

MONTEREY ZOOLOGICAL

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501(c)(3) non-profit
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Oct.~ 2020

Dear Animal Enthusiast and Supporters of Monterey Zoological Society,

As predicted and unfortunate as it may be, we were very disappointed to have to cancel our 2020 Annual Zoo Gala for the first time in the history of this event. This decision is obviously beyond our control, however, in our attempt to remain as responsible and health conscious as possible towards our community, we feel it was the correct decision for all concerned. 2020 has been extremely difficult for many, zoos included. Unlike many businesses however, that can shut their doors and cut back on much of their overhead, a caring and responsibly managed zoo cannot cut back anywhere. The animal's needs remain the same, whether there is any financial income or not. This has made Monterey Zoo's difficulties a bit more challenging. With this letter, we hope to share some of our zoo's more recent events and needs that we would have shared with you at our gala. After seven long years of fund-raising, building and battling many challenges while doing so, we were so very much looking forward to announcing the final "Grand-Opening" of our zoo in March of 2020, to include announcing the achievement of our **Institutional Accreditation from the Zoological Association of America** in July, a milestone we could not be more proud of!

A VERY Challenging Year...

But no-one could foresee a world-wide pandemic that would literally shut down our entire planet as COVID19 has done. California remains one of the slowest in recovering from this tragedy, therefore we are still being very negatively impacted by this tragic occurrence. But if COVID19 was not enough, California has been plagued with life threatening fires, one of the first being the River Fire, which was named for it's being on our very own River Road address. Sparked by a dry-lightning strike one very scary evening, the River Fire was extremely threatening to our zoo as it demanded our being ready and on stand-by for a complete evacuation of all our animals for weeks. Fortunately, that evacuation was never realized.

The fires left us without power and water, both of which added to our financial distress. But we did what was needed to do to care for, protect and honor our unwavering commitment to the animals. In doing so, we feel they saw very little, if any, stress or impact from that threatening chain of events happening around them.





At that point, we were forced to deal with both loss of income as well as emergency response costs incurred. We did apply for and achieve any government aid available. A very rewarding and successful social-media campaign also contributed greatly to our ability to continue caring for the animals. We invite all to visit our Monterey Zoo Facebook Page to enjoy the “Our little Zoo to YOU” video series we provided the community in an attempt to help all tolerate and honor those difficult stay-at-home orders. Finally, all of our staff voluntarily cut back their hours where possible while volunteering their time on many days and nights to care for the animals. Volunteer staff also contributed greatly to fill in the blanks and assure our survival.

But that was unfortunately not the last of which our little zoo would have to endure this year. As extremist/domestic terrorist groups that oppose the existence of zoos watched the world’s tragedies unfolding, they embraced these trying times, using them to further their hidden and very misrepresented agendas. Known to many as being one of (if not the most) extreme of these groups,  is a world-wide organization with a very transparent opposition to animals being housed and cared for in all zoos today. With a tremendous and misled international audience and a multi-million-dollar budget resulting from such, it is not uncommon for such organizations to launch financial assaults on smaller and less financially solvent zoos, like Monterey Zoo. Upon learning of our small zoo’s accreditation as the newest zoo and preying on our financial struggles due to the pandemic and fires, PETA immediately pounced, fabricating extremely false and vicious allegations and demanding investigations by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. After their investigations were completed, **both agencies found all allegations to be unfounded**, taking no action and instructing our zoo to continue caring for the animals as usual. PETA then responded by using social media to spread world-wide petitions with grossly fabricated and false information while filing a lawsuit against us regardless of the truth and facts stemming from the investigations. Their goal: to injure and strangle our small zoo financially, even at the risk of losing those lawsuits by forcing us to channel much needed funds away from our animals’ and towards legally defending our existence. In August of 2020, PETA’s attempt to achieve an immediate emergency restraining order that would close our zoo was denied in a Monterey County Superior Court. In September of 2020, the same court granted Monterey Zoo’s petition to dismiss PETA’s suit with the judge finding their allegations false and without merit. Today, we can only hope that PETA will discontinue their assault and consider channeling their funds and efforts towards true animal welfare while we continue to recover from the financial harm they caused us.

