

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

FRIENDS OF THE ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

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 INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



There is much to celebrate in the Friends 2019 annual report. Last year saw the birth of a baby Asian elephant and two critically endangered Amur leopard cubs. The zoo unveiled several new exhibits and welcomed several new rare and endangered species. Friends of the Zoo and our county partners upgraded and expanded the Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve, and construction began on a key Friends project, the Zalie & Bob Linn Amur Leopard Woodland.

Some 332,000 people visited the zoo, enhanced by the Friends' addition of a summer-long Big Bugs! attraction and a new 18-horse carousel. Our education programs involved more than 10,000 participants, including more than 7,500 school-age children. Our volunteers provided educational enrichment to guests, beautified the zoo with lush gardens and joined work projects to improve the facility. Our catering staff executed more than 120 events, from weddings to the Snow Leopard Soirée to Brew at the Zoo. All told, Friends provided more than \$175,000 in direct support to the zoo and allocated more than \$500,000 for capital improvements to help the zoo meet the “gold standard” for animal care and welfare, conservation education and saving species.

We are extremely proud of these accomplishments, and we hope you will enjoy this look back at our achievements and all the people, businesses and community partners that helped make them possible.

Looking forward, 2020 has been anything but typical. Our former Friends leader, Janet Agostini, retired in January after 13 years of service. In March, COVID-19 forced the zoo to close for eight weeks. We reopened Memorial Day weekend to a dramatically altered zoo experience to ensure the health and safety of visitors, staff and animals amid a pandemic. Each day brings a new set of challenges, but the Friends continues to meet those challenges and move forward.

We recently launched a special \$50K for 50 Years campaign to celebrate our 50th anniversary and further our primary mission – supporting our zoo and the precious animals in its care. Thanks to financial support from people like you, we are a quarter of the way to our goal in just the first month of the campaign!

In 2020, we anticipate beginning construction of the Animal Health Center that will elevate our zoo's ability to provide the best medical care to our animals and serve as a teaching hospital for Cornell University and other veterinary colleges. The Zalie and Bob Linn Amur Leopard Woodland exhibit opened this summer as well.

Thank you for your support and encouragement! We urge you to continue investing in your zoo financially and sharing your time and talents with one of the jewels of CNY.

Respectfully,



Quentin “Skip” Lockwood
Interim Executive Director



Heidi Holtz
Chair of the Board

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Facebook followers increased from 56K at the start of 2019 to 61.3K on December 31, 2019, gaining over

5,000 followers.

Surpassed
20,000
followers on Instagram,
a huge milestone.



Nearly **10,500**
children and adults actively participated in
conservation education learning programs



Over **\$10,000** donated to global
conservation projects including the Red Panda
Network, International Elephant Foundation,
AZA Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) and
Amphibian Ark, among others.



BIG BUGS DESCEND!

After bringing the hugely successful *Dinosaur Invasion!* exhibit to the zoo for the summer of 2018, the Friends followed up with an investment of \$73,000 for a *Big Bugs!* Exhibit in 2019. Seven giant animatronic insects were staged along the wooded portion of the Wildlife Trail, where they captivated visitors throughout the season and beyond. The exhibit served as a foundation for educational programming and biofact displays related to arthropods as well as a fun attraction for kids – especially the water-spraying bombardier beetle!



18-HORSE CAROUSEL

Friends of the Zoo invested \$65,000 in a new interactive attraction for families visiting the zoo – an 18-horse carousel on the wooded green across from the Blue Crane habitat.

The colorful, musical carousel lent a festive, nostalgic atmosphere to this parklike area of the zoo and became a popular stop for young and old alike.



EDVENTURE ACADEMY: WILD BEGINNINGS

A new program for our youngest guests proved to be a great hit with parents of infants and toddlers. Wild Beginnings, an Edventure Academy series specially tailored for ages 12 months to 3 years, offered 45-minute sessions focused on encouraging little ones to explore with their senses, develop motor skills and experience early learning about animals.

The program immediately became our most popular education offering. Classes consistently sold out and we were able to add sessions to serve parents who greatly appreciate this unique program.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS

Our Education team held 274 on-site programs such as Edventure Academy classes, Zoo Safari programs, Evening Expeditions and special field trip sessions for every First and Second grade class in the Syracuse City School District – **bringing conservation education to 4,440 students and 1,187 adults in 2019.**

ZOO TO YOU

Our Zoo to You mobile education program brought 184 learning experiences using our ambassador animals to 147 locations, including every public library in Onondaga County as well as community centers, hospitals and schools. **Zoo to You reached 3,188 youth and 1,500 adults in 2019.**



ZooGUIDES

Our summer ZooGuides program trains teens from low-income households in Syracuse to work as paid education interns who engage and educate zoo visitors during the busiest time of year. A primary goal of the ZooGuide program is to foster workplace and professional skills that enable participants to be self-sufficient as adults. The program is made possible by a grant from the Green Family Foundation with support from CNY Works.

