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# News Release

"We work together to build and maintain a community of the highest quality for present and future generations."

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Zoobilation Brings Flavors of Madagascar to Abilene**

Gala starts fundraising for new exhibits and honors Gail and Joe Russey

ABILENE, Texas - Abilene Zoo fans and supporters are preparing to celebrate Zoobilation: Journey to Madagascar. The annual fundraising gala dinner will be held on September 30, from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Zoo. The event promises to bring to Abilene a hint of the colors and flavors of Madagascar. This African island inspires the event theme that is also a kick off to the campaign for the future Madagascar exhibits. Tickets starts at \$100 and includes a Malagasy four course dinner, pairing beverages, music and animal encounters. Gail and Joe Russey, past presidents of the Abilene Zoological Society and long term volunteers will be honored during the event. "We're thrilled to be recognizing Gail and Joe, two very special friends of the Abilene Zoo. The evening promises to be a fitting celebration and fundraising event", said Bill Gersonde the Abilene Zoo Executive Director.

This event will showcase both, a new band and a new chef for the Abilene Zoo. Trey & the Tritones from Dallas/Fort Worth area will rock the night for a great cause. For dinner, a Malagasy menu with four courses will be prepared by Chef Daren Grace, from 1881 Food Truck and ACU Premier Catering.

The evening will also feature one of a kind silent auction items, including "naming rights" for a year on the Swan Boats plus exclusive Zoo experience opportunities. A painting donated by the artist Jack Harkins, jewelry from Bush and J. Shea, along with authentic items from Madagascar will also be auctioned. Zoobilation is the Abilene Zoo's premier party with a purpose, with all proceeds to benefit the Zoo. Tickets and sponsorships are available at the Zoo Store and [www.abilenezoo.org](http://www.abilenezoo.org).

#### **About the Abilene Zoo:**

Since its founding in 1966, the Abilene Zoo has stood as a place of learning and adventure. Situated on 16 acres in the award-winning Grover Nelson Park, the zoo has more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Last admittance is 4 p.m. The zoo is open until 9 p.m. each Thursday all summer, with last admittance at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. [www.abilenezoo.org](http://www.abilenezoo.org). 325-676-6085.

**Mission Statement** : The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.

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