So today, our zoo suffers tremendous financial drains, from both past and present threats, with minimal income to help offset those concerns and a long recovery ahead... We will continue to forge on, finding fuel and ammunition in the positive moments our animals bring us, as well as with the help and support we receive from you, our supporters and believers who still look forward to a better day when we will once again celebrate, as we have in the past, all that we’ve accomplished and all that we hope to accomplish for the animals and our community. Until that time, here’s a quick update on some of the happier moments we hoped to share with you at this year’s gala...

Newcomers to Monterey Zoo...

On a much more positive note, **OUR ZOO IS NOW OPEN**, as a **REAL ZOO**, for all to visit and stroll about at their leisure and enjoy the serene zoological environment we all worked so hard to bring our community and our animals. We feel very confident that the rules, restrictions, equipment and protocols we've implemented now contribute to one of the safest, healthiest and very much needed outdoor activities all families can benefit from today. We invite ALL to visit our website at montereyzoo.org where our hours, visiting instructions and much more is available.

Typically, we would surprise our guests at the Gala with the introduction of a "newcomer" to Monterey Zoo. This year would have been no different but due to circumstances, we can now only invite you to visit one day soon and meet them at the zoo. One very special addition to our family is "Vladimir", our new Siberian Lynx cub who will one day soon, join our older Siberian lynx, "Nadia" in our quest to find habitat companions for all our single animals so that nothing will be housed alone in the future. A very special donation from our friends at Cat Haven in Northern California, Vladimir is without a doubt, the definition of cute and ENERGETIC!



For those who have visited recently, you have no doubt enjoyed our all new "Birds of the Feather" Exhibit, where we now proudly display all the birds that call Monterey Zoo their home. One we had hoped to introduce in person at the Gala this year is "Arrow", our very own and very majestic American Bald Eagle. A donation from our very close friends at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo, Arrow was involved in an unfortunate auto accident in Alaska years ago. While impairing his ability to hunt, the accident in no way impaired his ability to educate and inspire all who visit him at Monterey Zoo.



Another amazing bird and very exciting first for us is "Abby", a Peregrine Falcon. One of the most cunning and skilled birds of prey, Abby came to us visually impaired from an injury that would forever impair her falconry abilities. Her relationship with the falconer who raised and trained her will prove to be extremely valuable to our zoo's education and conservation efforts. And rounding off our new feathered arrivals, we were very fortunate to acquire "Penn", a Eurasian Eagle Owl, one of the largest owls in the world. He was born and raised in captivity, providing education at a zoo on the East Coast.

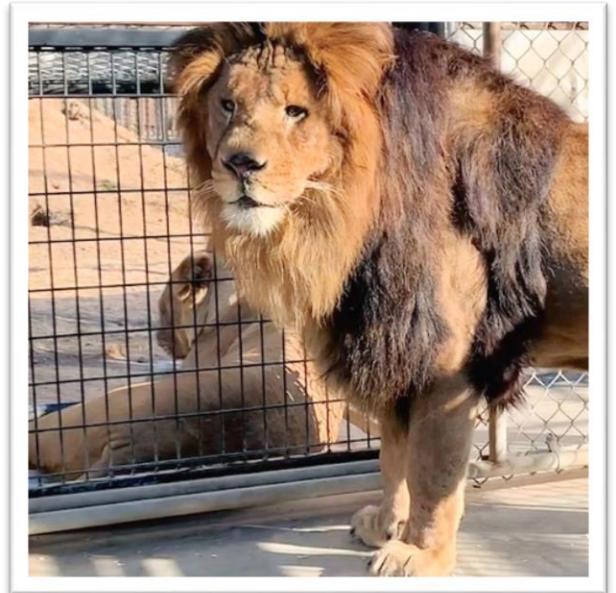


Our birds of prey are quickly becoming a favorite part of our visitor's experience at the zoo today, one we hope you'll experience and enjoy soon.



