

An insider's view of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

# My ZOO

WINTER 2021

Magazine



## A FRUITFUL FLAMBOYANCE!

VOLUNTEERS  
HELP INCREASE  
FLAMINGO FLOCK

**P3**

ANIMAL HEALTH CENTER  
TAKES SHAPE

**P8**

VIRTUAL  
ZOO TO YOU  
EXPANDS  
ITS REACH!

**P12**

# IN THIS ISSUE



## A Message from the Friends Executive Director

Happy New Year! I am excited and honored to be the new executive director of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. I joined the Friends this past fall and quickly gained a great appreciation for the important work going on at the zoo and the amazing community that supports it.

Wrapping up my first week on the job, I walked around to say hello to guests at the zoo. I was absolutely transported when a simple "Hello!" to a grandmother and her grandchildren led the 2-year-old granddaughter to run up and hug my leg! This is the kind of response that brings a smile to my face. This is what our zoo does – inspiring youngsters to have their eyes wide open to animals and conservation and just to embrace love for our planet and each other.

Since then, I have been able to tour much of the zoo and meet the passionate animal care, veterinary and operations staff that take such great care of our animals and our internationally accredited institution. I have gotten to know the Friends of the Zoo team who are constantly seeking creative ways to support the zoo. And we have all gone through an unexpected tragedy together with the recent loss of our two young Asian elephant calves to EEHV, a heartbreaking turn of events that was immediately followed by an enormous outpouring of love and support from our zoo family far and wide.

We have received many notes of encouragement and dozens of donations from our community to the Ajay and Batu Memorial Fund to provide EEHV testing and treatment at our future Animal Health Center. Some two dozen of our fellow AZA zoos have also sent gift cards, meals, goodies and sympathy cards to our elephant team.

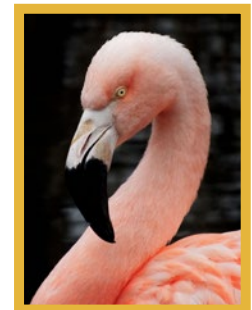
In this issue of *MyZoo Magazine*, you will find other inspiring information, including the uplifting story of how zoo volunteers led their community to raise over \$14,000 in a month for a chance to double our flock of flamingos. We also have an update on the new Animal Health Center from our zoo director and details on new events we're planning to bring us together to learn about, enjoy and provide for the animals at your zoo.

As we enter a new year, I count meeting more of our members among the things I look forward to most. Thank you for being such great Friends of the Zoo!

Excited for 2021,

Carrie Large  
Executive Director, Friends of the Zoo

- 3 A Fruitful Flamboyance!
- 4 Animal Updates
- 5 Creature Feature
- 6 Meet our New Friends Executive Director
- 7 Planning for the 2021 Season
- 8 Animal Health Center Takes Shape
- 12 Virtual Zoo to You Expands its Reach!
- 13 Education Programs
- 14 MyZoo Jr.
- 15 EcoNotes
- 17 Adopt an Animal: Iniko
- 18 Member Notes



**ON THE COVER:**  
Chilean Flamingo  
Photo by Hunter Simmons

ROSAMOND GIFFORD  
**ZOO**  
AT BURNET PARK  
Ted Fox, Director

ONONDAGA  
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Please direct questions regarding this publication to [editor@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:editor@rosamondgiffordzoo.org).

The **Rosamond Gifford Zoo** One Conservation Place, Syracuse, NY 13204 is owned and operated by Onondaga County. **Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo** is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a level of excellence that makes the Rosamond Gifford Zoo a national leader in animal care, conservation and visitor experience.

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*Many bird species mate for life, but flamingos are not among them. Call them fickle, flirtatious or friendly, wild flamingos are known to be serially monogamous – meaning they are faithful for a season, but not forever.*

# A FRUITFUL FLAMBOYANCE!

*Rosamond Gifford Zoo volunteers help increase our flamingo flock in hopes of hatching future chicks*

For flamingos, the bigger the flock, the better the chance for chicks. A large flock allows breeding birds to feel safe and seeing other pairs engaging in courtship displays encourages stronger pair bonds, said Rosamond Gifford Zoo Bird Manager April Zimpel.

This helps explain why the Rosamond Gifford Zoo has had Chilean flamingos since 1996, but has never hatched a chick. Our flock of seven is small enough that all they breed is familiarity.

That's about to change! Thanks to a fabulous fundraiser led by zoo volunteers, the zoo is doubling its flamingo flock -- known as a flamboyance -- in hopes of increasing our chances for flamingo chicks in the foreseeable future.

The Fund for Flamingo Flamboyance – as the campaign was called – began when our zoo learned that a fellow Association of Zoos & Aquariums-accredited zoo, the Fort Worth Zoo, was seeking to rehome 29 Chilean flamingos. Our bird experts saw a chance to potentially jumpstart flamingo breeding here. April hoped for seven new birds to double our flamboyance and “even out” the genders.





# ANIMAL UPDATES

**Female Amur tiger Zeya** arrived from Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo on September 29. Zeya, age 3, will be introduced to our male Amur tiger, 9-year-old Thimbu, in hopes they will produce cubs in the future. Amur tigers are critically endangered in their native Far East Russia.



**Female laughing kookaburra Sydney** passed away on June 6. She was 16 years old. Her companion, male kookaburra Ogakor, went on to the Memphis Zoo to meet a potential mate.

**A Harlequin brittlestar starfish** was acquired on August 20.

**Three male San Clemente Island goats** moved to a private farm on September 3.

**Two female degus, Daphne and Daisy**, were acquired on September 4. These South American rodents reside in the education classroom as Outreach animals.

**Two troupial chicks** hatched at the zoo on September 4.

**One male and three female American bison** moved to a Central New York preserve September 22 as construction began on the new Animal Health Center adjacent to their exhibit. The remaining two adults and one calf went to the Toledo Zoo on January 7.

