of animals at Rosamond Gifford Zoo such as Sisu and Mushu. Your help betters our tomorrow. Scan the QR Code for more information.





A Hopeful Endeavor

Bird is the word, and word is that two of our South American birds are playing a very important role in the survival of their species!

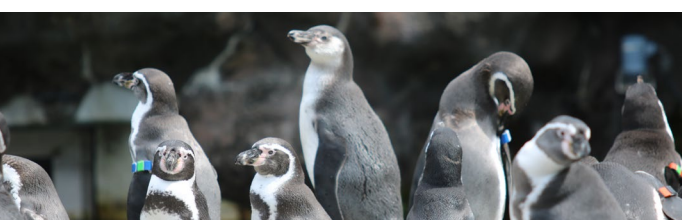
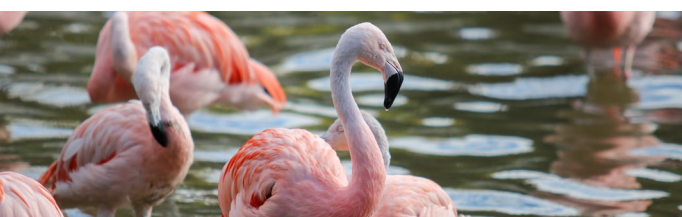
Our Chilean flamingos represent an important, genetically diverse population that is underrepresented in managed care facilities. Our seven original birds have been at the zoo since the 1990s, and six younger birds were introduced in 2021 thanks to a volunteer-led fundraiser dubbed the Fund for Flamingo Flamboyance. As we participate in the AZA SAFE (Saving Animals From Extinction) Andean highland flamingo program, we temporarily removed our flock from exhibit this summer in order to encourage breeding behaviors, and we are hopeful to contribute more of these genetically diverse birds to other AZA accredited institutions within managed care facilities in the future.

While behind-the-scenes, the flamingos had a very successful breeding period! They formed pairs, built nests, and even laid some eggs! While none of the eggs this year were viable, it is still a remarkable achievement and positive sign for the future. They are currently back on exhibit.

Our other feathered friends are the Humboldt penguins! We supported scientists who surveyed two islands off the central Chilean coast in 2023 and detected 842 breeding pairs of Humboldt penguins. This year, only one breeding pair was found. Unfortunately, marine pollution, loss of habitat for nesting sites, and avian flu, exacerbated by the El Niño weather phenomenon, have dramatically decreased the Humboldt penguin population in areas along the central coast of Chile, making them one of the most vulnerable of the world's 18 penguin species.

Rosamond Gifford Zoo participates in the Humboldt Penguin Species Survival Plan and collaborates with other facilities to create a genetically diverse assurance population of these penguins in human care. In the event the population of these penguins continue to decline, we may be able to participate in re-release programs to repopulate them in the wild. But this is not an option unless significant changes occur to prevent another population crash.

Support for the Humboldt Penguin starts with you. When shopping, use the Seafood Watch app to make sure you are buying from well-managed, sustainable fisheries. Cut back on plastic purchases, reduce your carbon emissions, and support us and other AZA-accredited institutions that contribute research and resources to the survival of this species.



Denizens of Sand and Snow

Get to know our captivating camel brothers Patrick and George!

Bactrian camel half-brothers Patrick and George arrived from the Milwaukee County Zoo in January of 2018, and are current fan-favorites! Native to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia and China, these camels can withstand severe temperatures, from -40°F to over 120°F, making them perfectly suited to our dramatic and ever changing Syracuse weather. They have long eyelashes in double rows and a third eyelid which acts like a windshield wiper to wash sand or dirt out of their eyes. Their broad, flat feet have leathery pads and two toes on each foot which helps prevent them from sinking into sand or snow!

Older brother Patrick is the taller and more dominant of the two, weighing in at 2,500 lbs. Younger brother George weighs 2,100 lbs. Like the letter “B” for Bactrian, these camels have two humps, as opposed to their single humped Dromedary “cousins.” Contrary to popular belief, a camel’s hump does not hold water. Instead, the hump serves as a reservoir for energy-rich fat, which the camel metabolizes for energy when food is scarce. Because our camels can eat regularly, they don’t need to store fat reserves like they would in the wild, so their humps can appear slightly lopsided.

You may have had the chance to feed these charismatic camels during our summer animal demonstrations, or even to meet them at a wedding on zoo grounds, but their public appearances are more than just enrichment. Funds from our camel feedings and encounters directly support and inspire the conservation of their species.

While domestic Bactrian camels are fairly common throughout North American zoos, they are actually remnants of a critically endangered species. Over a million domesticated Bactrian camels live in human care throughout the world, but fewer than 1,000 wild individuals exist in their native range – making them the eighth most endangered large mammal in the world. In fact, in 2008 scientists at the Institute of Population Genetics, University of Veterinary Medicine, found the wild camel (*Camelus ferus*) to be a genetically separate species from the domestic Bactrian camel (*Camelus bactrianus*) as both only shared a common ancestor nearly 0.7 million years ago. Wild Dromedary camels became extinct around 2,000 years ago, meaning that our wild Bactrian camels are the very last species of wild camel left on the planet.