In 2019, Friends of the Zoo hired 16 ZooGuides and 12 completed the program. Among their accomplishments:

- ZooGuides helped raise awareness of the new boardwalk completion and the Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve expansion at Rosamond Gifford Zoo as frontline ambassadors to welcome visitors and answer questions.
- ZooGuides served as a primary operations team for several unique events at the zoo, including Party for the Planet (April 27), World Oceans Day (June 8), Animal Enrichment Day (July 27) and Asian Elephant Extravaganza (August 17).
- On July 29, 2019, ZooGuides participated in a group field trip to the recently AZA- accredited Utica Zoo, where they experienced animal demos and toured the ambassador animal area and the zoo. This was a wonderful opportunity for our youth to broaden their horizons and see how two different AZA institutions operate.



ZooGuides Helena and Yaheim

"I want to be a vet, so this job has filled me with information for my future career."

– ZooGuide Aliciana

"This job taught me the reasons of why these animals are endangered."

– ZooGuide Carlos

OUR NEAREST AND DEAREST

Our members are our most loyal fans, biggest cheerleaders and constant support system – that’s why we treat them so well! We are happy to say that our zoo family continued to grow in 2019. We saw 7,027 total memberships purchased, including 1,309 new members and 5,718 who renewed their memberships.

Membership also:

- Launched our most popular T-shirt design, featuring our Humboldt penguins.
- Set an attendance record at our popular Member Appreciation Night in June 2019, with over 1,300 members participating.
- Introduced a new member perk, Member Mornings, offering special early access to the zoo, breakfast specials in the Jungle Café and extra discounts at The Curious Cub Gift Shop.
- Provided 650 Adopt-an-Animal packages to adoptive “parents” to support animal care and conservation at the zoo.

Membership set an all-time record for gift memberships in 2019.

968 people
purchased holiday season gift
memberships totaling
\$73,882 in revenue!



VOLUNTEERS

GIVING BACK TO A CHERISHED INSTITUTION

The zoo's 350 volunteers contributed more than 35,000 total hours assisting with zoo events, education programs, enrichment activities and more!

- Garden volunteers from the Men's & Women's Garden Club of Syracuse worked to plant, weed, landscape and maintain beautiful gardens throughout the outdoor zoo, while the Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners planted their annual vegetable and herb garden whose produce goes to feed and enrich zoo animals.
- Volunteers helped staff our most popular events including Noon Year's Eve, Zoo Boo, Asian Elephant Extravaganza and Brew at the Zoo & Wine, Too!
- Youth volunteers wrapped packages and created special treats for animal enrichment days including Sweet Treats (Valentine's Day), Animal Egg-Stravaganza (Easter) and Holidays with the Animals (Christmas/Hannukah/Kwanzaa).
- Teams of corporate volunteers from National Grid, Nielsen Group, Pyramid Companies and Haylor, Freyer & Coon, Inc., among others, held team-building activities that included zoo beautification projects such as clearing brush around the elephant preserve and sprucing up the shores of the waterfowl pond.

"People used to think of zoos as recreation, but now they're so much more. They're conservation, they're education. While we are having fun doing it, we're making a difference. It's an honor to be at a zoo like this."

– Ellenrose Galgano,
30-year volunteer at the
Rosamond Gifford Zoo



National Grid staff work as corporate volunteers

Peter Huntington of the Men's & Women's Garden Club of Syracuse



CATERING AT THE ZOO

2019 COUPLE'S CHOICE AWARD



Friends of the Zoo's event venue, Catering at the Zoo, received a **2019 Couple's Choice 5-star rating** from wedding website WeddingWire, thanks to rave reviews from couples who said "I do" at the zoo!

CATERING WITH A CAUSE

Catering at the Zoo is catering with a cause. Our event service began 15 years ago to fulfill requests to hold weddings, social events and corporate gatherings at the zoo, and it has attracted a clientele of conservation supporters who like knowing that their special occasion also benefits the animals of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and its mission of saving species.

Catering at the Zoo has blossomed into a popular event venue whose beautiful banquet space, top-notch catering service and outdoor patio hosted 124 events last year. Besides offering five-star service in a one-of-a-kind setting, Catering at the Zoo appeals to animal lovers who cherish their zoo memories and appreciate the chance to make more.



Angela and Paul McLane



CATERING AT THE ZOO

"This is a beautiful place to get married! The patio was stunning, the courtyard impressive (thanks for supplying a beautiful sunset), Eagon the Eurasian eagle owl brought happiness and the banquet room looked gorgeous. Brittany and her team were amazing to work with and the food was delicious. We are so very happy we chose Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Fabulous!"