**Female Giant Pacific octopus Tellaro** arrived at the zoo from Canada on September 24.

**One male and two female Black Welsh Mountain sheep** moved to the Erie Zoo on September 25.

**Three pairs of pink-headed fruit doves** arrived from the Toledo Zoo on September 25. These gorgeous birds are native to Indonesia and we hope to breed them in the future. (see Creature Feature, page 5)

**A pair of red-billed blue magpies** arrived from the Toledo Zoo on September 25. These members of the Corvid family are native to northern India and Southeast Asia. The pair will be moving into the outdoor birds exhibit shared by turkey vultures Vic and Victoria.

**Snow leopard cub Marcy joined her mother, Daania**, on exhibit on International Snow Leopard Day October 23. Marcy, born May 18, needed several weeks of intensive physical therapy to overcome a condition called Swimmer Syndrome that disabled her hind legs. (See the *MyZoo Magazine* Fall 2020 cover story.) Marcy is completely recovered and can be seen at the snow leopard exhibit on the Wildlife Trail.

**A female Luzon bleeding heart dove** arrived from the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago on September 28.

**Irwin the rhinoceros iguana** has been spending his days on the lower level of the Tropical River Exhibit in the USS Antiquities cave.

**A male bar-headed goose** arrived from Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo on September 29.

**A female Inca tern** arrived from Chicago's Brookfield Zoo on October 6.

**Three Humboldt penguins, Ernesto, Salvador and Luz**, went on loan to the Lincoln Children's Zoo in Lincoln, NE, on December 3.

**Two Humboldt penguins were humanely euthanized** due to debilitating health issues. Jorge, one of our founding colony members, was 23 years old. Female penguin Tierra was 14.

# CREATURE FEATURE: PINK- NECKED FRUIT DOVE

AT THE  
ROSAMOND  
GIFFORD ZOO:

3 Males  
3 Females



## **FUN FACT:**

The Pink-necked fruit dove's call is a low-pitched "woow" noise, similar to that of our local mourning dove.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo recently acquired three pairs of Pink-necked fruit doves from one of our fellow AZA institutions, the Toledo Zoo & Aquarium. Toledo was the first zoo to establish a population of these strikingly beautiful birds in human care.

Also known as the Pink-headed fruit dove or the Temminck's fruit pigeon, these brightly colored birds are native to mountain forests on the Indonesian islands of Bali, Sumatra and Java. As their name suggests, they eat fruits and berries. Their diet consists largely of figs in their native habitat. They digest the fruit and disperse the seeds as waste as they fly, helping regrow their own food source.

As their name also suggests, both males and females of this species have pink/purplish heads and necks with white bands on their chests and green, gray and yellow feathers. Males have more vibrant plumage than females.

Because Pink-necked fruit doves have such a small range and are quite reclusive, studying this species is incredibly difficult! Population numbers are unknown, and they are feared to be in decline due to habitat loss.

To help support the wild population, the Toledo Zoo began breeding and rearing Pink-necked fruit doves in 2014. Hatch rates have since increased from two a year to more than five per year. In 2017, the zoo hand reared 14 Pink-necked fruit dove chicks. By 2018, the number of doves in human care had increased from 11 to 60!

We are among a few AZA zoos that have acquired representatives of this species to care for, exhibit and study here in Syracuse. Our three new pairs are currently in quarantine, but we expect to introduce them into the Diversity of Birds aviary in early 2021.



## Carrie Large Joins Friends of the Zoo as Executive Director

**Carrie Large**, a longtime senior leader at ACR Health, is the new executive director of the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. The Friends of the Zoo board of directors selected Large following a national search to fill the position after former Friends executive Janet Agostini retired in January 2020.

Carrie joined the zoo in November after 17 years with ACR Health, formerly AIDS Community Resources, most recently as deputy executive director of operations, a position she held since October 2017.

She has a bachelor's degree in physical education with a concentration in Sports Management from SUNY Brockport. Right out of college she took on the challenge of starting up a professional arena football team, the Rochester Brigade, focused on game day operations and sales.

Carrie moved to Syracuse in May 2003 to join AIDS Community Resources, dba ACR Health, and worked there until fall 2020, rising from the position of Care Manager (2003-2005) to Deputy Director of Development (2005-2009) to Director of Development (2009-2017) and to her most recent role as Deputy Executive Director of Operations. Large oversaw ACR Health's daily operations in nine counties with more than 100 team members. She has mentored 10 directors and managers, helping grow operations, marketing and funding sources.

Friends of the Zoo Board Chair Heidi Holtz said the board felt Large was a good fit to lead the Friends organization as it seeks to help the zoo recalibrate after the COVID-19 pandemic, sustain its highly respected reputation in animal conservation and education, and pursue an ambitious strategic and master plan that includes support for a new Animal Health Center now under construction.

"We look forward to working with Carrie, who we believe will bring a powerful mix of professional expertise and personal dynamism to the Friends organization," Heidi said.

Carrie said she has loved working at ACR Health and she is excited to join another important community non-profit that makes Central New York a better place to live.

Carrie resides in Liverpool with her wife, Stacey, and three children, Lucas, Callie and chocolate lab Winnie, aka the world's greatest snack stealer. "Everyone at home is excited about the zoo and have requested to come to work with me every day," she said.

*"My family loves our zoo, and it is an absolute honor to join this team. I can't wait to continue the zoo's mission of mixing fun with nature education, helping families create memories and looking forward to our best days ever!"*

**Carrie Large,  
Executive Director  
Friends of the Zoo**





# Planning for an Exciting 2021 Season

By Heidi Strong, Director of Development

One of the most difficult parts of 2020 was not being able to gather in groups and having to cancel or postpone important events that we had looked forward to for months or years. Here at Friends of the Zoo, we also had to cancel several of the annual fundraisers that we rely on to help keep our zoo financially stable. Although we pivoted to provide virtual substitutes, it took some time to acquire the equipment and expertise to be able offer events worth attending from home.

**Now as we enter 2021, we are looking forward to inviting you to some wonderful new and revamped events this coming year. Here is a sampling of what we have planned:**

## Golf Tournament, Monday, June 7

Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo will host a charity golf tournament to support the zoo at the Bellevue Country Club. This 18-hole tournament will feature breakfast on the cart, lunch on the course and a post-event dinner in the clubhouse. The golf tournament will replace the former "Birdies Before Brew" 9-hole event at Burnet Park in hopes of attracting more golf fans to this top-notch CNY golf venue. We also plan to partner with a charity auction site specializing in sports memorabilia to run a silent auction in conjunction with this event.