While camels were domesticated 4,000 years ago, it is believed that the wild camels in the Gashun Gobi (Lop Nur) area were a separate species, and avoided domestication due to their isolated habitat. Not only has the wild camel evolved to survive on salt water, but they live in an area that was used as a nuclear test site for 25 years, and yet they continue to reproduce and seem to have avoided any obvious side effects of radiation. However, they are still faced with extreme danger of extinction because of breeding with domesticated camels, hunting, and continued habitat loss.

Our zoo is proud to support The Wild Camel Protection Foundation, which is working to protect wild camels from extinction through a breeding center in Mongolia. Their original center in Zakhyn-Uus recently reached capacity, with 35 wild camels and 5 calves born in 2020. On September 23, 2024, the WCPF opened their second center in Toli Bulag, moving 7 wild camels to the new facility. Along with these breeding efforts, the WCPF is working to estimate the remaining number of wild camels accurately, learn where they travel, and see how they survive on the land. But wild camels are incredibly difficult to study, given their shy nature and vast, unforgiving habitat.

“Patrick and George, while not the exact same species as wild camels, are still uniquely suited to their roles as ambassadors,” said Theo Campbell, the large mammal Collection Manager at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. “They have a ton of personality, and everyone who gets to meet them up close can see that and be inspired to protect them, and by extension, their wild counterparts.”

While we and other Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited institutions participate in SSPs, or Species Survival Plans, to create a genetically varied assurance population of animals in human care, this is no longer an option for wild camels. Instead we must support efforts in their range country to save their remaining population. By donating funds from our camel feedings and encounters directly to the WCPF, we are able to support their conservation mission while introducing the public to a species they will probably never encounter in the wild.

Domestic Bactrian camels at accredited institutions, such as Patrick and George, help give us an insight into the world of wild camels, including their social structure and eating habits, but more advanced camera-trapping is needed to study those in the wild. Some facilities with domestic Bactrian camels, such as The Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio, have been able to participate in studies to test tracking collars that could be used on camels in the wild. The WCPF is also working to study genetic information by non-invasively collecting wild camel hair and feces that will be able to determine how much hybridisation has occurred between wild and domestic camels. All of this research helps develop our understanding of how to best conserve Bactrian camels and their habitats.



Remembering Our Friend Ryan Wood

We are heartbroken to share the passing of our colleague Ryan Wood on August 16. For nine years, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was incredibly lucky to have Ryan Wood as a teammate and friend. He brought an array of exceptional skills to our foundation. A lifetime resident of the Syracuse area, he was a distinguished alumnus of West Genesee High School and earned his bachelor's degree from the prestigious Rochester Institute of Technology. He 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.

Whenever you read our magazines, walk around zoo grounds, visit the gift shop, and browse our website you have enjoyed Ryan's work. 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.

As graphic designer, Ryan worked on zoo posters and interpretive signage. He created branding for innumerable projects, special events, event merchandise, educational programs, the gift shop, and special attractions such as 2018's Dinosaur Invasion! – and much more. His work on our member publication, MyZoo Magazine, helped earn two consecutive Syracuse Press Club awards.

Implementing his technological expertise, he worked with the marketing team to revamp the zoo's websites as well as helped build and expand the zoo's social media platforms, which were key components to the zoo's communication and engagement efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic closure. He also assisted with the implementation and launch of the zoo's onsite digital communications platforms.

There was nothing Ryan couldn't do. Whatever you needed, he'd make it happen. He took photos of our animals and zoo grounds – once climbing to the top of our zoo to take aerial photos. He interviewed and filmed our keeper staff for informational videos and outreach. Any computer program you had a question on, he had the answers. Ryan knew all sorts of facts and tidbits about the zoo and those who worked here. And most of all, if you needed someone to talk to, he was always there to listen.

Ryan was a gifted and genuine team player, dedicated to the mission of the Friends of the Zoo and to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo family. He has left his mark here at the zoo, in the community, and in our hearts. We will always cherish his radiant smile, joyful spirit, creative soul, and the genuine warmth he brought to all who knew him.

Please enjoy the amazing work Ryan did for the zoo, the Syracuse community, and his personal art projects.



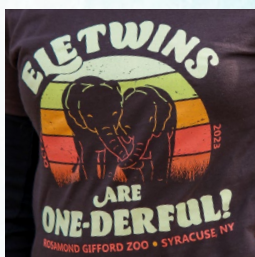
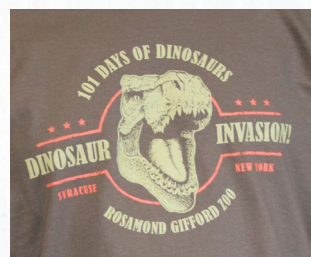
THE FINGER LAKES



