

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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Editor note: For more photos, visit the zoo's blog: <http://bit.ly/HasaniGiraffe>

Press preview: Male baby giraffe takes first steps outdoors with new shoes made by equine specialist and has a name!



- WHAT:** **Note: This opportunity is weather dependent—the baby will have outdoor access if rain is spotty and light. If rain is heavy, this outdoor session and press preview will be canceled for the welfare of the baby giraffe.**
- The press is invited to a short outdoor session for Woodland Park Zoo's male baby giraffe as staff begin introducing and acclimating him to the outdoor corral.
- WHEN:** **Thursday, May 16, 9:30–9:50 a.m.**
- WHERE:** Woodland Park Zoo's outdoor giraffe corral. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance on Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. Park in the Penguin or Otter Lots.
- WHO:** Mammal curator Martin Ramirez will be available for interviews following the outdoor session.
- INFO:** An outdoor schedule for the baby giraffe will be unpredictable for an indefinite period of time during the introduction phase.

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's baby male giraffe now has a name: *Hasani* (hah-SAW-nee), which means "handsome" in Swahili and was the name of the baby's paternal grandfather.

Hasani was born on May 2 to mom Olivia. Immediately after his birth, the zoo's animal health team noticed each rear foot was not in normal alignment. The condition, known as hyperextended fetlocks, is well documented in horses and has been reported to occur in giraffes. One day after the giraffe was born, the zoo's animal health team applied casts on both rear legs to help stabilize his limbs.

"Initially we were going to hold a public naming contest for our baby giraffe but changed our plans. Instead, staff were given the honor of naming him," said Martin Ramirez, mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo.

A week ago, Woodland Park Zoo's exhibits team constructed therapeutic shoes on a trial basis for the baby giraffe. Meanwhile, the zoo's veterinary team consulted with a Kentucky-based equine veterinarian who specializes in foot conditions. He visited the zoo to evaluate the calf, and crafted new custom shoes based on the zoo's specifications. He modified a design that he has used to successfully treat numerous foals with the same condition. The shoes will do the heavy lifting in the next phase of treatment of the baby's rear leg abnormalities.

The new shoes are made of more durable metal with a textured bottom for extra grip, with an acrylic foundation and molding on top that wraps around and secures the shoe to the hooves.

“This whole-toe wrap binds the toes more snugly to stabilize the shoe and provide a stronger grip to the hoof,” said Dr. Tim Storms, associate veterinarian at Woodland Park Zoo. The shoes are more water-resistant than the previously made wooden shoes. “This will be better for walking outdoors on wet ground and will allow him to exercise more, which is critical to his development.”

The leg bandages were also removed as part of the next phase of treatment. “Though they provided important support initially, removing the bandages is an essential next step to allow the flexor tendons to strengthen unimpeded. While the bandaging is gone, the kinesiology tape remains in place for now to help stimulate and support his leg muscles,” added Storms.

“Last week our exhibits team made a heroic effort by custom-making shoes with short notice to help our little giraffe. And now, a colleague from across the country has donated his time and materials to make these specialized shoes. We feel so grateful for all the help we’ve received and the overwhelming outpouring of best wishes from our community,” added Storms.

Treatment may well span over the next few months. “While we are happy with Hasani’s response so far and these new shoes, he’s not out of the woods yet. His condition is still guarded and we’re keeping him under close observation. We’ll continue assessing the best course of action to help him walk and grow normally, and to find a good balance between supporting his limbs and strengthening his tendons,” said Storms.

Mom and Hasani remain off view in the barn for an indefinite period and to allow continued maternal bonding and nursing in a cozy, private setting.

The next step is to get Hasani outdoors for exercise, said Ramirez. “Baby giraffes are typically outdoors by the time they’re a week old,” explained Ramirez, “so beginning this week we’ll start giving him access to the outdoor corral so he can get exercise. These outdoor sessions will be very brief at first for controlled periods of time. We will not be able to predict what time of day or how long he and mom are outdoors during these initial periods.”

Other than the abnormalities in his rear legs, the baby giraffe remains in good health and is nursing and bonding with mom. He weighed 155 pounds at birth and currently weighs 180 pounds.

Hasani was born to mom Olivia and dad Dave. He is the first offspring between the 12-year-old mom and 6-year-old dad; Olivia had her first baby in 2013 at Woodland Park Zoo with a different mate.

The last giraffe birth at the zoo was a female, Lulu, born in 2017 to mom Tufani—Olivia’s younger sister—and dad Dave. The addition of Hasani brings the current number of giraffes at the zoo to four.

Viewers can see updates by visiting www.zoo.org/giraffe and following the zoo’s [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

The parents, Olivia and Dave, were paired under a breeding recommendation made by the Giraffe Species Survival Plan, a cooperative, conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of giraffes.

Woodland Park Zoo participates in 111 Species Survival Plans, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. Led by experts in husbandry, nutrition, veterinary care, behavior, and genetics, these plans also involve a variety of other collaborative conservation activities such as research, public education, reintroduction and field projects.

Giraffes are widespread across southern and eastern Africa, with smaller isolated populations in west and central Africa. New population surveys estimate an overall 40 percent decline in the giraffe population; fewer than 100,000 exist today. Of the currently recognized subspecies of giraffe, five have decreasing populations, while three are increasing and one is stable.

Giraffe enthusiasts can stick their necks out for giraffes and help support conservation efforts by visiting Woodland Park Zoo and supporting the Wildlife Survival Program, which includes the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. The Foundation seeks to provide the first long-term ecological monitoring effort of the Angolan giraffe—an important desert-dwelling giraffe subspecies in north-western Namibia. Visit <http://www.zoo.org/conservation> to learn more about the zoo's conservation partnerships taking place in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Spring/summer zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

Founded in 1899, Woodland Park Zoo engages more than a million visitors of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life in extraordinary experiences with animals, inspiring them to make conservation a priority in their lives. The zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats in the wild through more than 35 wildlife conservation projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. 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. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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