– Angela Stevenson McLane



COMMUNITY AND PARTNER EVENTS

TEDDY BEAR CLINICS SPONSORED BY ST. JOSEPH'S HEALTH

St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center partnered with Friends of the Zoo to offer two Teddy Bear Clinics in 2019, one during the February school break and one on the Columbus Day holiday. **More than 650 children brought their stuffed animals to the zoo to get check-ups**, First Aid and grooming at stations staffed by St. Joseph's health and zoo volunteers.

Dozens of volunteers from St. Joe's medical staff volunteered to examine, stitch and bandage their plush "patients" and educate young participants about health care.

CNY FERTILITY CENTER FAMILY NIGHT

One of the most joyful events at the zoo is the annual family night held by CNY Fertility Center as a client appreciation event. The families that attend love to catch up with the center's founder, Dr. Robert Kiltz, and his staff and show off the children that CNY Fertility helped them conceive. The company booked its first such event at the zoo in 2007 and has held it here every summer since.

NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVORS DAY

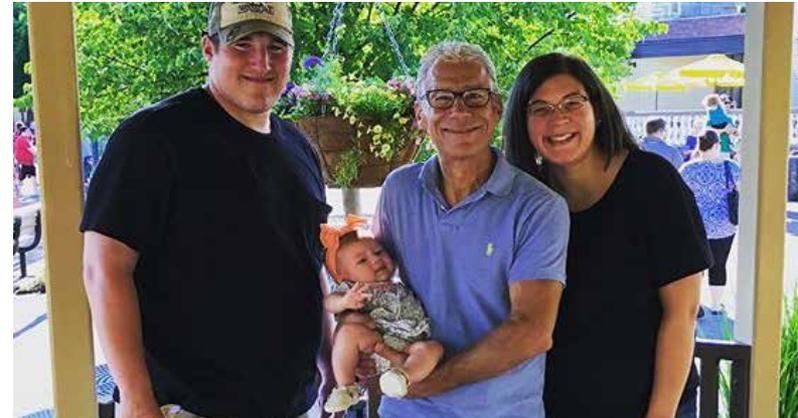
The year 2019 marked the fourth year in a row for one of our most inspiring events, the National Cancer Survivors Day celebration held by Upstate Cancer Center. Upstate has held its event at the zoo since 2016, and each year the number of attendees has increased. The event celebrates cancer survivors of all ages with a custom food menu by Catering at the Zoo as well as face-painting, animal greeters and evening access to zoo exhibits.

"The zoo is a spectacular venue for the Upstate Cancer Center because it is one of our region's treasures, and enables us to accommodate many cancer survivors and their families."

– Matthew Capogreco, Upstate Cancer Center



Above: St. Joseph's Health staff volunteers at two Teddy Bear Clinics



Above: CNY Fertility's Dr. Robert Kiltz with the Raby family: Ed, baby Scarlett and mom Olivia
Below: Celebrating at Upstate Cancer Center's Cancer Survivors Day



SYRACUSE ZOO FAMILY FUN RUN

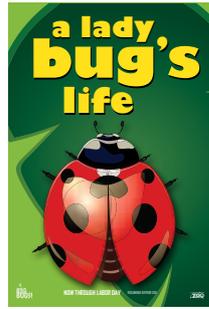
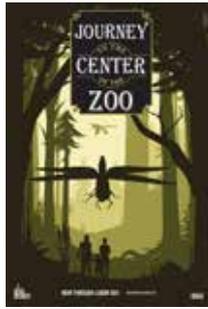
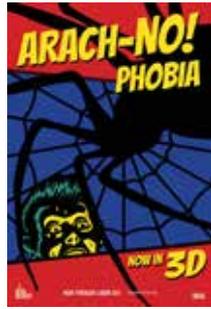
Friends of the Zoo held its first-ever Family Fun Run on September 28, 2019, and it was a great success. The event exceeded 250 participants and set a strong precedent for future Fun Runs. The Fun Run's theme was "Run for the Cats" with proceeds directed to the Amur Leopard Woodland Project.

The 2.5K (1.5 mile) race offered a family-friendly run/walk through a portion of Burnet Park and around the zoo's Wildlife Trail, ending with cider, donuts, music and games in the zoo courtyard and free zoo admission for participants. Many families and individuals said it offered a fun, unintimidating atmosphere that appealed to beginning and seasoned runners alike.

"This run provided such a unique and low-pressure atmosphere. I was able to assist a friend train and helped him to make this his first ever organized run. When we approached the end and got to race past the animal exhibits, I knew all the hard work was worth it."