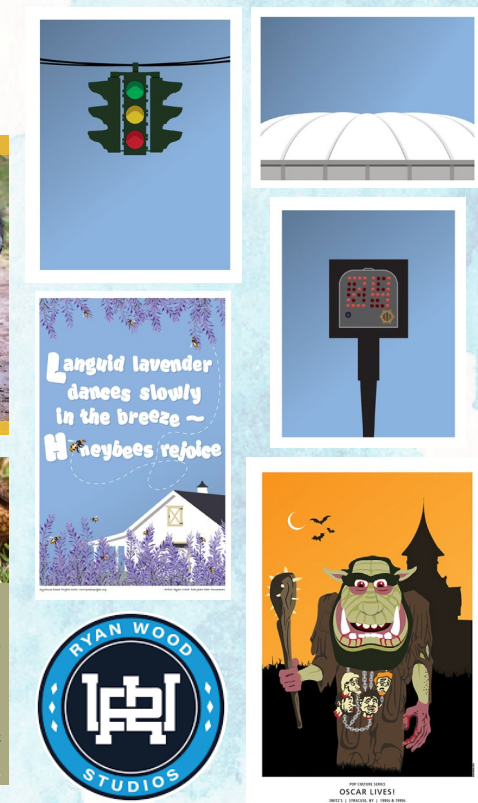
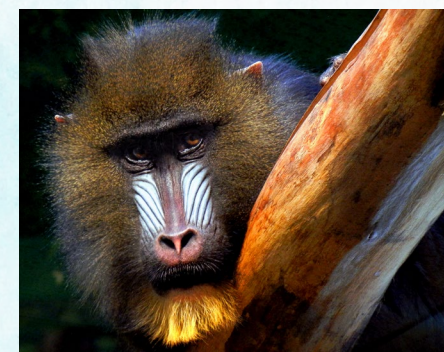
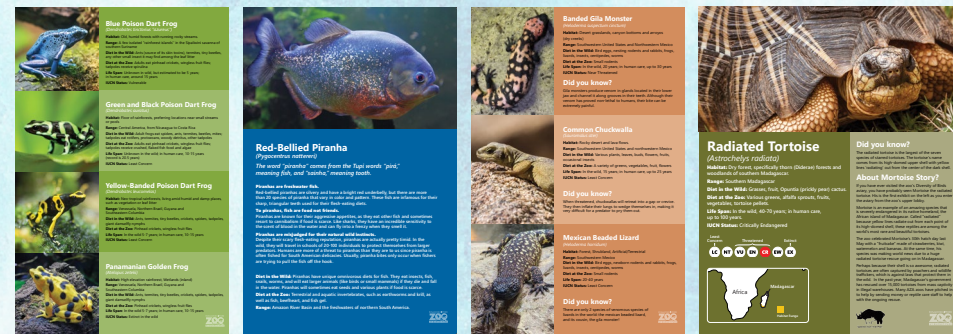
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3



GAME BOY



In Loving Memory of a Life Well-Lived.





Eletwins Turn Two and Receive a Crucial Vaccine

We can hardly believe it ourselves, but we recently celebrated the EleTwins' second birthday! Miracle Asian elephant twins Yaad and Tukada were born on October 24, 2022. Since that day, they have brought immeasurable joy to our zoo family. Beyond being a source of pride, these unprecedented brothers have provided our animal care team with plenty of novel observations in their first two years of life.

While they are gaining more independence from their herd, the boys are definitely braver together. Their incredible bond means the brothers have learned things at a remarkable pace, perhaps inspired by a friendly sibling rivalry. The elephant care team has never seen anything quite like Yaad and Tukada – and neither has any other zoological institution in North America! We'd call them one of a kind, but there are two of them, and we could not be more proud of our care specialists for stepping up to save Tukada two years ago.

Turning two for an elephant calf is like sending your kid to kindergarten for the first time. There are all new behaviors and skills for the boys to learn in order to grow into healthy young bulls, and the way we have to teach those behaviors has changed. As an AZA-accredited zoo we have strict policies in place when it comes to interactions with our animals in order to keep our animals, and staff, safe. (After an elephant turns two, our care specialists do not share a space with them.) Our staff has been practicing with the twins to make this transition as smooth as possible. Being comfortable with exams through "protected contact" (or contact from the other side of a secure barrier) is even more important with the regular EEHV testing the twins receive.

EEHV, or elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus, is a naturally occurring virus that targets young elephants and can be deadly. By two years old, Asian elephants have lost most if not all of the antibodies from their mother, and are at a much higher risk of succumbing to this disease than in their first year of life. While this disease does not currently have a cure, we are working with experts around the world to come up with a solution. In fact, Yaad and Tukada were actually the fifth and sixth recipients of a new EEHV vaccine trial! While the boys were sufficiently distracted with treats and attention from their care staff, our veterinarian Dr. Rebecca Eddy gave each of the boys an injection that lasted fewer than five seconds to administer.

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 EEHV. 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.

Senior Veterinarian Dr. Rebecca Eddy notes, "Being selected to be part of the EEHV1A mRNA vaccine trial is a huge opportunity for the calves in hopes that their immune system will develop antibodies to a protective level, but even more exciting is that the calves are able to contribute important data for Baylor College of Medicine's research that could be life saving for so many elephants in the future. It is an honor to be able to participate in such an important endeavor." Administering this vaccine to the twins marks a monumental step forward in the ongoing battle to treat this often fatal disease.

In addition to this exciting vaccine trial, there are many ways our staff monitor the elephants for signs of this virus. EEHV can appear as lesions in the mouth, so all of our elephants, including Yaad and Tukada, are trained to present and open their mouth on cue. Just as important are regular blood draws and trunk washes to test for viremia and shedding of the virus. A "trunk wash" is a procedure that involves the elephants holding a sterile saline solution in their trunk before depositing it into a bag to be tested. These checks help us to catch problems early should they arise.

In the wild, elephant death as a result of EEHV can only be detected if a necropsy is conducted in sufficient time to detect it. Accredited zoos provide an unparalleled opportunity for scientists to study and learn more about treating this disease.



(pictured above) The EEHV vaccine is given to the Eletwins and the brothers receive a treat for being brave!