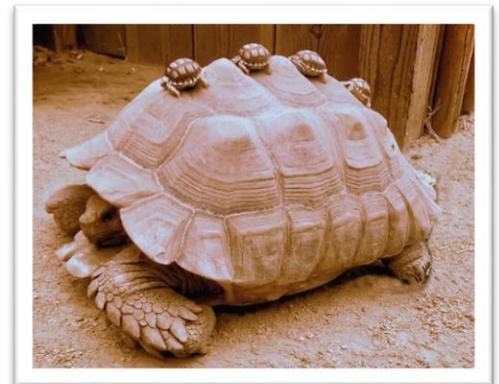
The biggest new addition to our 2020 line-up is bitter sweet as we unfortunately lost our oldest and beloved male lion Jacob in July to both old age and health issues he'd been struggling with for years. This left his habitat-mate, Leah, alone and showing obvious signs of depression for which there was only one cure for. Once again, our special relationship with Six Flags, this time at their park in New Jersey, provided that cure, a four-year old male lion named "Michael" who arrived in September. Michael and Leah are still in their introduction stages but will no doubt be the focus of our 2021 Gala video presentation.

Although breeding is not something we have ever participated in at Monterey Zoo, it is now something we must consider as we embark upon this new industry. We hope to contribute to other zoos as they help us populate our needs. After adding to our Patagonian Cavy herd this year, we soon learned that one of the females arrived pregnant... becoming the first birth at our zoo.



But not all our newcomers at Monterey Zoo are of a furry or feathered nature...

Our Sulcate Tortoise, Big Mama, presented us with a clutch of eggs one afternoon. Due to our cooler climate, the eggs were placed in an incubator and in September yet another first blessed our zoo family. Actually, four of them!!! And their timing was perfect as we race to finish a project very near completion!



No Idle Hands at Monterey Zoo

While the zoo was closed to the pandemic and indoor exhibits remain unable to be displayed, it seemed like the perfect time for Charlie and Co. to begin construction of our band new indoor Rainforest & Reptile Habitat" which will soon house and display all our reptiles, amphibians, sloths and more. With a project completion date of December ~2020, this exhibit is by FAR exceeding all our hopes and expectations.





Sharing with those who do so much for us...

Throughout these trying times, sharing our animals with those who do so much to keep them and our community safe were defining moments in our lives, reminding us just why we do what we do. It's not often we are given the opportunity to give back to those who give so much of themselves.

"Vladimir" enjoying a very special moment with several fire fighters who visited the zoo during a brief break from their heroic efforts.



At the end of the day, these people do for us what we do for the animals, care enough to commit to and honor a lifestyle that assures them the safety they so very much deserve. Aside from sharing our time and animals with these people for a few brief moments, we cannot thank and honor them enough for all they do.

"Butch & Buffy" enjoy treats and a photo with First Responders of the COVID19 Pandemic.

Your help and support is so very much needed, now, more than ever...

Today, we find ourselves struggling to recover from the tremendous loss of income we incurred when all businesses that support the zoo were completely closed for three months. We are also recovering from the costs incurred for the emergency equipment and services that were required to care for the animals during the fires as well as the tremendous legal expenses we were, unfortunately, forced to incur. Now with the loss of the income that our Gala historically contributes to our budget, your help has never been more needed. We can only ask that you consider contributing, in lieu of the Gala you would normally enjoy this year. We realize many have suffered greatly with the pandemic and fires, but our commitment to the animals and those who helped bring this beautiful project to fruition demands that we at least ask.