– Nicholas Capparelli, 27, Syracuse





ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The Friends marketing team achieved record engagement on our social media platforms, topping 60,000 followers on Facebook and 20,000 on Instagram in 2019. We set a Facebook record, gaining over 1,000 new followers in five days after the birth of baby Asian elephant Ajay in January, and continued that trend with a series of video updates featuring special milestones for the playful calf, several of which reached over 100,000 viewers.

A creative marketing campaign for the Big Bugs! exhibit was developed that included on-site graphic elements featuring old-style “movie” posters and comic-book word bubbles strategically placed throughout the exhibit, as well as themed messaging on billboards, advertising and social media to build excitement for this temporary attraction.

To engage our constituents and increase our following, the zoo partnered with Destiny USA as a featured attraction in their Summer Fun Pass, and teamed up with the Syracuse Chiefs, Syracuse Crunch, the OnCenter and the Landmark Theatre to offer free ticket raffles and promotional discounts on our social media. These partnerships provided opportunities for our constituents to experience other cultural attractions and strengthened our ties with other valued community assets.

Collaborated with other AZA institutions on a book project, “Animals Reviewed,” that collected “reviews” of animals as if they were items purchased from Amazon. All six of our posts made it into the #RateASpecies book, which is available on Amazon and in The Curious Cub Gift Shop!

Continued to strengthen our AZA alliance by participating in social media campaigns by AZA zoos and aquariums to share animal content via dedicated posts with inventive hashtags – such as the Oscar-inspired #AquademyAwards for marine animals, David Attenborough-style animal posts (#AttenboroughASpecies) and Halloween-themed #SpookyScience posts.

Significantly enhanced the editorial content in our member publication, *MyZoo Magazine*, to include more insightful and compelling stories for our readers, such as the behind-the-scenes story of the birth of Amur leopard cubs Milo and Mina on June 19. The magazine was recognized in the best trade publication category at the 2019 Syracuse Press Club Awards.