The AZA Seal of Approval

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo's recent renewal of its accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a significant achievement that underscores our commitment to excellence in animal care and conservation.

AZA accreditation is a rigorous process that requires zoos and aquariums to meet a set of high standards in areas such as animal welfare, education, and conservation. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo has proudly held this distinction for thirty-seven years, since 1987.

The AZA accreditation process involves a comprehensive evaluation of an institution's operations, including finances, guest experience, and animal care. This includes on-site inspections of animal habitats, reviews of veterinary care and animal welfare protocols, and assessments of educational programs and conservation initiatives. Zoos and aquariums must demonstrate that they are providing a high-quality environment for their animals and are actively contributing to the conservation of endangered species.

AZA accreditation is more than just a seal of approval; it is a commitment to excellence. Zoos and aquariums that are AZA-accredited are held to a higher standards of animal care and conservation efforts than non-accredited institutions. This means that visitors can be confident that the animals they see are being cared for in a humane and responsible manner.

One of the key differences between AZA-accredited institutions and other zoos is their focus on conservation. AZA members are actively involved in a variety of conservation programs, including species survival plans, habitat restoration, and education initiatives. These programs help to protect endangered species worldwide and to promote biodiversity.

By supporting AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, you are helping to support these vital conservation efforts. Your visits, memberships, and donations contribute to the ongoing success of these institutions and their commitment to protecting our planet's wildlife.

A Vital Tool for Conservation

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Species Survival Plans (SSPs), and Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE), are cornerstones of global conservation efforts.

These collaborative programs coordinate the breeding and management of specific animal species within AZA-accredited institutions. By carefully tracking the genetics and demographics of these populations, SSPs help to ensure the long-term survival of endangered and threatened species. One of the key advantages of SSPs is their ability to maintain genetically diverse populations. By carefully matching breeding pairs, SSP coordinators help to prevent inbreeding and ensure that future generations of animals are healthy and resilient. Additionally, SSPs play a crucial role in reintroducing animals into their natural habitats. By carefully selecting individuals for reintroduction, SSPs can help to establish viable populations in the wild. SAFE is a program that pools money from AZA members to focus on the conservation programs that need the most support.

Rosamond Gifford Zoo has seen previous success with SSPs and other breeding programs that have produced genetically valuable offspring like our Amur Tiger cubs Zuzaan and Coba, Eletwins Yaad and Tukada, and Patas half-sisters Sisu and Mushu. AZA institutions such as ours are dedicated to providing the highest quality care for their animals and actively participating in SSP programs. Your support is not only helping to ensure the well-being of individual animals but also contributing to the broader goal of protecting endangered species.

Patronizing AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums is essential for the continued success of SSPs. The revenue generated by ticket sales, memberships, and other programs helps to fund vital conservation efforts, including research, education, and habitat restoration.





Dreamnight

Our annual evening for families with special health care needs and disabilities was a grand success! On a rainy June 7, guests enjoyed a sensory-inclusive after-hours walk around the zoo with keeper chats, games, and fun performances. Upon arrival families received stuffed animals, and everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner with snacks throughout the night.

In all, **832 guests** participated and **over 100 volunteers** helped make lasting memories.

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 families and friends celebrate Dreamnight on six continents and in 23 countries around the world.

Since 2008, many Central New York organizations have worked with us to provide children in our community the opportunity to participate in Dreamnight.

This night was made possible thanks to sponsors **Tops Friendly Markets, Jim and Juli Boenheim Foundation, Mohawk Global, The O'Donnell Family, Pathfinder Bank, and The Petting Zoo.**



Tee Off FORE the Animals

Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo held its charity golf tournament, Tee Off FORE The Animals on June 24. **64 golfers** joined us at the historic Bellevue Country Club for 18 holes of championship golf.

The Bellevue Country Club was designed by the world-renowned golf course architect Donald J. Ross. This challenging course offers breathtaking views of the Syracuse skyline and the surrounding hills of Central New York.

Captain-and-Crew participants enjoyed a tasty breakfast and lunch on the course, followed by a post-tournament dinner in Bellevue's luxurious clubhouse. During their evening meal, the golfers enjoyed a raffle and auction. In total this event raised **\$40,723** in support of animal care and conservation.

Thank you to our golf tournament sponsors, **Nave Law Firm, Coca Cola Syracuse, CNY Business Journal, and Shaughnessy's Irish Pub.** Thank you to our 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.**



Penguin Palooza!

On Sunday, July 7, Penguin Palooza **presented by Tops Friendly Markets** kicked off with a peaceful (or not so peaceful...have you heard our penguins?) morning yoga at the Penguin Coast exhibit. The penguin party of over **2,215 guests** continued with an array of fun activities for all to enjoy. Throughout the day, families listened to Chilean music performances by Carlos Gutierrez, learned about Sustainable Fishing by Fishery Biologist Tom Hughes, and watched penguin demonstrations.

Our **24 helpful volunteers** handed out tasty treats like ice cream and root beer floats to guests. Visitors crafted mosaic masks inspired by Chilean artist Isadora Paz López's work. They also helped paint pebbles that were then given to our penguin colony for courtship and building nests.

A raffle benefiting penguin conservation gave zoo visitors had an opportunity to take home an art masterpiece painted by the penguins. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo Conservation Crew gave presentations on the different kinds of penguins found across the world and the efforts of penguin 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.



