NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
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Seneca Park Zoo

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SENECA PARK ZOO ANNOUNCES PALLIATIVE CARE FOR BELOVED AFRICAN ELEPHANT

Genny C. has called Seneca Park Zoo home since 1979

ROCHESTER, NY — The Seneca Park Zoo announced today that 49-year-old Genny C., one of the Zoo's four African elephants, is receiving palliative care, focusing on keeping her comfortable as she ages.

Over the past several months, Genny C. has experienced recurring digestive issues and has struggled to maintain her weight. More recently, she has shown signs of significant discomfort associated with colic, a serious and potentially life-threatening condition in elephants. Seneca Park Zoo veterinary and animal care teams are pursuing a comprehensive approach to maintain her comfort and well-being. Genny C's comfort is being managed using a combination of therapies, including receiving anti-inflammatories and analgesics, with additional pain medications administered when needed.

> "Seneca Park Zoo is a leader in geriatric elephant care because of our staff's deep commitment to these social creatures," **said County Executive Adam Bello**. "While we are concerned to see Genny C. in pain, I am confident that our veterinary and animal care teams will continue to provide the highest standard of care. Through decades of working alongside Genny C., these caregivers have built a strong relationship that empowers them to respond to her needs quickly and compassionately."

> "Genny C. has been part of Seneca Park Zoo for nearly five decades and holds a special place in the hearts of generations of Rochester families. For those who have cared for her over the years, she's truly family," **said Zoo Director Bob Lee**. "It's difficult to see her uncomfortable, and while we don't know how much time we have left with her, our focus is on ensuring her days are as comfortable and fulfilling as possible. We recognize there may be difficult days ahead, but every decision we make will be guided by what's best for Genny C., even when the kindest decision may also be the hardest."

According to Zoo Veterinarian Chris McKinney, older elephants are more prone to colic, and Genny C's age will make her more susceptible to the damaging effects colic can have on the GI tract.

> "In older elephants, the potential negative effects of colic, including ulcers and bacterial infections, can develop more rapidly," **McKinney said.** "She will be overall less able to fight through these occurrences."

Seneca Park Zoo is renowned in the zoo industry for its care of geriatric African elephants, due largely to its record of success with Genny C. and Lilac, both of whom were transferred to the Zoo in 1979 when they were just two years old. At 49 and 48, they are both well beyond the median life expectancy of 40 for female African elephants in human care. Moki, now 44, joined the herd in 2015, and Felix, the youngest at 43, was brought to Seneca Park Zoo this August. All four receive extensive care and monitoring, from measuring muscle and fat composition and tracking sleep patterns to blood draws, x-rays, and carbon dioxide therapy.

> "When she is in pain, she will frequently lay down or go down on her knees to stretch out. She also stops eating," **said Assistant Curator Lindsay Brinda**, who has worked together with Genny C for more than 26 years. "She loves being with her keepers and at her training sessions, so when she is not willing to participate, that's the first sign that she's not feeling well."

Brinda's decades-long relationship with Genny C. is an important component of her care, as Genny C. fully trusts her.

> "When she's not feeling well, she finds comfort in tactile rewards," **said Brinda**. "For example, she will hold my hand gently with her trunk during her treatments."

Dr. McKinney notes that palliative care is centered around maintaining comfort and controlling symptoms of disease. The team is working on evaluating the underlying cause of the repeated colic episodes, but in many colic cases, a cause is not found.

> "We can't perform x-rays of the abdomen, and even an ultrasound only reaches so far in an elephant, so diagnostics are limited," **said McKinney**. "Our goal is to maintain comfort and get the GI tract moving normally again."

The Zoo invites you to share your favorite memories and photos of Genny C by sending them to socialmedia@senecazoo.org. While the Zoo is open daily (other than Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day), guests wishing to see Genny C should know that when she is not feeling well, she will most likely be inside the barn receiving special care, and at these times, the barn will be closed to the public. Elephants Lilac, Moki, and Felix are expected to be out on habitat.

For more information, and to purchase tickets in advance and save $2, visit senecaparkzoo.org.

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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.

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