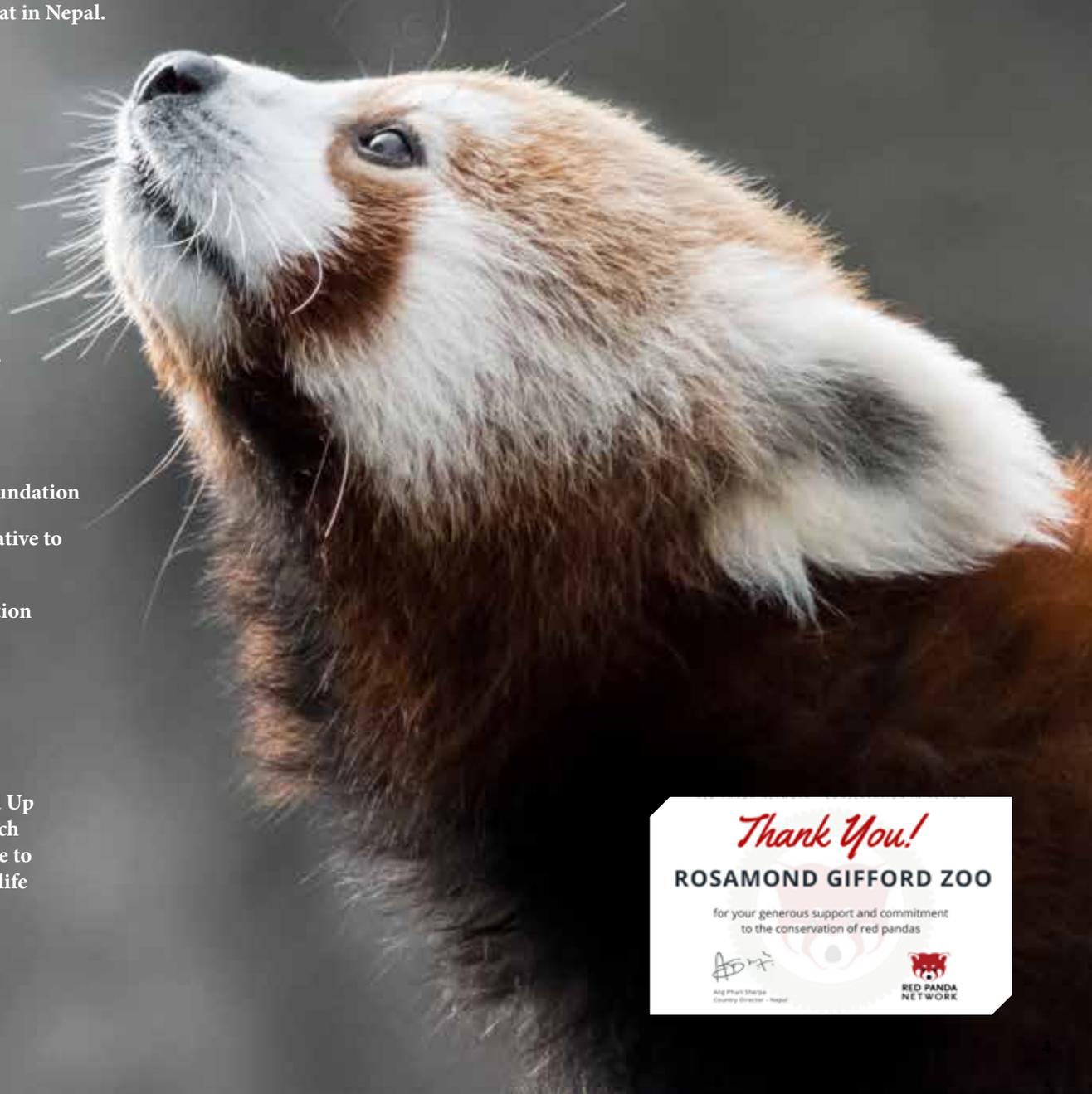
FULFILLING OUR MISSION

The Friends of the Zoo became a Red Panda partner in the Red Panda Network's First Panda Challenge. Our \$1,515 donation went toward matching individual donations to help reforest red panda habitat in Nepal.

Friends of the Zoo donated over \$11,000 to wildlife conservation programs around the world in 2019, including:

- \$2,500 to the Komodo Dragon Species Survival Plan
- \$3,500 to the International Elephant Foundation
- \$1,515 to the Red Panda Network's initiative to reforest red panda habitat in Nepal.
- \$1,500 for Humboldt penguin conservation
- \$1,700 to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Global Conservation Network
- \$750 to the Amphibian Ark

A total of \$8,825 was raised via our Round Up feature at The Curious Cub Gift Shop, which asks shoppers to "round up" their purchase to the nearest dollar to help fund future wildlife conservation projects.



Thank You!

ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

for your generous support and commitment
to the conservation of red pandas



Ang Prun Sherpa
Country Director - Nepal



RED PANDA
NETWORK

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

AMUR LEOPARD WOODLAND

After our zoo joined the Species Survival Plan for critically endangered Amur leopards, the Friends launched a capital campaign to create a new habitat for our breeding pair of Amur leopards and any future offspring. The Amur Leopard Woodland project transforms the former African lion exhibit to accommodate the natural behaviors of Amur leopards, including their penchant for climbing tall trees in their native habitat, the temperate forests of Far East Russia.

We allocated over \$250,000 – including a generous naming gift from zoo supporters Zalie and Bob Linn of Manlius – and construction began this past winter. The Zalie & Bob Linn Amur Leopard Woodland is slated to open in 2020!



HELGA BECK ASIAN ELEPHANT PRESERVE

As part of the expansion of the Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve, the Friends allocated \$75,000 to construct a larger Elephant Overlook as well as a new, improved shade structure for our elephant herd. The new overlook can accommodate more people and includes a wheelchair ramp to the seating area and space for refreshment carts or tables. The shade structure just below the overlook is a favorite spot for our elephants to graze. We are grateful to our county partners for expanding the preserve from 4.5 to 6.5 acres and replacing the old boardwalk with a beautiful new walkway.



\$50K FOR 50 YEARS!

Senior Education Coordinator Benjamin Trowbridge busts animal myths with Education Coordinator Leo Rode.



Friends of the Zoo aims to start the next 50 years strong with the launch of new initiatives and key campaigns for 2020 and beyond.

\$50K FOR 50 YEARS

The Friends of the Zoo has launched a special campaign in honor of our 50th anniversary! The \$50K for 50 Years fundraiser seeks to raise \$50,000 for the zoo by the end of 2020, our 50th year. We kicked off the campaign in June 2020 and raised \$13,000, or 25 percent of our goal, in the first month! We invite our public to pitch in with a donation of any amount at syracusezooevents.org/Friends50.

DISTANCE LEARNING AND VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

Our Education Team now offers new distance learning and virtual education opportunities to reach a wider audience, including people of all ages who may be homebound. This initiative began while the zoo was closed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we recognize that virtual learning is here to stay.

Education set up two distance learning studios, Studio 1 in the former birthday party room and Studio 2 in the zoo classroom, and went to work producing and filming a slate of programs and conservation classes that will be available as online classes. They also will have the ability to tailor custom programs, virtual Zoo to You visits and other content on request.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

Our events team also is devising new virtual experiences, celebrations, meetings and fundraisers that use their event planning expertise, top-notch catering services, unique zoo setting and animal encounters to broaden our online offerings and amenities.