Brew at the Zoo

Despite the rain, the spirits of over **2,000 guests** were not dampened at this year's Brew at the Zoo on August 2. The popular, annual fundraiser featured a selection of 160 regional craft beers, wines, and canned craft cocktails at 68 different pouring stations.

In addition to the wide variety of beverages, guests enjoyed the offerings of local food trucks Bold Coast Lobster, Funk'n'Waffles, Herlihy Smokehouse and Grill, Ji Woo's Korean Seoul Food, Limp Lizard, Macarollin, Rosalie's Cucina, and The Saucy Sandwich. While visiting the various animals on evening exhibit, guests listened to live music throughout the zoo featuring local musicians Hold the Air, Dennis Veator, Peg Newell, and Taking Back October.

The Hayden Jewelers VIP Lounge sold out this year. Those who purchased a VIP ticket were able to skip entry lines and had access to exclusive indoor spaces featuring special tastings, and complimentary gourmet fair.

Brew at the Zoo also featured the NBT Bank Silent Auction and Raffle with the chance to bid on one-of-a-kind items such as animal artwork, sports memorabilia, and vouchers for various experiences in the Syracuse area.

Altogether, Brew at the Zoo raised over **\$125,000** in gross revenue. The Friends of the Zoo are extremely grateful to the **130 volunteers** who did everything from pouring drinks to parking, and of course, handing out ponchos.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to 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.**



Asian Elephant Extravaganza

Over **2,522 guests** joined us on August 17 for our annual Asian Elephant Extravaganza! This event is a birthday celebration for our two oldest elephants, Siri and Romani, and honors the culture of their native habitat.

Romani, who turned 49, got first dibs on her spectacular birthday cake, created with all of her favorites by our very own Catering at the Zoo team. Siri, who turned 57, prefers to spend time with her care staff behind-the-scenes, but was still properly celebrated with a "cake" of her own.

In addition to our elephant art silent auction, our AAZK (Animal Association of Zoo Keepers) chapter designed and sold limited edition hats, coasters, and planters to support Asian elephant conservation in the wild. The event raised nearly **\$7,000**. Guests also enjoyed a traditional Gamelan performance by the Eastman School of Music and Bharatanatyam dance performance.

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.



Fall Conservation Bash

On Thursday, September 12, Friends of the Zoo hosted their annual Fall Conservation Bash to celebrate all of the achievements of the past year. Such accomplishments include the birth of patas monkey half-sisters Sisu and Mushu in early May and expanded efforts on the building of the gardens.

The Conservation Bash was an outdoor dining experience hosted in the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's courtyard and featured fall-themed cuisine from our caterers and included live music from pianist and vocalist Steve Laureti. Guests witnessed a flyover from Harris Hawk Anakin, Collection Manager Lucas Whitman, and Animal Caretaker Julia Lemonyades.

Lastly, the Raffle and Auction had another successful night of generating funds for future conservation efforts. Prizes this year ranged from custom animal artwork to sports memorabilia, to gift baskets, and more. In addition, the Friends of the Zoo raffled off a one-of-a-kind diamond elephant pendant donated by Hayden Jewelers.

In total, **174 guests** attended this autumn, evening celebration of past and future conservation efforts, raising more than **\$35,000** in the process. A special thanks to our sponsors **Constellation, C&S Companies, Cumulus Media Syracuse, Hayden Jewelers, Scicchitano Law, PLLC., Tito's Handmade Vodka, and Visual Technologies** for making this possible.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Wild Beginnings!

Ages 1-3 | Mondays | 9:15 - 10 a.m. or 10:30 - 11:15 a.m.

Join the education team for a three-week program tailored just for the little ones, ages 12 months to 3 years. Each themed class includes animal biofacts, nature-themed sensory play, a story, and hands-on learning! Young ones will explore with their senses as they develop language and motor skills in this early-learning adventure. **This program is designed for one child/one caregiver pair.**

Animals Big and Small - December 2, 9, 16

Tuition per series:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$50 per child/adult pair
Additional child (same session) – \$25

NEW!

Stroller Safari

Ages 1-5 | Saturdays | 9:45 - 10:30 a.m.

Get ready for an exciting journey through the zoo designed just for our youngest adventurers! Join us for **Stroller Safari**, where kids aged 5 and under, along with their adult companions, will embark on a fun-filled exploration of the animal kingdom. Together, we'll stroll through the zoo, discovering amazing animals, engaging in interactive activities, and enjoying captivating stories about wildlife. Each stop on our safari is packed with sights and sounds that will spark curiosity and wonder!

Playful Primates - December 7

Tuition per session:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$15 per child/1-2 adults
Additional child – \$5 each

Kids' Night Out

Ages 6-12 | Fridays | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Looking for a night out? Drop your kids off at the zoo to party like an animal! Kids will enjoy pizza upon arrival, learn about animals, tour the zoo after hours, make crafts, and play games all night long.

Session 1: December 6

Tuition per session:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$40 per child

Family Adventures

All Ages | 10 - Noon

A learning adventure for everyone! Whether it's touring the zoo, playing games, making crafts, or meeting animal ambassadors, this family-friendly program is a perfect opportunity to connect with your loved ones while also connecting to wildlife. Don't miss out on this opportunity to create lasting memories and foster a love for nature.

