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News Release

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Baby Giraffe Gains Weight and a Name

ABILENE, Texas - The Abilene Zoo's giraffe calf born on Monday, January 8th is thriving after receiving a lifesaving blood plasma transfusion. “We are thrilled that our newest calf is progressing so well. She is the first female calf born at the Abilene Zoo in the past 35 years,” said Zoo Executive Director Bill Gersonde.

The female calf has gained over 40 lbs. since her birth, weighing in at nearly 200 lbs. and standing close to 7' tall. “When the calf didn't nurse within the first 24 hours we took action and were able to coordinate with other zoos and obtain the needed blood plasma which contained antibodies to provide her with proper immune protection,” said Zoo Staff Veterinarian Dr. Stephanie Carle.

During an exam to check weight, the calf made a rare vocalization that zoo staff were able to capture on video. “These types of vocalizations are incredibly rare for our staff who have over 60 years of combined experience working with giraffe. This has been a great opportunity for our zoo to share and educate the public on this unique giraffe behavior,” said Gersonde.

“The calf has been named Malaika, which means Angel in Swahili, a name picked by zoo staff. Malaika began introductions this week in the off exhibit holding area with Cha Tatu and Mtumishi which are the two giraffe calves under 4 months old,” said Zoo General Curator Denise Ibarra. “We are hopeful to have all 3 of the newest giraffe calves on exhibit in the coming weeks as long as the weather permits and introductions continue to go well.”

The Abilene Zoo is now home to a tower of giraffe meaning they have a herd of at least 10. The zoo is always thankful for the community support and is excited for the community to meet the new additions in the coming weeks.

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. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5.50 for children ages 3-12, \$7 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org, [325-676-6085](tel: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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