## Brew at the Zoo 25th Anniversary, Friday, August 6

Our popular Brew at the Zoo event turns 25 this year and we plan to make it special with a new spin. Last year's Brew event was forced to turn virtual and, while it received rave reviews, we can't wait to bring everyone back to the zoo for the real deal!

## Fall Conservation Ball/Ted Fox Celebrity Roast, Friday, September 10

We are reimagining the former Snow Leopard Soirée winter gala as a Fall Conservation Ball to benefit animal care at the zoo and conservation in the wild -- with a twist! Zoo Director Ted Fox marks 30 years at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and, as a highlight of the ball, he will be the subject of a roast and lead an auction to benefit the Animal Health Center. Over the years, the zoo has seen many changes and provided many memories, which will be celebrated along with Ted at this fun-filled evening event.

## Run for the Syracuse Zoo, Saturday, October 23

We will host a fun run with a virtual component to get people out and moving on behalf of their zoo. It will be a chance for everyone to join in and be part of the action. Participants will receive complimentary admission to the zoo and a run T-shirt.

**We are in the process of reimagining old favorites like Penguin Palooza, Zoo Boo and more. We are forming committees to plan these events, so if you are interested in participating, please contact me at (315) 435-8511 x8526 or [hstrong@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:hstrong@rosamondgiffordzoo.org)!**

## **In closing, I would like to share some bright spots that made 2020 a year to cherish our wonderful Friends of the Zoo family's amazing support.**

In response to revenue losses from the pandemic, Friends of the Zoo chose to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2020 with a fundraiser to help the zoo heading into 2021. We launched the \$50K for 50 Years campaign in hopes of raising \$50,000 for the zoo by the end of 2020. Thanks to YOU, not only did we meet our goal, we exceeded it by over \$15,000, raising a total of \$69,690 to support the zoo!

When the zoo learned of a chance to double our flock of Chilean flamingos to boost the potential for chicks, our zoo volunteers also led a fundraiser, the Fund for Flamingo Flamboyance, to make it happen. (See cover story on page 3). Thanks to YOU, the flamingo fundraiser almost doubled its goal, raising over \$14,000 to provide for a larger flock in the future.

We are also working on a new capital campaign to assist with diagnostic and medical equipment for the new Animal Health Center (see update on page 8). This campaign also provides opportunities for you to get involved. I welcome your ideas and participation. Together, we will make 2021 a great year for the zoo!



# Animal Health Center Takes Shape at Rosamond Gifford Zoo

By Ted Fox, Zoo Director

*If you have visited the zoo recently, you may have seen the construction going on at an expansive hilltop site adjacent to the zoo's parking lot. This is the spot where the zoo's new animal health center is transforming from a long-sought vision into a concrete reality.*

Onondaga County broke ground on the project in September, and construction will be ongoing through the winter. At this point, we are excited to be able to say that all the footings are in, walls are going up and we can finally see the footprint of the entire building – and it's HUGE!

When it is completed this coming fall, the new animal health center will be a free-standing complex exceeding 20,000 square feet – about 10 times the size of the in-house clinic we have been using to examine and treat our animals since the 1980s. The new center will include a separate quarantine facility to ensure that maximum comfort and best safety practices are in place for new animals joining the zoo.

As the center takes shape, the excitement is palpable for everyone to see this long-awaited project come to fruition. Here are some highlights:

- Onondaga County allocated \$7.5 million for the health center in 2019 and broke ground on the project this past September. Construction is progressing and the project is on track for completion in September 2021.
- The county is footing the bill for the health center design, engineering, site work, construction, infrastructure and landscaping. Friends of the Zoo has pledged to outfit it with state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment equipment with help from key sponsors and a Capital Campaign to raise over \$1.1 million. The Friends' goal is to provide the latest tools necessary to perform most exams and procedures on-site at the zoo, eliminating the need to borrow or rent diagnostic equipment or to transport a sick or stressed animal off grounds.
- The health center will meet and exceed standards required for our next accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) in 2023 and for decades to come, cementing our reputation as a world-class animal care institution.



- The center also will nurture and expand our 22-year partnership with Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, allowing veterinarians from one of our nation's top veterinary schools to practice at the zoo while their students, interns and residents benefit from rotations through a premier zoological medical center.
- We also will be able to add capabilities previously limited due to space constraints, including more in-depth research projects in concert with other AZA facilities to improve the health and well-being of animals at AZA zoos and aquariums and their wild counterparts.
- The new health center will vastly increase our ability to provide educational experiences and inside views of animal health and welfare in action. Floor to ceiling windows will look in on the lab, the nursery/ICU, animal nutrition kitchen, treatment rooms and surgical suite, among others. Large video screens and new video technology will allow us to share everything we do for animal health – from nutrition to routine exams to radiology to surgical procedures – with our Central New York community and beyond.

Our contractors say the entire building should be enclosed by the end of February, allowing them to begin work on the interior. Stay tuned for more updates on our Facebook page.

**Meanwhile, if you or your company, group or organization would like to get involved in supporting the new health center, please contact Heidi Strong at [hstrong@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:hstrong@rosamondgiffordzoo.org) or (315) 435-8511 x8526.**



## ONE HEALTH

The new Animal Health Center at Rosamond Gifford Zoo will exemplify the ONE HEALTH philosophy:

- **PROVIDING** state-of-the-art health care for over 215 animal species from prenatal to geriatric care.
- **TRAINING** future animal health practitioners from Cornell University and other veterinary institutions.
- **SHARING** data, research and best practices to further animal care and conservation in North America and worldwide.
- **CONNECTING** people to animals, nature and our planet.
- **EDUCATING** people about the collective, connected health of all living things.



In December, a deadly strain of Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV) claimed the lives of our two young Asian elephant calves, brothers Batu and Ajay. While we continue to support efforts to find a vaccine for this insidious disease, the zoo also plans to ensure that our new animal health center has on-site EEHV testing and treatment equipment.

