

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Montgomery Zoo announces the birth of a female giraffe calf

MONTGOMERY ZOO, MONTGOMERY, AL: The Montgomery Zoo and Mann Wildlife Learning Museum proudly announces the birth of a female giraffe calf. The calf was born on March 23rd at the Montgomery Zoo. She would love to have you and all your friends come see her when she makes her grand entry onto the Giraffe exhibit on Wednesday, April 22nd at 10:30am, as part of Mayor Todd Strange's Weekly Media Briefing. After her debut, she and her mom will be on exhibit 9am - 1pm daily, pending any animal husbandry needs. This is Ashley's (mother) first calf, and Willy's (father) third calf. Ashley is eight years old and Willy is nearly 12 years old.

Since the calf's birth, mother and calf have been removed from display for the past month. This time alone allows for one-on-one bonding and nurturing. This time together is extremely important and valuable for the health and overall well-being of the calf.

The Montgomery Zoo's African realm features the reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*), also known as the Somali giraffe, a subspecies of giraffe native to Somalia, southern Ethiopia, and northern Kenya. The reticulated giraffe is among the most well-known of the nine giraffe subspecies. Its coat consists of large, polygonal, liver-colored spots outlined by a network of bright, white lines. The spots may sometimes appear deep red and may also cover the legs.

The average gestation period for a giraffe is approximately 15 months (453-464 days). Giraffes give birth in a 'calving ground' and mothers will often return to where they were born to have their own babies. At the Zoo, keepers prepared the giraffe's night quarters with several inches of sand which provides secure footing. The average height at birth is just under 6 feet with a tendency for the females to be slightly smaller than the males. A newborn calf will hit the scales at approximately 220lbs. Newborn calves grow very quickly and can nearly double their height in their first year of life.

The Montgomery Zoo and Mann Wildlife Learning Museum is a 42-acre zoological facility located minutes from the heart of historic, downtown Montgomery. The Montgomery Zoo features five continental realms housing over 500 species of animals from Africa, Asia, Australia, North America and South America. Adjacent to the Zoo is the Mann Wildlife Learning Museum, housing the one of the Southeast's largest collections of preserved North American wildlife and artifacts.

The Montgomery Zoo is a Department of the City of Montgomery, Alabama

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