In an attempt give back as much as possible and to thank you for your support, you'll receive the following gifts in response to your contribution;

- ***For gifts of \$250 or more***, (your normal Gala ticket cost) you will receive a special Gala "Commemorative Party Gift" as you would have received at the Gala
 - You will also receive **recognition in our 2021 Gala program** for supporting our efforts in our time of need.
 - You'll receive a **commemorative Monterey Zoo Mask** to help spread the word about Monterey County's very first ZOO while protecting your community.
 - You'll receive **two admission passes** to visit the zoo any time, at your convenience.
- ***For gifts of \$500 or more***, you'll receive a special Gala "Commemorative Party Gift", recognition in our 2021 Gala program, a commemorative Monterey Zoo Mask, and a **VIP upgrade** when purchasing standard seats to our 2021 gala. This upgrade will entitle you to a private open-zoo wine reception, complimentary cocktails during the Gala cocktail reception, as well as **four daily zoo admission passes**.
- ***For gifts of \$1000 or more***, you'll receive **two** special Gala "Commemorative Party Gifts", recognition in our 2021 Gala Program, **two** commemorative Monterey Zoo Masks, a **VIP upgrade** when purchasing standard seats to our 2021 gala, and **six daily zoo admissions**.
- ***For donations of \$2500 or more***, you'll receive two special Gala "Commemorative Party Gifts", recognition in our 2021 Gala program, two commemorative Monterey Zoo Masks, **ONE COMPLIMENTARY VIP TICKET to our 2021 Gala** as well as a **VIP upgrade** when purchasing any additional standard seats to our 2021 Gala.
- ***For donations of \$5000 or more***, you'll receive two special Gala "Commemorative Party Gifts", recognition in our 2021 Gala program, two commemorative Monterey Zoo Masks, **TWO COMPLIMENTARY VIP TICKETS to our 2021 Gala** and a **VIP upgrade** when purchasing any additional standard seats to our 2021 gala.
- ***Donations \$7500 or more*** will receive two special Gala "Commemorative Party Gifts", recognition in our 2021 Gala program, two commemorative Monterey Zoo Masks, **FOUR COMPLIMENTARY VIP TICKETS to our 2021 Gala** and a **VIP upgrade** when purchasing any additional standard seats to our 2021 gala.
- ***Donations of \$10,000 or more will be eligible for a major zoo sponsorship, which will include all of the above and more. This donation can be further explained by contacting our zoo office at (831) 809-2919.***



A Virtual AUCTION to benefit our zoo...



To further enable you to help while still affording you the most we can from our typical Gala experience, on **October 17th & 18th of 2020**, Monterey Zoo will be hosting a Virtual Auction to benefit our zoo's recovery and survival of the above described concerns. We sincerely hope you'll join us on-line those days and evenings and hopefully, win a fantastic item, trip or experience while benefitting the animals of Monterey Zoo. To participate in our auction:

- Go to www.32auctions.com/montereyzoo
- Quickly and Easily Create your own account by providing your name, email and by creating your own password.
- You'll receive an email confirming your account and providing a link for you to sign in and begin viewing our auction items.

NEW ITEMS WILL BE ADDED AS THEY ARE DONATED SO BE SURE TO KEEP CHECKING FOR NEW AUCTION ITEMS DAILY.

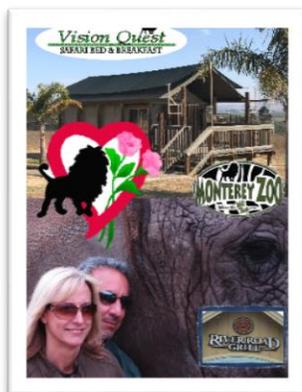
Bidding will begin at 8am on October 17th, and close at Mid-Night on October 18th. Even if you choose to not bid on an item or package, there's a **DONATE button** that will still enable you to help. We sincerely hope you'll participate and enjoy this cyber-event. Below are a just a few of special items and packages that will up for auctions on those dates:

- **A Dream of Africa... 8 People** will enjoy the ultimate animal experience. Join Charlie Sammut on a **VIP tour and lunch** like no other. An all day, full contact photo opportunity of a lifetime. **Dinner** is on us, a 5 course dinner by Turf Club Catering and Manzoni Wines with more animals table side of course! And that's not all! Spend the night with us at the Vision Quest Safari B&B to awaken to a complimentary breakfast and elephant feeding.