December 21- Winter Warriors

Tuition per day:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$40 per child/adult pair

One-Day Zoo Camp

Ages 6-12 | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Join us for a dive deep into the incredible world of animals for a full day of Zoo Camp! Each camp day is different, allowing your child to explore something new about the animal world through hands-on science, artistry, technology, and engineering projects – whether they're registered for just one or multiple days! **For your convenience, you can select to pre-order lunch from the HoneyBee Café during registration.**

Sessions:

Wednesday November 27	Tuesday December 31
Monday December 23	Thursday January 2
Friday December 27	Friday January 3
Monday December 30	

Tuition per session:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$65 per child

All members will receive a 7% discount on camps. A minimum number of participants are needed to run all programs. Pre-registration required. Sessions fill fast, sign up today! Register online at rgz.campbrainregistration.com
Questions? Call the education department at (315) 435-8511 x8559 or email zoocamp@rosamondgiffordzoo.org

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Adult Zoo Camp

Why should kids have all the fun? Immerse yourself in elevated zoo experiences guaranteed to inspire your inner child. Join our education staff for an afternoon of hands-on projects, themed tours, insider animal stories, engaging activities, and more, while you learn how the Rosamond Gifford Zoo provides exceptional care for all your favorite animals.

Ages 18+ | 1 - 4 p.m.

Non-members: \$60 | Members receive a 7% discount

Winter Warriors: Surviving the Cold

December 14

Come discover how wildlife thrives in the frostiest of conditions! Step into the fascinating lives of animals that conquer the cold, from resilient snow leopards to our fur-covered gray wolves. Join us for a captivating exploration of winter adaptations, survival strategies, and the incredible ways animals navigate the harshest environments. Through engaging presentations and hands-on activities, you'll learn about the unique traits that make these creatures true "Winter Warriors." Don't let the winter blues get you down—embrace the chill and celebrate the resilience of nature!

Programming on Your Schedule:

Join us on your schedule for these other opportunities year-round!

Zoo School on the Go!

Created for groups of 5+ adults and between 10-20 kids

Available times for checkout: 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or 1-3:30 p.m.

\$115 tuition, includes zoo admission

Learn at your own pace on a school trip or with your family and friends! This self-guided tour through the zoo incorporates biofacts, fun facts, games, and more to get you to learn about some of your favorite animals while connecting with them in real time. Great for ages 6 to 15 with adult support/supervision and includes extension activities for a fun challenge!

Prices for Zoo-To-You Programming range from \$125-\$200 and can accommodate both large and small groups of all ages – almost anywhere! See [Education Pricing Sheet](#) on our website under "Learn". For questions and to reserve a Zoo-to-You or Virtual Zoo-to-You Program: Contact (315) 435-8511 x8531 or email zootoyou@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.



Pre-registration required; a minimum number of participants are needed to run all programs.

Questions?
Call the education department at (315) 435-8511 x8506 or email education@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

Sessions fill fast, sign up today!

Register online at rosamondgiffordzoo.org/learn

or
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW



Register for Adult Zoo Camp
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW



Mark Your Calendars!

Register your child for Summer Zoo Camp 2025!

Week-long day camps for children ages 4-17.

Online registration for members begins **Wednesday, March 5th at 9 a.m.!**
Non-member registration begins at **Wednesday, March 19th at 9 a.m.!**

SEA TURTLE FIND IT!



Help clean up the ocean for our sea turtle friend! Find all the plastic pollution and avoid the jellyfish. Use the key to identify what's trash.



MYZOO COMIC!



Volunteer Shout-Out!

As you walk around the zoo grounds, you'll notice an array of beautiful flowers and foliage. Here at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, we are lucky to have the important support and knowledge of the Men and Women's Garden Club of Syracuse. This Zoo Crew is a hard-working group of volunteers who have a passion for the environment and bettering their community.

The Club started as a men's only club in 1938 and is affiliated with the Gardeners of America national organization, founded in 1932. In 1991, the first woman member was accepted, and since then, it's been a co-ed organization. Their mission is to educate and encourage gardening and horticulture in the Central New York Community.

In the past, the zoo grounds lacked lush gardens. The Zoo Crew volunteers knew they could make a difference and helped sow the seed of change. Every Thursday before the zoo opens, rain or shine, they meet in the early morning to dig in the dirt. The joy of being outside and the close friendships with their fellow gardeners make the hard work fly by until it's time for a rewarding coffee, pastry, and friendly catch-up chat. With their help, the zoo grounds like the entryway, walking paths, and lamp posts have been beautified.

They are mindful of what goes into every garden patch. The goal is to have different plant life flourishing throughout every season to create a cycle of beauty for guests to enjoy. Perennials, flowers that bloom every year, are used often in their gardens. While the gardeners joke that weeds are the fastest growers, they've had a grand success this year with the black-eyed susans provided by Peter Huntington, a thirty-year member.

Not only do they look after the plant life at the zoo, the volunteers also aid in the care of our butterfly garden. They refill the hummingbird feeders and make sure there is plenty of milkweed for even the smallest monarch caterpillar to feast on. It's always exciting to see a butterfly flutter past or a hummingbird whizz by while the gardeners tackle tricky weeds. No chemicals or insecticides are used. Everything is kept natural to mitigate pests.