The Ajay and Batu Memorial Fund will honor our boys' memory by providing this equipment in their names. Donations to the fund will go to purchase a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) machine to test blood for EEHV, a centrifuge for extracting plasma for treatment and refrigerator units for blood and plasma storage.

**Find information and donate via our events site, [syracusezooevents.org](http://syracusezooevents.org).**

The catch was the cost. Acquiring the birds and transporting them to Syracuse from Texas and purchasing supplies to care for them amounted to over \$2,000 per bird. We would need \$18,000 to opt in, and the October 31 deadline to commit was only a month away.

Zoo Director Ted Fox recalled that zoo volunteers had helped us acquire our first flamingo flock in the 1990s. Perhaps our current volunteers would like to assist this effort. Due to the COVID crisis, many had been assigned to pandemic-related duties such as informing guests about new restrictions and monitoring for mask-wearing and social distancing. A flamingo fundraiser would be more fun!

When Director of Development Heidi Strong proposed the idea, over two dozen volunteers responded. They brainstormed several

facets of the flamingo fundraiser that Heidi named the Fund for Flamingo Flamboyance:

- An online donation site they could share with friends to help with the cause
- A silent auction of mostly flamingo-themed items including gift baskets donated by our volunteers and original art created by our current flamingos
- A sale of flamingo-themed “Flock Star” T-shirts designed by our marketing team, which were pre-ordered so none went unsold.

**The Fund was a fantastic success, raising over \$11,000 in donations and \$2,700 from the silent auction.** Overall, more than \$14,000 was raised, allowing the zoo to welcome at least six new flamingos!

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers and all the flamingo fans who donated to the fund, bid on silent auction items or bought a T-shirt in support. You’re all Flock Stars to us!



# RECOGNIZING OUR FLOCK STARS!

## \$1000+

**In Memory of Gene Ridall**

## \$750-\$999

Ms. Margaret Wicks

## \$500-\$749

Ellenrose Galgano  
Maria Kane  
Linda M. Payne

## \$250-\$499

Christine Kochan-Serburn  
Mr. John Piston  
Mr. and Mrs. Howard Preston  
Mrs. Constance Tuttle and Mr. Earl Tuttle

## \$100-\$249

Deborah Holihan  
Dr. Peter and Mary Huntington  
Ms. Judy Kilpatrick  
Ms. Joanne Marshall  
Ms. Donna Muscarella and Mr. Stephen Bloom  
Margaret Napoleon  
Ms. Fredrike Purkert

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Redhead  
Elizabeth Spence  
Cheryl & Jack Young

## \$10-\$99

Mr. and Mrs. George Angeloro  
Marishka and Drucilla Biela  
Ms. Diana Biro and Mr. Eric Rogers  
Lisa M. Canale  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Carey  
Peter & Elizabeth Costello  
Mr. John Cross  
Mrs. Paula Cutrone  
Deborah DeLorenzo  
Ms. Denise Dowdall and Mr. Michael Yeager  
Ms. Lynne Deuschle  
Mrs. Janet Erardi  
Ms. Maggie Field  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Fitzgerald  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery Glose  
Deb Groll  
Jean and Jay Guss  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hipius  
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Fred Kromm  
Carrie Large and Stacey Portzline  
Carol S. Lebieczinski  
Ms. Emily Mallar and Mr. Phillip Aubin  
Mr. and Mrs. John Mauro  
John, Diane, and Haylee McClure  
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Mr. and Mrs. Mark Miller  
Mr. and Mrs. David Miranda  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Monteleone  
Ms. Nancy Morey  
Mr. and Mrs. Derek Norcross  
Ms. Jeanne Wagner-Pratt and Mr. Dale Pratt  
Ms. Ashley Redhead  
Ms. Margaret Smyth  
Cindy Sparrow  
Mrs. Catherine Stolz  
Barbara Stratton  
Ms. Cynthia Taylor  
Donna and Mike Thomas  
Ms. Christina Tucci  
Amy Tuttle  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wilbur  
Diana Wolpert

## A Note on Chilean Flamingos

There are six species of flamingo. The one most familiar to North Americans is the American flamingo or Caribbean flamingo, which is larger, has a deep salmon color and resides in the Caribbean Islands, Galapagos, Venezuela and Colombia as well as Florida and the U.S. Gulf Coast. Its cousin the Chilean flamingo is smaller, a paler pink and is native to a more temperate climate in South America. Chilean flamingos are adapted to much colder climates, which allows our zoo visitors to occasionally enjoy the sight of pink flamingos against white snow.





*In her seven years as a bird keeper at the Houston Zoo and two as bird manager at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, April Zimpel has transported many birds. But her recent trip to drive a half-dozen flamingos 1,543 miles from Fort Worth, TX, to Syracuse was her longest yet.*

April recruited her dad, Greg Zimpel of Chesapeake, VA, to help her bring six young Chilean flamingos from the Fort Worth Zoo to their new home at our zoo. The Zimpels managed to fly to Texas, acquire a van, construct a flamingo enclosure in back and then drive 30 hours through seven states with their fragile feathered freight.

The mission went smoothly thanks to weeks of planning. Fort Worth Zoo did pre-ship exams to ensure the birds were good to travel and sent reports to our veterinary team for approval. April picked the brains of Fort Worth's bird team to figure out logistics, timing and a plan.

"We decided a corral-style enclosure would be the most comfortable and least stressful for the birds," April said. "We considered individual crates, but flamingos are a flocking species, so they are used to huddling together for protection."

On January 4, April and Greg flew separately to Charlotte, NC, and together to Fort Worth, fetched the van and went to meet Fort Worth Zoo Bird Curator Brad Hazleton for a tour. Then they picked up plastic sheeting from Home Depot, bought mesh netting at Tractor Supply and built a flamingo enclosure in the van in their hotel parking lot.

"We got some strange looks," April said. "People definitely thought we were up to something."

The enclosure was made of two curved sheets of plastic tall enough for flamingos to stand up, a mesh roof and bedding on the floor. They attached a five-gallon pail with five inches of water to the inside for drinking and feeding.

