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## **Zoo will build on 2015 successes in conservation efforts this year** *Nearly \$67,000 raised and more than three decades of accreditation in 2015*

Rochester, NY — January 20, 2016 — The Seneca Park Zoo Society relies on financial support from members, visitors, docents and other supporters to provide critical funding for in situ international conservation efforts that work to save wildlife in wild places. In 2015, supporters raised \$66,256, a nearly 15% increase from 2014. These donations supported researchers working with ecosystems in Borneo and Madagascar, as well as conservation efforts for African elephants, African penguins, polar bears and more.

In 2015, Seneca Park Zoo also received the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Quarter Century Award, a new award which acknowledges facilities that have maintained AZA accreditation continuously for 25 years or more, highlighting their commitment to animal care, welfare, conservation, education, and more. The Zoo has received continuous accreditation since 1979.

Connected to this dedication to animal conservation and care, a new mission statement will serve the Zoo in 2016 and beyond: *Seneca Park Zoo inspires our community to connect, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places.*

Pamela Reed Sanchez, Executive Director of the Seneca Park Zoo Society, is excited to build on these successes in order to surpass them in the future. “We are incredibly proud of the accomplishments that were achieved last year through the hard work and generosity of our entire community,” she says. “These victories are helping us to face the challenges still threatening species survival as we begin a new year.”

New priorities for the Zoo Society’s fundraising efforts have been established to provide support to the most important causes. The following organizations have been chosen to be the recipients of grants provided through the generous support of the Zoo community in 2016:

- **Snow Leopard Trust:** Zoo members will be asked to consider providing an additional gift with their membership that will be granted to the Snow Leopard Trust as we work to elevate the awareness of the Zoo’s snow leopards and their endangered status in their natural range.
- **Health in Harmony:** Visitors to the Zoo Shop will be asked to support Health in Harmony, our partner in Borneo, by rounding up their purchase amounts. The Zoo’s annual Halloween fundraising even ZooBoo will also support Health in Harmony, as a portion of each ticket purchased is directed to the program.
- **International Elephant Foundation:** Patrons of this summer’s ZooBrew events will support the International Elephant Foundation with each ticket purchase, as fifty cents from each ZooBrew ticket will be directed to the International Elephant Foundation’s efforts to decrease elephant poaching in Africa.

- **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy:** A new 21-and-over event, Cinco de Rhino, will help generate funds for the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's work to save rhinos from extinction; a portion of proceeds from birthday parties held at the Zoo and ZooCamps will also support this important Conservancy, as will the Zoo Keepers' annual Bowling for Rhinos event.
- **Polar Bear International and SANCCOB:** Visitors paying admission at the Front Gate of the Zoo will be asked to donate a dollar to support conservation of polar bears and African penguins, alternating each month.
- **Madagascar efforts:** Once again, the Zoo Society's Jungle Jog will raise funds to support lemur research and conservation in Ranomafana National Park, while Party Madagascar, a fundraising event held annually by the Zoo's volunteer docents, will directly support multiple organizations working in Madagascar, including the Duke Lemur Center.

The Zoo Society's goal is to raise more than \$100,000 in 2016 to support the critical work of those working in situ to protect the wild counterparts to the animal ambassadors that call the Zoo home.

"A Zoo's most important purpose is to act on behalf of wildlife," says Larry Sorel, County Zoo Director. "We look forward to our community's continued support and engagement as we continue those actions in the coming year."

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Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.