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Seneca Park Zoo Shares Update on the Zoo's Masai Giraffe Tower

Rochester, N.Y. – This past August, fans and friends of Seneca Park Zoo were saddened to learn the news that Kipenzi, one of the Zoo's female Masai giraffe, has a squamous cell carcinoma growth on her jaw. The Zoo today shared an update on Kipenzi's medical treatment and well-being.

"Guests to the Animals of the Savanna habitats are now noticing the change in the shape of Kipenzi's facial structure," shared Zoo Superintendent Steve Lacy, who shared that Kipenzi's tumor continues to grow slowly. "She is eating well, behaving normally, and allowing Animal Care teams to treat the area," he added.

Zoo Veterinarian Dr. Chris McKinney shared that animal care and animal health teams have been applying a new antitumor treatment topically, in hopes of slowing tumor growth. "The medication stimulates the giraffe's own immune system to attack the tumor," said McKinney, who added, "This is the first use of this medication in a giraffe, though it has proven to be very safe for use in multiple species."

"In working closely with Kipenzi to train her for medical procedures, we have been able to take ultrasounds, as we had some evidence she might be pregnant. We can also now confirm and share that Kipenzi is pregnant," continued McKinney. "While exact due dates are difficult to predict, we expect a calf this winter. Having said that, giraffe births are always high risk, and with Kipenzi's medical conditions, we are extremely guarded in projecting an outcome."

The Zoo's other female Masai giraffe is also pregnant, as announced on Labor Day. The Zoo's Animal Health and Animal Care teams continue to monitor Iggy for signs of labor. Iggy is now in her delivery window.

The Zoo also announced that Olmsted, the Zoo's first Masai giraffe calf born at Seneca Park Zoo, will be staying at Seneca Park Zoo, upon recommendation from the Species Survival Plan (SSP) of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

The Zoo will provide additional updates as more information becomes available.

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.