“Tiki” the Giraffe Turns Twenty-Five at Oakland Zoo

In honor of the momentous occasion, Zookeepers Amy Phelps and Jessica Porterfield threw a private party for Tiki, treating her to special carrot and banana flavored cupcakes that were donated by James & the Giant Cupcake in Oakland.

Oakland, CA (PRWEB) May 16, 2014 -- Oakland Zoo’s oldest giraffe, Tiki, is celebrating her 25th birthday today. Twenty-five is equivalent to age eighty-five in human years. In honor of the momentous occasion, Zookeepers Amy Phelps and Jessica Porterfield threw a private party for Tiki, treating her to special carrot and banana flavored cupcakes that were donated by James & the Giant Cupcake in Oakland. The cupcakes were served to her on a platter garnished with lettuce and edible flowers.

Media Advisory:
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Tiki was born at Oakland Zoo and her given name is “T’Keyah (Tuh-Kay-Ya), meaning “righteous one” in Ibo. She comes from a long line of Bay Area born and bred giraffes; in fact, her mom “Dinah” was born at the Sacramento Zoo. While living at Oakland Zoo, she has successfully given birth to five calves. Two of the calves have moved to other zoos, while the other three have remained at Oakland Zoo (daughter, Twiga, and two sons, Benghaz and Balthazar). Not only has she raised five calves on her own, she has also nurtured and helped raise seven additional calves.

Tiki is the shortest adult of Oakland Zoo’s giraffe herd (which consists of nine giraffe, four males and five females); she stands between thirteen and fourteen feet tall and weighs 1,800 pounds. “Tiki is tiny but she is mighty,” said Lead Keeper Amy Phelps. “She is like the mighty mouse of the veldt. She isn't afraid of any other giraffe and she will stand up for herself if need be.” Guests can pick her out from the herd by looking for the smallest adult with small, dark shapes on her coat pattern.

Due to Tiki’s age, she receives special foot care, massage therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, and traditional Western veterinary medicine. “We have two full-time keepers who work just with giraffe as well as five other keepers that work with giraffe on a needed basis,” said Amy Phelps, Lead Keeper at Oakland Zoo. “We also are grateful to a team of volunteers known as "Team Tiki," made up of animal care volunteers, animal training specialists, a farrier, a chiropractor, acupuncturist, massage therapist, and other dedicated volunteers.”

Zookeepers feed her a variety of food like fresh tree branches, kale, romaine lettuce, and chard; however, Tiki does have a sweet tooth. According to her Keepers, she also enjoys cinnamon flavored treats, zucchini bread, carrot cake muffins, and fruit, especially bananas. Zookeepers make sure her diet is filled with a variety of options but also feed her orchard grass hay, pellet feed, vitamins, and many fruits and vegetables.

ABOUT OAKLAND ZOO:
The Bay Area’s award-winning Oakland Zoo is home to more than 660 native and exotic animals. The Zoo offers many educational programs and kid’s activities perfect for science field trips, family day trips and exciting birthday parties. Oakland Zoo is dedicated to wildlife conservation onsite and worldwide. Nested in
the Oakland Hills, in 500-acre Knowland Park, the Zoo is located at 9777 Golf Links Road, off Highway 580. The East Bay Zoological Society (Oakland Zoo) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization supported in part by members, contributions, the City of Oakland and the East Bay Regional Parks. For more information, please visit our website at www.oaklandzoo.org.

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