ANIMAL HEALTH CENTER

The zoo's long-awaited Animal Health Center will become a reality with construction starting in fall 2020. Onondaga County has allocated \$7.5 million for the project, while Friends of the Zoo has committed to raising over \$1 million for diagnostic and medical equipment to outfit a state-of-the-art wildlife health center and quarantine facility.

This project is essential to maintain our zoo's accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and our 22-year partnership with Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, whose vets, residents, interns and students contribute to and learn from the animal health care team at the zoo.

When completed, the health center will greatly enhance and expand our animal care teams' ability to perform medical procedures on zoo animals as large as bison, camels or a baby elephant, as well as do lab work, exams and specialized tests that otherwise might require transporting an animal to Cornell – always a risky and stressful proposition.

With help from Friends of the Zoo, on-site technology will allow our vet teams to do endoscopic procedures, ultrasounds, better radiographs and pathology without having to rent equipment or drive an animal to Cornell for further testing.





STATEMENT OF OPERATING FINANCES

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2019		2018	
	\$	%	\$	%
Membership	\$582,998	17%	\$575,623	20%
Retail operations	779,111	23%	948,352	33%
Program fees	319,612	10%	384,152	13%
Contributions and grants	960,257	29%	436,334	15%
Fundraising and events	191,022	6%	102,589	4%
Rental and catering income	358,187	11%	383,697	13%
Interest income	166,215	5%	82,864	3%
Total Support and Revenue	\$3,357,402	100%	\$2,913,611	100%
EXPENSES	\$	%	\$	%
PROGRAM SERVICES				
Zoo support	\$1,061,453	38%	\$1,097,446	38%
Gift shop	205,969	7%	232,710	8%
Educational programs	253,494	9%	241,657	9%
Facility rentals/catering	392,015	14%	436,994	15%
Total program services	\$1,912,931	68%	\$2,008,807	70%
SUPPORTING SERVICES				
Administration	\$559,719	20%	\$567,771	20%
Fundraising and Membership	342,591	12%	294,458	10%
Total supporting services	902,310	32%	862,229	30%
Total expenses	\$2,815,241	100%	\$2,871,036	100%
INCOME (LOSS) FROM OPERATIONS				
	\$542,161		\$42,575	
Net change in market value of investments	\$535,247		(\$250,717)	
Increase (Decrease) in net assets	\$1,077,408		(\$208,142)	
Net assets at beginning of year	5,855,489		6,063,631	
Net assets at end of year	\$6,932,897		\$5,855,489	

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.



ANIMAL UPDATES: BIRTHS HATCHINGS NEW SPECIES

Every year we look forward to welcoming new arrivals to the zoo – be they through zoo births and hatchings or new animals and species coming to us from other accredited institutions.

More than ever, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is established as a top-tier zoo entrusted with caring for and helping to save some of the world's most endangered species. Thank you for helping the Friends of the Zoo support this crucial mission.



CRITICALLY ENDANGERED ASIAN ELEPHANT CALF BORN JANUARY 15, 2019

On January 15, 2019, baby Asian elephant Ajay entered the world after a 22-month pregnancy on the part of his mother, Mali, and over a year of planning and preparation by our elephant care team.

After determining Mali was expecting her second calf with bull elephant Doc, our team -- along with staff from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine -- began a schedule of prenatal exams, ultrasounds and training to ensure the birth would go as smoothly as possible.

As the anticipated due date in late December 2018 neared, the team even held birthing drills using a life-size inflatable elephant to represent Mali and a giant boat buoy to represent the baby.

Members of the team had been keeping a 24-hour watch for weeks when Mali went into active labor at 5 a.m. on January 15, 2019. They called in the rest of the team, most of whom arrived in time to see the calf born at 5:30 a.m.

Ajay's birth brought our zoo's Asian elephant herd to eight and **spotlighted our status as one of only 11 accredited zoos approved as a breeding facility for this critically endangered species.** His birth also highlighted our 22-year partnership with Cornell Veterinary, whose doctors and residents work closely with our animal care team to ensure stellar care of every species at the zoo.

Ajay ("Ah-JYE") has proven to be the most precocious baby elephant ever, quickly learning behaviors that took his big brother, 5-year-old Batu, much longer to master – probably due in part to having a big brother as a role model! Indeed, having a three-generation family group of Asian elephants living together in a large preserve has helped cement our zoo's reputation as one of the world's top elephant management programs.

We are proud to have assisted in Ajay's birth by providing ultrasound equipment and modifications to the elephant barn to create the birthing space and nursery for Ajay. Thank you for helping to make this possible!

ANIMAL UPDATES: BIRTHS AND HATCHINGS

First takin calf born at the zoo, Windsor arrived March 9, 2019

A baby Sichuan takin calf was born to female takin Jaio and sire Bo in March, the first baby takin born since our zoo joined the Species Survival Plan for takin in 2016. Takin were rated as “vulnerable” in 2008 and their wild population has been in deep decline since then due to overhunting and habitat destruction in their native range, the mountains of northern China.