The next day, they picked up the birds and hit the road by 7:30 a.m. "The birds were a little nervous at first, vocalizing and bickering, which is normal," April said. "But within 30 minutes they actually laid down and tucked their heads."

April and Greg took turns driving for six-hour stretches, staying within the speed limit and away from other vehicles to avoid quick braking or acceleration – "for the safety of the birds and because I didn't want to have to explain to a police officer why I had flamingos in the back of a van," April said. The birds mostly slept until they reached Syracuse at noon on January 6.

April's bird team had a quarantine area prepped to shelter the new birds for at least 30 days before they can meet our flamingos. "They started eating within the first 20 minutes here, which is a good sign that they are comfortable and relaxed," said General Curator Dan Meates.

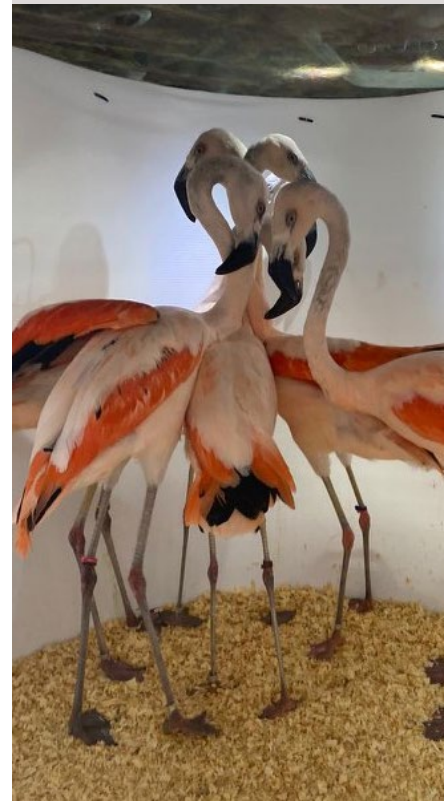
By then, April and Greg were on the way to April's to spend the next two days dismantling the corral, cleaning the van and getting some much-needed sleep.

### About our Current Flock:

- Four Chilean flamingos – one male and three females – came to us in 1996. All were wild-caught as adults, so they are at least 24 years old.
- Three more Chilean flamingos – all males – came to us in 2000. Two are at least 28 years old and the third is at least 19 years old.
- The wild genetics of our birds make them very important for breeding as they contribute genetic diversity to the population of Chilean flamingos in human care.

### About our New Birds:

- Three male Chilean flamingos and three females, all under age 2, arrived from the Fort Worth Zoo on January 6 and are now in quarantine.
- All were hatched at the Fort Worth Zoo and all but one female were hand-reared.



# Virtual Zoo to You Expands Its Reach!



*By Kim Coons, Director of Education and Volunteers Services*

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo Education Department's transition to a virtual platform was implemented quickly in the midst of a pandemic and required significant adaptation to meet the need for distance learning

and virtual classes in the new learn-at-home and virtual classroom environment.

Fortunately, this platform has advantages over traditional learning! Historically, most of the zoo's programs have been focused locally and only on occasion reached outside Onondaga County. But as it turns out, the strongest advantage to newly created virtual programs are their reach both out of state and internationally.

We had the amazing opportunity to share our conservation mission with a school in Iqaluit, a small town in Nunavut, Canada. While our two educators, Ben and Leo, prepared for their presentation, the children in Iqaluit were just finishing up playing outside. As the Zoom call went live, we could hear the bustling noises of children peeling off snowsuits and excitedly chatting off camera. Snow suits in October? The Nunavut region is the largest and most northern territory of Canada. While Syracuse was having seasonal fall weather, the children of this Inuit community were coming inside from arctic conditions. This opportunity was made possible by a partnership with Connected North and their mission to bring educational experiences to remote indigenous communities.

Despite the challenges of a virtual platform, we are excited to be able to reach schools from the west to the east coast and even into the arctic of Canada. Thanks to virtual learning, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is reaching more people with our conservation message than ever before!



- ★ Ashland, KY
- ★ Chatauqua, NY
- ★ Fort Frances, ON Canada
- ★ Hammond, LA
- ★ Harrisburg, PA
- ★ Iqaluit, NU Canada
- ★ Manhattan Beach, CA
- ★ Memphis, TN
- ★ Palmdale, CA
- ★ Webster, WI
- ★ Westfield, WI



## Virtual Zoo to You Offerings

Zoo to You offers education programs on a variety of topics brought to you virtually. Subject areas include animal adaptations, habitats and endangered species. Our programs are designed for specified age groups and grades according to the New York State Learning Standards. We have programs available for ages 3 through adult, and most can be adapted to suit both older and younger students. We can also design a program to your specific topic needs or on subject matter not included on our curriculum list.

### Here is just a sampling of Virtual Zoo to You topics in our lineup:

**Amazing Adaptations (Pre-K through High School)** Why do tigers have such big teeth? How far can an owl turn its head? In this program, discover how animals survive in their environments using specific body parts or behaviors known as adaptations.

**Animal Enrichment (Age 12 & up)** Have you ever wondered if animals get bored like humans do? Explore different tools that the zoo uses to enrich the lives of the animals that live here. You can also learn how to enrich the lives of animals that live in and around your home!

**Animal Grossology (Grades 1-4)** From penguin poop to vulture vomit, the zoo can be a pretty gross place! We will explore the icky, yucky, gross side of working with animals and find out why a little gross can be a good thing!

### Animal Myths Busted! (Pre-K through 4th grade)

Can an owl turn its head all the way around? Do porcupines shoot their quills? Can turtles leave their shells? Find out by joining us as we present and analyze some myths and misconceptions about animals found at the zoo!

### Predator vs. Prey (Pre-K through High School)

What is a predator? What is prey? Learn how the ability to get food and avoid becoming food is linked to survival. Meet both types of animals that live at the zoo.