Volunteering at the zoo is important to the members of the Men and Women's Garden Club. They believe in the efforts of conservation and saving the planet. Plus, volunteers enjoy our Primate Park residents intently watching them as they work in the nearest garden. Not a lot of volunteer opportunities give you that experience. The Men and Women's Garden club enjoy what they do, the camaraderie, and giving back to the community. The friendships they have made with their fellow gardeners are strong and long-lasting. When they're not helping at the zoo or busy in their own gardens, members enjoy spending time together at picnics, dinners, and club outings.

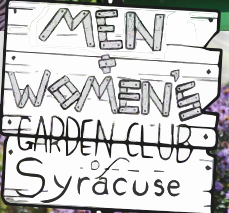
Deborah Holihan, the Zoo Crew's and Men and Women's Garden Club Leader, had this to say about her team's time volunteering at the zoo, "We, the Zoo Crew love coming to the zoo to garden and socialize with the staff and each other. We enjoy watching the animals and the loving care they receive from their caregivers. We are looking forward to the zoo's exciting new plans for expanding the gardens which will be spectacular and a joy to maintain."

Now their eyes are set to the future as they eagerly await the garden expansion project here at the zoo. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is so lucky to have their help in bettering our grounds, one flower bulb at a time.

If you have a passion for plant life and would like more information, please check out their facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MWGardenClubOfSyracuse/> or email mwgardenclubofsyracuse@gmail.com



SCAN QR CODE FOR FLYER



Trash Talk to Save Species: Rosamond Gifford Zoo's Fight Against Ocean Plastic

The world's oceans, teeming with life and biodiversity, are under siege.

Single-use plastics, a seemingly everyday convenience, have become a deadly threat to marine ecosystems. A staggering 8 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans annually, harming countless marine animals.

In the USS Antiquities Cave at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, we have created a striking visual display to highlight the dangers of plastic pollution. One porthole tank houses moon jellyfish, while another contains plastic bags, illustrating the confusion faced by sea turtles who often mistake plastic for food and the harm they face when they try to consume the inedible waste. A mural sponsored by our sustainability partner Novelis depicts plastic waste filling our oceans and threatening marine life, serving as a powerful reminder of the problem. As you exit the cave, you'll notice more imagery depicting the dilemma our oceans face and helpful guidance in how you can help.

As stewards of the natural world, the zoo is committed to reducing its reliance on single-use plastics and educating the community about the importance of plastic reduction.



ECONOTES

Zoo-wide Initiatives: Eliminating Single-Use Plastics:

The zoo has banned plastic straws, stirrers, and utensils from its food service areas, opting for sustainable and bio-friendly alternatives. You won't find any bottled water here, but you can still purchase water in cans at all concession areas.

Recycling Programs: The zoo has implemented robust recycling programs to ensure that any recyclable material is disposed of properly.

Community Partnerships: Our sustainability partner, Novelis, a leader in aluminum recycling, is helping us lead the charge in our efforts to make our planet a safer place.

Educational Outreach: A key part of our mission is providing education to our community about the issues that our planet and its many species face. Look for the signs around the zoo and many recycling bins to dispose of your waste properly.

Reusable Options: Our Curious Cub Gift Shop has a wide selection of reusable water bottles and tote bags that you can take home to take the first step in eliminating single-use plastic in your life...

Join the Fight: Every individual can contribute to protecting marine species from the crisis of plastic pollution. By using reusable bags, water bottles, and other eco-friendly products, we can significantly reduce our plastic footprint. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo encourages visitors to make conscious choices that support our efforts to create a healthier planet for future generations.



Conserving Coral

Coral reefs are often referred to as the "rainforests of the sea," and for good reason!

Coral reefs protect coastlines from storms and erosion and support approximately 25 percent of all known marine species, providing homes for many fish, coral, and other plants and animals.

Corals are not plants. They're animals. As animals, they can't make their own food. They rely on a symbiotic relationship, or partnership, with an algae called zooxanthellae that lives inside corals and helps them to get nutrients. In exchange, the coral protects the zooxanthellae. Different types of corals grow together to create a reef!

Our aquarists are able to "frag" (cut back) any corals that are overgrowing by strategically cutting pieces off and gluing them into plugs and other spots of the tank to grow in a new location. This regular maintenance keeps the corals from getting too big and stinging each other.

Unfortunately, coral reefs worldwide are facing significant threats, including climate change, pollution, and overfishing. Help protect coral reefs and the life that depends on them. Research where your seafood comes from and if it's caught sustainably. Check for the Best Aquaculture Practices, or BAP logo on your seafood to ensure your seafood has been farmed safe and sustainably.



MEMBER NOTES

Memories Worth Saving: A Family Tradition

Remember the magical feeling of stepping into the zoo as a child? The wonderment of seeing exotic animals up close, and the cherished memories made with loved ones? If you're a parent or guardian now, you've probably realized that these experiences are just as special for your kids.

A Family Tradition

Our zoo has been a beloved destination for generations. It's a place where families have made countless memories together. From birthday parties to school field trips, our zoo has been a constant in the lives of our community.

Why Become a Member?

A zoo membership is more than just an entrance ticket. It's an investment in your family's future to create cherished memories and support the zoo's conservation efforts.

As a member, you'll enjoy:

Unlimited Admission: Visit the zoo as often as you like, without worrying about ticket costs.

Exclusive Discounts: Save on food, merchandise, and special events.

Member-Only Events: Experience behind-the-scenes tours, animal encounters, and more.