The zoo joined the takin SSP when it acquired Bo from the Albuquerque BioPark, and takin sisters Jaio and Ling from The Wilds in Cumberland, OH. Windsor’s birth was recently followed by the birth of a baby brother on April 6 of this year!

Two Humboldt penguin chicks, Lima and Peru, hatched in May 2019

For the first time since 2016, not one but two Humboldt penguin chicks hatched at the zoo. More than 55 penguin chicks have hatched at the zoo since it joined the Humboldt penguin SSP in 2005, and many have gone to other AZA institutions to help preserve the species. The two new chicks are the offspring of penguin parents Frederico and Poquita. Foster parents Venti and Isa helped raise the older chick, Peru. The chicks were named for their South American heritage AND the zoo’s “I Love New York” naming theme.

Bison calf born on exhibit - with hundreds watching!

American bison calf Madison was born on exhibit on May 9, 2019, and the event was made more special as word spread among zoo visitors that a female bison was in labor and people came running to witness the birth. Dozens of guests stood in awe on a sunny Thursday to see the baby born. Madison was the second bison calf born to mother bison Sue and father Harley. Big sister Abigail was born here in 2017.

First hatching of a Kimberley rock monitor

It may be quite small compared to an elephant, bison or leopard baby, but the hatching of a baby Kimberley rock monitor in August 2019 was a big event in our world! The hatching on August 21 was a first for this Australian species of lizard at our zoo. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is one of only three AZA facilities in North America to have Kimberley rock monitors, and the first to have one successfully hatch.





RAREST OF THE RARE: CRITICALLY ENDANGERED AMUR LEOPARD CUBS BORN IN JUNE

As one of the newest zoos to join the Species Survival Plan for the most endangered of all big cats, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo defied all expectations with the births of twin Amur leopard cubs within a year.

The zoo welcomed the cubs' parents, Rafferty from the San Diego Zoo and Tria from the Greenville (S.C.) Zoo in late 2018 as recommended by the Species Survival Plan. Then came the delicate task of introducing two extremely rare big cats who could seriously harm one another if they didn't bond.

Our devoted animal care team spent over six months gradually introducing the pair through a "howdy" – adjacent spaces with a barrier between so they could see, hear and smell each other but not physically interact – while observing them around the clock.

As a playful 2-year-old, Rafferty showed interest in Tria right away, but the feisty female was standoffish at best. It took weeks before Tria would tolerate Rafferty's attempts to engage with her through the mesh, and months before keepers could safely house them together.

Our animal care staff's patience paid off with the births of Amur leopard cubs Milo and Mina on June 19, 2019 as the devoted team watched via closed-circuit camera. Tria has since proven to be a perfect mother, and the cubs have thrived.

Our zoo's success at increasing the number of Amur leopards on earth gives us hope for saving this species from extinction. Fewer than 60 Amur leopards are known to remain in the wild in their native Far East Russia; about 180 live in accredited zoos participating in the SSP, which now regards our zoo as a model for introducing a breeding pair of Amur leopards in human care.

Throughout this effort, Friends of the Zoo worked to raise and allocate over \$250,000 for the future of this species at our zoo. Amur Leopard Woodland will provide our Amur leopard family with an enriching outdoor habitat and encourage more cubs in the future. **Thanks to Zalie and Bob Linn for their generous naming gift, and to all of you for supporting the mission to save this amazing species.**



MOON JELLYFISH

On June 28, Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon unveiled the new Moon Jellyfish Exhibit in the USS Antiquities cave. The translucent sea creatures have short, fringy tentacles that are illuminated with blue light filters to show off their unique structure. The jellies are a first-time species for the zoo and have been very popular with visitors.

Friends of the Zoo contributed \$20,000 toward two specially shaped 100-gallon tanks, each home to up to 25 moon jellies.



KOMODO DRAGON

One of our zoo's most striking new residents, Naga the Komodo dragon, came to us on loan from the Memphis Zoo and spent the summer in a new habitat in the former peafowl exhibit. Komodo dragons are the largest species of lizard in the world and apex predators in their native islands of Indonesia. They are considered vulnerable and in decline, with only about 6,000 remaining in the wild due to habitat destruction and overhunting of their main prey, Timor deer. Naga is over 5 feet long, weighs about 50 pounds and has a remarkably mellow personality for a dragon.

Friends of the Zoo contributed \$10,000 to Naga's summer quarters, a beautiful space overlooking the zoo courtyard.