**Find these and many more Virtual Zoo to You programs at [syracusezooevents.org/virtual-zoo-to-you!](http://syracusezooevents.org/virtual-zoo-to-you!)**





## Zoom into Winter Break Zoo Camp

**Monday, February 15 through Friday, February 19**

**10 a.m. to noon daily**

We wish you could be here in person, but that doesn't mean the fun has to stop! Zoom into the zoo to join our educators for live content from 10 a.m. to noon each day of Winter Break Week. Daily activities will include videos of areas of the zoo that are currently closed, live animal meet and greets and craft projects.

**Members: \$125 | Non-members: \$150**

**Spaces are limited. Advance camp kit pickup is required. Additional child fee to cover extra camp kits will apply.**

## Zoo to You Learn at Home Series

**Programs begin via Zoom link at 2 p.m.**

**February 10, 2021:  
Love is in the Air**

Join us as we learn the many ways animals show affection and care for their families. Your heart will skip a beat when you see some of our loveable zoo animals.

**April 14, 2021:  
Beautiful Birds**

In this program we will soar into the world of birds and discover what makes them so special.

**JUST \$10 PER FAMILY**

**Register online today at: [syracusezooevents.org/education](https://syracusezooevents.org/education).**

**For details, Call (315) 435-8511 x8559 or email [zootoyou@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:zootoyou@rosamondgiffordzoo.org)**

**March 10, 2021:  
Spring Into Action**

World Recycling Day and World Water Day are both in March. Learn why you should care and what you can do to spring into action to help!

**May 12, 2021:  
Rambunctious River Otters**

Learn more about these spunky swimmers and what we can do to help them.

## Couples Virtual Paint Night ♥

**Friday, February 12 | 6-8 p.m.**

Sloooooow down and take the evening to hang with us as we guide you in painting as a pair through the steps to creating a work of art. You will even get to see our resident Hoffman's two-toed sloth live via Zoom and chat with her keeper. Don't be slothful -- register today!

**Members: \$70 per pair | Non-members: \$75 per pair**

**Spaces are limited. Ability to pick up your art supplies kit prior to the class is required. Kit includes canvas, paint, brushes and Zoom login information.**



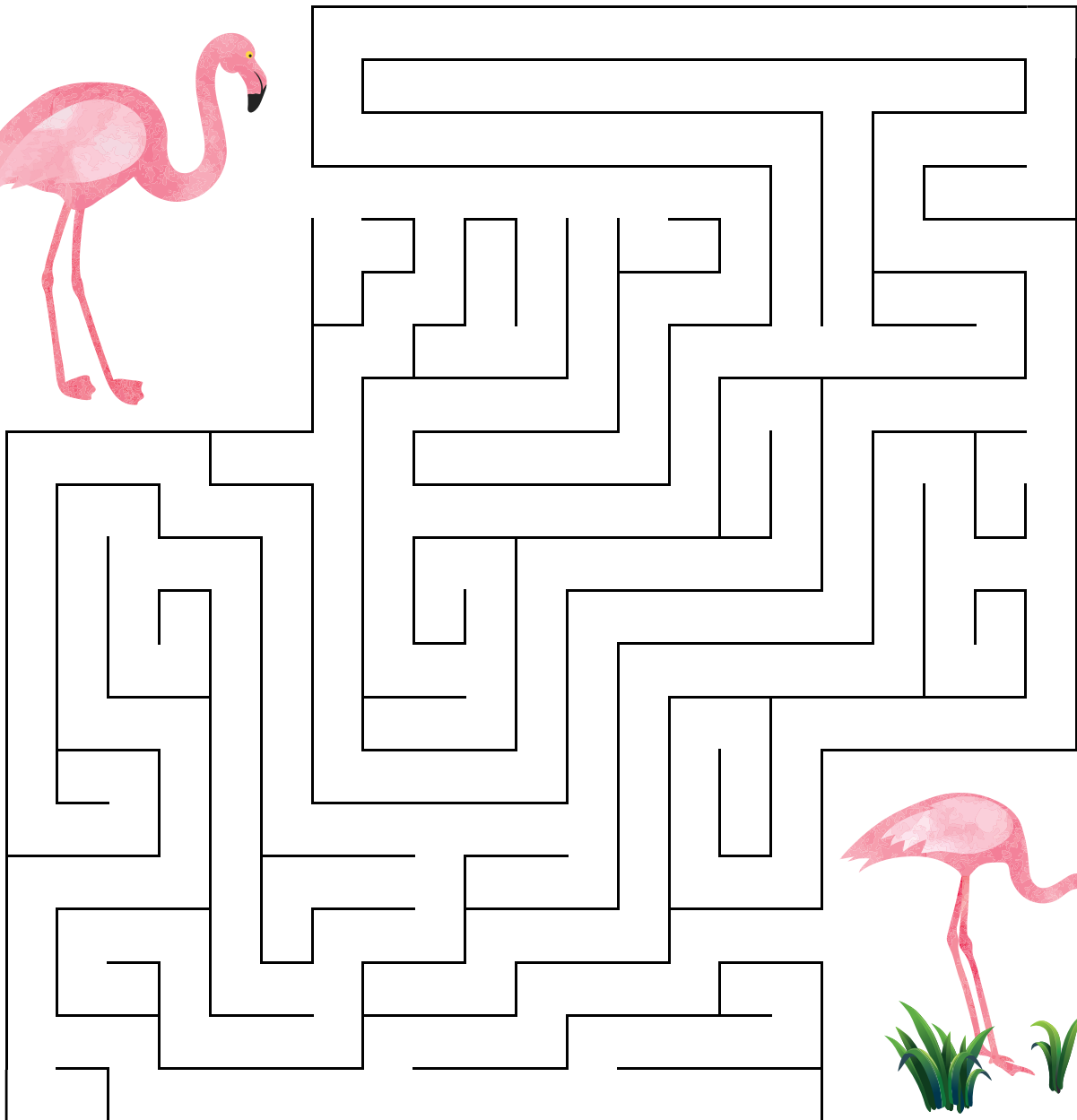
# FABULOUS FLAMINGOS

If a flock of adult flamingos is called a flamboyance, what do we call a group of their chicks? A creche – pronounced “kresh.” That’s a word meaning a place where children are cared for.

