

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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First zoo-born twin orangutan celebrates milestone 50th birthday! – Bash on February 17 pays tribute to Chinta and orangutans –

WHAT: *Chinta* (CHEEN-tuh), a female orangutan at Woodland Park Zoo, is turning the *big 5-0*—a cause for celebration! The press is invited **Saturday, February 17** to a birthday party in honor of the zoo's beautiful, red-haired ape.

The zoo will shower Chinta and her fellow orangutans with gift-wrapped presents full of favorite treats, streamers, flowers and, of course, birthday cake! Chef David Van Gelder with Lancer Hospitality, the zoo's food concessionaire, will bake a ginger-carrot cake fit for an orangutan and loaded with favorite ape ingredients including carrots, sweet potatoes and ginger.

The birthday girl is the oldest animal currently living at Woodland Park Zoo and one of the oldest female orangutans in North America. Visit the zoo's blog at <http://bit.ly/chinta50> for photos.

Born at Woodland Park Zoo in February 1968, Chinta is distinguished by stylish bangs gracing her eyebrows and by her sweet personality. Worldwide, she and her late twin brother Towan (toe-WAHN) gained instant celebrity status as the first-known twin orangutans born in a zoo. Photos of the pair as infants appeared around the globe, including in "Life" magazine. While other twins have since been born, twin orangutan births are still a rare occurrence. Towan passed away in 2016.

A special guest will reunite with Chinta at the birthday party: Eric Sano, who was 6 years old when he named the orangutans in 1968 through a naming contest co-sponsored by The Seattle Times and KVI radio. As the winner, Sano won the privilege to be keeper of the baby orangutans for a day. Today, Sano is a captain with the Seattle Police Department.

In addition to Chinta, two female orangutans currently live at the zoo: 46-year-old Melati and 36-year-old Belawan, daughter of Towan and Melati. The two males, who happen to have the same birthdays as Chinta, are: Heran, son of Towan and Melati, who will turn 29; and Godek, a Sumatran orangutan introduced last summer to Chinta and Melati, who will turn 9.

WHEN: **Saturday, February 17**
Press photo op: Cake and presents for Chinta begins at 10:30 a.m.
Space at indoor viewing window is limited; please anticipate guests at the exhibit
Birthday party activities: 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Orangutan exhibit located in Trail of Vines. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance at Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. Park in the Penguin Lot at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N. or Otter Lot off N. 59th St. & Phinney Ave. N.

INFO: Birthday festivities for guests include: complimentary cake pops courtesy of Woodland Park Zoo Board Member Kevin Schofield (while supplies last); a meet 'n' greet with animal care staff as they shed light on the quality care program for orangutans and the importance of geriatric care; a photo collage of Chinta; docents with discovery stations sharing fascinating biofacts; and a



free Chinta collectible card. To show love for Chinta and orangutans in the wild, guests are invited to take a palm pledge to choose consumer products that don't have an adverse impact on tropical rain forests and the animals that live there. In addition, guests can enter a free drawing for a chance to win a commemorative painting created by orangutan Heran, an orangutan ZooParent Adoption package and other prizes.

Chinta and twin brother Towan were handreared because their mother didn't know what to do or how to feed them. The twins spent their first several weeks in an incubator converted from a snake enclosure. Since the zoo did not yet have its own veterinary staff, physicians and nurses from the University Hospital Center for premature infants and University of Washington Regional Primate Center pitched in to care for the infant apes. The twins were never reintroduced to their mother; they were handreared by zoo staff and a team of volunteer "babysitter moms" until they were about 5 years old. Animal care practices have evolved, however, and today, there are more options for developing maternal care in adult orangutans or using surrogates, so there is rarely any need for handrearing.

Orangutans, a critically endangered species, belong to the family Hominidae, which includes all four great apes: gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans. There were previously two distinct species of orangutans known—the Bornean orangutan and Sumatran orangutan native to the islands of Borneo and Sumatra in Southeast Asia. In November 2017, a third species was announced—the Tapanuli orangutan found in Sumatra. Overpopulation, logging, agriculture, conversion of forests to unsustainable oil palm plantations, and other human activities are rapidly destroying forest environments required by orangutans for survival. This palm oil guide can be used to find sustainable, deforestation-free products when shopping: www.zoo.org/palmoil.

Learn about Woodland Park Zoo's partnership with [Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Project](#) in Borneo, whose focus is to help build a future where orangutans and other wildlife can thrive alongside local villages.

Zoo winter hours: 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 35 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to learn, care, and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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