AFRICAN RED RIVER HOGS

African red river hog brothers Nile and Zambezi came to the zoo last fall from the Oklahoma City Zoo, where they were born in 2018. African red river hogs are the most colorful members of the pig family. They are also called "tufted pigs" due to their long white whiskers and tufts on their ears. These animals are not currently threatened in the wild; the zoo acquired them as part of our Strategic and Master Plan to add an African savanna exhibit in the future.

Our animal care team created a new exhibit on the site of the former swan pond, and **the Friends contributed \$6,185 for their barn.**



CAPE PORCUPINE

Holley the Cape porcupine arrived at our zoo from the Los Angeles Zoo on May 16 and went on exhibit on July 24. Cape porcupines are native to Africa and their species represents the world's largest porcupine and Africa's largest rodent. (That's right, porcupines are rodents!)

Unlike their arboreal cousin the North American porcupine, Cape porcupines are strictly terrestrial. In July, Holley joined the new Africa exhibit in the Social Animals wing, where she rules the ground level while our pair of von der Decken's hornbills and a pair of Superb starlings occupy the tree canopy level.



CRESTED COUA

Crested coua bird brothers Joe and Al came to the zoo from Disney's Animal Kingdom, where they were hatched from the same parents six years apart! Crested coua are endemic to Madagascar and are considered among the world's most beautiful birds. They are greenish-gray with a white underbelly but are distinguished by their gray crest and the bright blue and violet skin around their eyes.

Their call is a descending 'koa-koa-koa' that can often be heard in the zoo's Diversity of Birds aviary early in the morning. They also respond to each other's calls, creating a chorus effect. Joe and Al are very used to visitors and often perch on low branches, railings and the back of benches in the aviary.



NORTH ISLAND BROWN KIWI

Our zoo became only the eighth zoo in North America to care for another rare species, a North Island brown kiwi. Justus ("Eustace") came to us on loan from Zoologischer Garten in Frankfurt, Germany – but not until our zoo team spent many months on paperwork, preparation and training to care for this species of nocturnal, flightless bird endemic to New Zealand.

Among other features, Justus' habitat has 12 inches of substrate on the ground so he can use his long beak to forage for worms and other food just as kiwi do in the wild. The Friends also provided funding to send two animal care specialists, Bird Manager April Zimpel and keeper Ryan Shostack, for hands-on kiwi care training at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, V.A.

Friends of the Zoo spent \$4,000 on special LED lighting, a misting system and enrichment for his new exhibit in the Nocturnal Animals Wing, which opened in October.



SOUTHERN TAMANDUAS

A pair of Southern tamanduas, male Dexter and female Derby, arrived at the zoo in August and moved into a new exhibit in the Nocturnal wing next door to Justus the kiwi. Tamanduas are lesser anteaters that live in trees. The addition of another unique nocturnal species highlighted our Nocturnal Animals wing, which is on a reverse light cycle to allow visitors to see these animals during their active hours.

The Friends contributed over \$12,000 to bring tamanduas to our zoo.



WAYA THE RED WOLF

A male red wolf arrived at our zoo from Zoo Knoxville in January 2019 as recommended by the Species Survival Plan for this critically endangered species. It was hoped he would be a mate to our female red wolf, Cheyenne, whose previous mate, Waya, passed away in 2018 at age 13. Our team found it remarkable that the new male also was named Waya – and that the introduction process took a matter of hours, not days. The pair bonded right away, spending a few winter months together in the former lion exhibit while **we constructed their new underground den – funded by Friends of the Zoo --** in their home habitat on the Wildlife Trail.

The Friends spent \$3,000 for the new den.



THIMBU THE AMUR TIGER

Nine-year-old Amur tiger Thimbu came to us from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo on December 4 as recommended by the Amur Tiger SSP after the passing of our elderly pair. The plan is for the zoo to welcome a female Amur tiger as a potential mate for Thimbu in 2020. Several members of our animal care team traveled to Rochester to transport Thimbu from the FedEx Terminal there to Syracuse.

The Friends assisted with transport expenses including a special crate for Thimbu, which cost \$6,000.

IN MEMORIAM

AMUR TIGERS TOMA AND TATIANA

Both of the zoo's elderly Amur tigers passed away in the fall of 2019 within weeks of each other. Male Amur tiger Toma, a past cancer survivor, passed away on September 19 at age 18. Female Tatiana passed away five weeks later at age 19. The pair had three cubs together as part of the Species Survival Plan for Amur tigers. Both had been receiving care for geriatric-related issues.



ANDEAN BEAR KAHLESS

Andean bear Kahless passed away on December 18 at age 25. Kahless and his twin brother, Morath, 26, resided at our zoo since 2005. They were born on January 1, 1994 at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago; they came to us as a duo and were close companions for life. They were named for mythical Klingon warrior brothers from Star Trek. In Star Trek lore, Kahless was known as "the Unforgettable," and we will never forget him.



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.

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