Both Chilean flamingos like those at the zoo and their Caribbean flamingo cousins typically hatch one egg at a time. The incubation period, or time it takes to hatch, is 29 days on average. Once hatched, the flamingo chick will leave the nest in less than a week to gather with other chicks in a large group called a creche. In the wild, flamingo creches can include as many as 30,000 young birds!

Flamingo parents can find their offspring in the creche at feeding time by sight and vocalization, a sound specific to that chick. They will not feed a chick that is not their own! The zoo has recently acquired some new adult flamingos in hopes of having our first flamingo chicks hatch here in the future.

***Help the flamingo find its chick in the creche below.***







## Feeding Backyard Birds in Winter

As the days have become shorter and the temperatures colder, you have probably noticed a change in the wildlife that visits your backyard. Many animals hibernate or migrate during the winter months. However, it's important to remember and look out for those who don't! Many birds stay in the same place all winter. In spring and summer, most birds predominately eat bugs and vegetation. In the winter, food is much harder to come by, and nonmigratory birds must rely on seeds and fruit to survive. For this reason, winter is actually the best time of year to feed our feathered friends!

Chickadees, cardinals, finches, sparrows, jays, woodpeckers and mourning doves are just a few of the many species of birds that winter up north. Even mallards stay put all year -- the flock of wild mallards at the zoo is at its largest in winter because the ducks know our bird keepers feed everyone on the pond twice a day whether they live here or not. Free loaders!

**Here are some bird feeding tips from our friends at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology:**

- Black-oil sunflower seeds are highly nutritious and the kind of seed most birds will flock to eat. Using a standard mix of many types of seed can be wasteful, as visiting birds may just eat the sunflower seeds and leave the rest.
- To attract birds like chickadees and woodpeckers to your feeders, put out high-energy foods like peanut butter and suet. These can be left plain or mixed with oats or seeds like millet.
- To attract birds that don't consume many seeds to your backyard, put out dried fruit like raisins after soaking them in water to soften them. Even slices of fresh fruit can attract a variety of visitors.
- Putting out bowls of fresh water can be just as important as putting out food. In frigid weather it can be difficult for birds to find liquid water to drink and bathe in. Clean feathers provide the best insulation and are important to keep the birds warm.
- Space out your feeding stations and place them in well sheltered areas. Pine trees and shrubbery are good locations as they shelter stations from wind and provide cover to make the birds feel safer.
- Be a bird watcher as well as a bird feeder! Keep a pair of binoculars and/or a camera and a bird guide near a window with a view of your feeder. Before you know it, you'll be able to identify a few new birds!

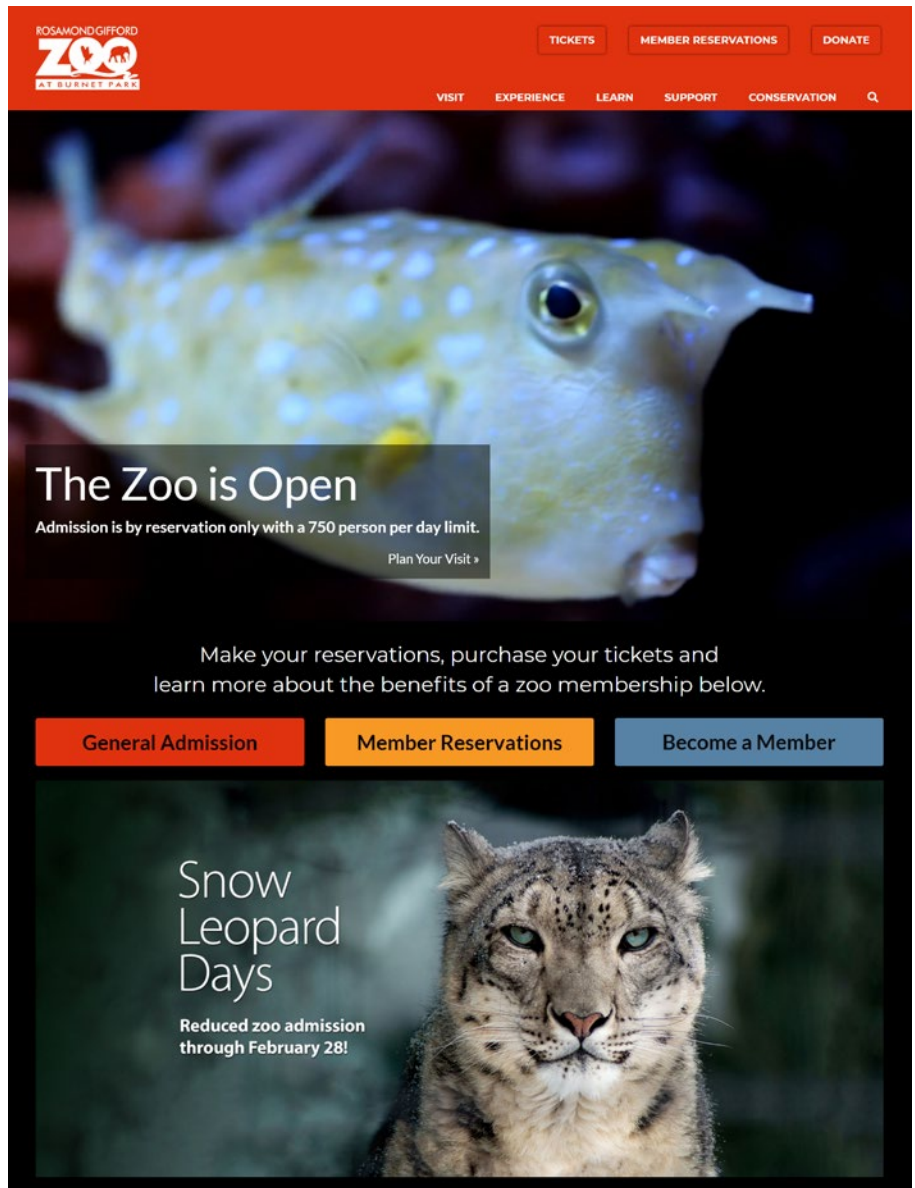
# New Zoo Website Launched in January

Have you had a chance to visit our new zoo website?