- **A Safari Valentine...** Two lucky adults will enjoy a romantic night on

"Safari" at the Vision Quest Bed & Breakfast to include champagne, chocolate, and flowers on Valentine's night 2021. Includes a VIAP tour and lunch. In the evening enjoy dinner, compliments of River Road Grill next door.



- **A Safari in Sonoma...** Your day will begin by joining Charlie at Six Flags, Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo for some meet-n-greet opportunities with animals not found at Monterey Zoo to include their dolphins, giraffes, sea lions and more. Then it's off to Safari West in Santa Rosa. You'll enjoy a Classic Safari Jeep Tour of the property that is home to over 800 animals and 100 different species. Safari West is also home to many animals not found at Monterey Zoo. You'll enjoy a classic safari Jeep tour of the property that is home to over 800 animals and 100 species.





- **A HALF BARREL OF WINE...** A Half Barrel of an awesome assortment of award winning wines! Wines donated by Puma Road Winery, Manzoni Winery, Conundrum, Odanada, Hahn, Star Market and more!

several other generous wine makers in our community! Depending on what comes in prior to auction date, this will amount to a 6 to 8 case collection!

- **A KONA VACATION FOR SIX...** Thanks to Monterey Zoo donors Tony Mavrides and George Sammut Black Bear Diner, you and five guests are invited to spend a week at the beautiful Kanaloa at Kona Condominiums on the paradise island of Kona Hawaii. In a recently renovated and beautiful condo, on the water near all the Alii Drive action, this is truly a vacation in paradise for six while helping the animals of Monterey Zoo.



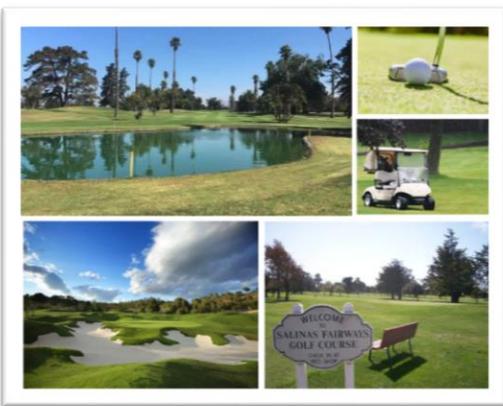
- **A veteran-hand-crafted solid wood 3D**

American Flag Beautifully Hand crafted three-dimensional wooden American Flag. United States Veteran and Monterey Zoological board member, Justin Bond. A VERY special piece from an awarded winning soldier.

- **Walk with CHEETAHS...** Join Monterey Zoo Director Charlie Sammut and his wife Lisa on a one of kind experience with the Cheetahs of **Cathaven** is the facility that recently donated our baby Siberian Lynx to Monterey Zoo. Home to many different species of wild cats, you'll see them all and meet some "hands-on"! The experience will be enhanced with lunch, wine, and dessert including visits by other ambassador cats.



- **For the GOLF LOVERS...** generously donated by Sierra Golf Management. Enjoy "Golf for Four" at the Salinas Fairways Golf course, to include golf-carts. After golfing, **lunch** is compliments of Mike Catanesi and Terry Sammut at **Stoney's Restaurant** in Salinas.



There are many many more items and experiences available at price ranges that will allow any and all to participate and help our efforts. Over 100 things to bid one, **ALL completely DONATED** so that 100% of your contribution goes to the animals. We hope you'll take the time to visit our auction site on Oct. 17th and 18th to participate.