A Sense of Community: Connect with other families who share your love of the zoo.



Grand Opening!

Siri's Birthday!

A Gift for Generations

By purchasing a membership, you're not just giving your family a year of fun. You're creating a legacy that will be passed down from generation to generation. Imagine your grandchildren visiting the zoo and hearing stories of your childhood adventures.

Join Us Today

It's time to make new memories and to relive old ones. Become a member of our zoo and experience the magic for yourself.

Visit our website or call us today to purchase a membership and start making memories that will last a lifetime.



Happy Birthday to Zoo

Best Day Ever!

Hear me ROAR!

WE LOVE THE ZOO!



Adopt an Animal

Senior Keeper Special

\$55



Amur Leopard

Package includes:
 A certificate of adoption, 4x6 color photo, animal fact sheet, 12" Amur leopard plush, an adopt parent gift, copy of *MyZoo Magazine*, and listing in online adopt parent board for one year.

Adopt an Animal online at thecuriouscubgiftshop.org
 Looking to adopt another animal at the regular rate?
 Call (315) 435-8511 x8563
 or email giftshop@rosamondgiffordzoo.org

CATERING AT THE ZOO



Enjoy an Evening of Delicious Food and Educational Messaging!

Our final Pairing Dinner of 2024 is upon us! Don't forget to grab a ticket to our popular dinner series.

When you take part in our monthly dinners, you support animal conservation!

Look forward to more dinners in 2025!

2024 Dinner Pairings

Enrichment – Wednesday, December 18

* Schedule subject to change.
 Must be at least 21 years old to attend.



Looking for the Perfect Day Date? Head to the Zoo!



Grab some refreshing beverages from the Trunk and Tusk Canteen and enjoy watching the elephants graze, and order ahead at the HoneyBee Café for delicious and healthy food made fresh!

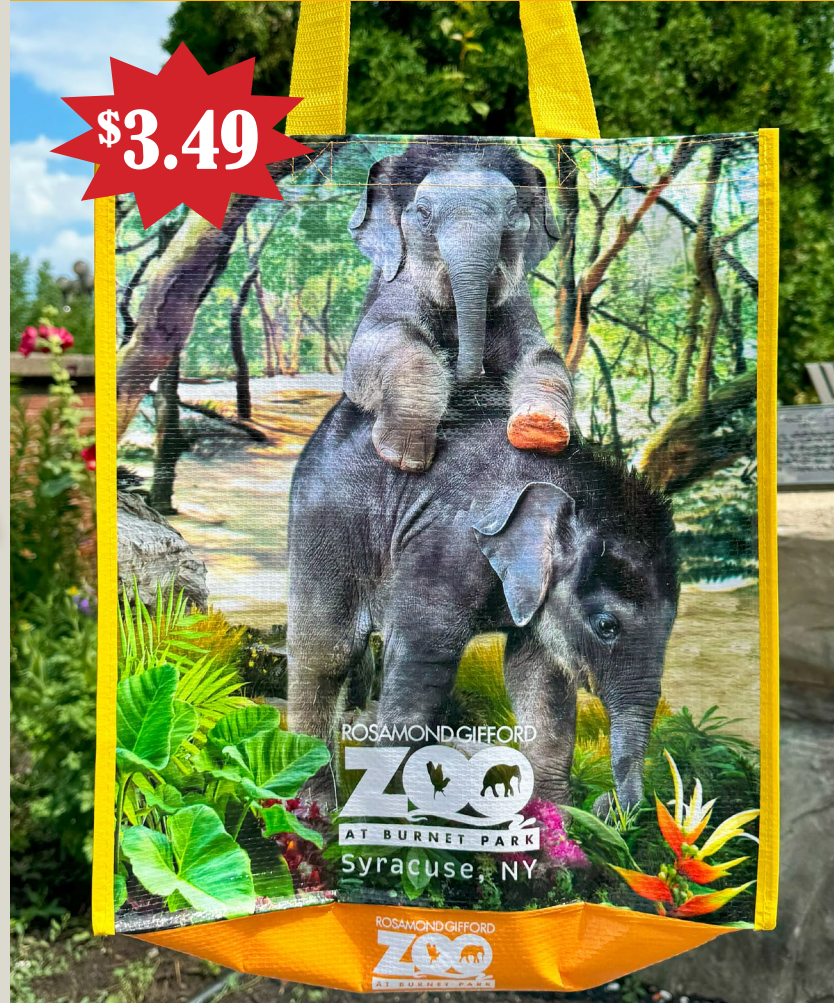
The Curious Cub GIFT SHOP

New in the Gift Shop!

Check out our new seasonal items, including newly arrived tote bags and more! Stop in and see our great selection of conservation-themed gift items for the animal lovers in your life next time you visit.

Members Receive 10% OFF!

Best of all, your purchases benefit animal care at the zoo and conservation in the wild.



Can't come to the zoo? Scan the QR code to visit our online store or go to syracusezooevents.org/shop



Book Your Company Luncheon

Company luncheon package includes room rental, food, beverages, festive holiday decor AND Zoo admission!

\$49/PER PERSON

EVENTS@ROSAMONDGIFFORDZOO.ORG | (315) 435-8511 x8543 | CATERINGATTHEZOO.ORG



Upcoming Events!



**DECEMBER
FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS**



**DECEMBER 31
TUESDAY**



**APRIL 6
SUNDAY**