The old Rosamond Gifford Zoo website has been transformed with a new look and new features, including our online gift shop, reservations information, quick links to events, classes and program offerings, ways to support the zoo, conservation information and more!

We are continually updating our animal information pages and adding features like our new Preservation Pointers from the zoo Conservation Committee and Collection Manager April Zimpel.

**When you have a moment, please visit [rosamondgiffordzoo.org](http://rosamondgiffordzoo.org) to explore, learn and support your zoo -- and let us know what you think!**

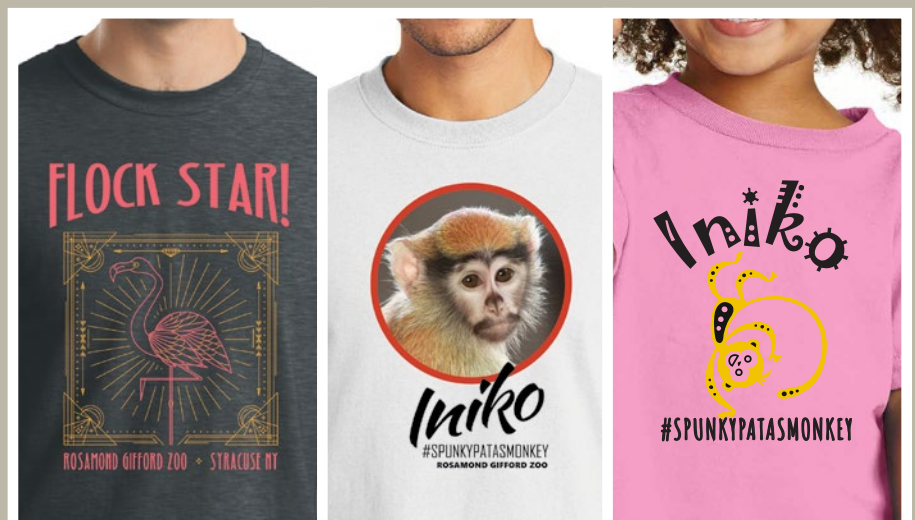


## Hot New Items!

Check out our new seasonal items including newly arrived Iniko apparel plus a great selection of gift items for the animal lovers in your life.

**Members receive a 10% discount!**

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



Shop **ONSITE** or **ONLINE** at [syracusezooevents.org/shop](http://syracusezooevents.org/shop). You don't need a zoo reservation to visit the gift shop!




# Iniko

Our baby patas monkey, Iniko, is now 7 months old and spunkier than ever! The little 4-pound whirlwind has been greeting visitors and scampering around her windowed playroom at the zoo since January 12, and she has gained quite the fan club. Her status as the first baby patas monkey to be hand-reared in North America after the loss of her mother at birth won hearts across social media and support from a caring community in Central New York.

Her name means "born during troubled times," but Iniko has proven to be a delightful distraction from the pandemic. You may have seen her story in our Friends of the Zoo Annual Appeal letter, and she has also been featured on CNY Central with anchor Michael Benny, on Channel 9 Bridge Street and Syracuse.com/The Post-Standard. She's also on T-shirts available at The Curious Cub Gift Shop, and our 2021 Zoo member shirt is, appropriately, a patas monkey.

Soon Iniko will begin introductions to her non-human primate family of patas monkeys – called a troop -- in our Social Animals wing. Meanwhile, stay tuned to our social media for updates on our spunky patas monkey!



**Adopt  
an  
Animal** 

**Senior Keeper Special \$55**

**Package includes:**

A certificate of adoption, 4x6 color photo of Iniko, animal fact sheet, 12" animal plush, an adopt parent gift, copy of *MyZoo Magazine*, and listing on adopt parent board for one year.

Adopt an Animal online at [syracusezooevents.org](http://syracusezooevents.org)

Looking to adopt another animal at the regular rate?

Call (315) 435-8511 x8563 or email [giftshop@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:giftshop@rosamondgiffordzoo.org)





## 2021 Member T-shirts are Here!

Next time you're at the zoo, pick up your exclusive 2021 member T-shirt (complimentary with coupon). This year's design features our patas monkeys! Shirt coupons can be redeemed at the membership desk in the lobby during zoo hours.

**Members can purchase additional T-shirts for \$10 each.**



## Your Membership Matters!

Welcome, members, to the year 2021! We are so happy to have you on board with us as we enter this new year together. Things may look a little different right now at the zoo (and everywhere!), but we are more excited than ever to welcome you back.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo holds a cherished place in the Syracuse community, serving the mission to protect the world's most precious creatures. Despite the hardships of the COVID pandemic, we have continued to provide the highest level of animal care and welfare while maintaining a safe and enjoyable visitor experience for all.

We could not do so without our supporters, especially our valued member family. Your membership purchase has helped us to accomplish so much — we are here with you, and because of you.

**THANK YOU!**

## Spring 2021 Events in the Works!

Many of you have asked if we are planning to host our traditional spring events this year. We are currently working on revamping our popular events such as Breakfast with the Bunny and others. This year, Breakfast with the Bunny will pivot to a **virtual Breakfast From the Bunny** -- complete with special animal guest appearance and goody bag filled with Easter treats! Watch for regular email updates and social media posts in the days ahead for the latest news on our exciting spring events.



# Recently Engaged?

There's still time  
to book your  
2021 Wedding  
at the zoo!



**CATERING AT THE ZOO**

You can still say "I Do" at the zoo -- just contact us today!  
Email [events@rosamondgiffordzoo.org](mailto:events@rosamondgiffordzoo.org) to perfectly curate your special day.  
**Visit [cateringatthetree.org](http://cateringatthetree.org) and follow us on Facebook!**







After the devastating loss of our young Asian elephant calves, Ajay and Batu, to EEHV, we received hundreds of heartfelt condolences as well as messages asking for ways to honor them. In response, we have created the Ajay and Batu Memorial Fund. Please consider a donation – no amount is too small. **Visit [justgiving.com/campaign/ajay-batu-memorial-fund](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ajay-batu-memorial-fund).**

