



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Chad Yelton, 513-559-7744

Tiffany Sands, 513-559-7724

Cincinnati Zoo's New Giraffe Ridge Takes Fun to a New Level *Giraffe Ridge Set to Open in June 6th*

CINCINNATI – On June 6, the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is taking FUN to a whole new level – *Eye Level* - with the world's tallest animals at the Zoo's most exciting new exhibit, Giraffe Ridge. This 27,000 square-foot exhibit, complete with an elevated viewing platform, provides an amazing interactive experience, bringing guests eye-to-eye with a herd of giraffes.

The herd consists of five young Maasai giraffes – all under two years of age. The three boys are one-year-old “*Pekua*,” eight-month-old, “*Mtembei*” and six-month-old, “*Kimbaumbau*.” The two girls are one-year-old, “*Tessa*,” and 13-month-old, “*Akilah*.”

“There’s really nothing quite like coming eye-to-eye with an animal nearly three times your height,” said Cincinnati Zoo Executive Director Thane Maynard. “Giraffes are not only known for their incredible size, but they also love to eat. With a healthy appetite and an 18-inch-long tongue to gently take food out of your hands, I guess you can say they’ll be eating out of the palm of your hands, literally.”

A giraffe can eat up to 75 pounds of food each day and that’s good news for Zoo visitors, who will be able to help feed special giraffe crackers for a nominal fee. Giraffes also enjoy hay and a variety of their favorite acacia leaves. Acacia trees have long thorns that prevent most animals from eating the leaves. But those thorns don’t stop the giraffes. They use their impressively long tongues to reach around the thorns.

The Maasai Giraffe, also known as the Kilimanjaro Giraffe are the largest subspecies of giraffe. Maasai giraffe have jagged spots on their bodies. Originally the Maasai giraffe lived throughout Africa but currently, due to loss of habitat and deforestation, the giraffe only live in Kenya and Tanzania. Adult males can stand 17 feet tall and weigh up to 4,200 pounds and adult females grow to 16 feet tall and weigh up to 2,500 pounds.

Giraffe Ridge also features two key green components that are critical to the Cincinnati Zoo *Go Green* program. The first component is the elevated viewing deck, which is made entirely of composite wood (made of recycled plastic and wood wastes). The second feature is the 2,500 square-foot green roof that will help insulate

the giraffe barn and will reduce the rate and volume of rain water going into the city's sewer. Displaying more than 40 plant species, this is the only visible green roof in the Cincinnati.

Do the Zoo! The Giraffe Ridge exhibit is FREE with general admission to the Zoo. Admission prices are \$13/adults, \$8/children (2-12), children under two are free, and parking is additional. The Zoo opens daily at 9 a.m. For more information on the Cincinnati Zoo and all of this summer's exciting events, please call the Zoo at 513-281-4700 or visit us online at www.cincinnati-zoo.org

###

The world famous Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden was rated the #1 attraction locally and one of the top zoos in the nation by Zagat Survey. It has also been recognized by Child Magazine as one of "The 10 Best Zoos for Kids." Over one million people visit the Zoo's award-winning exhibits, and more than 500 animal and 3000 plant species annually. The Zoo is an accredited member of the American Zoo & Aquarium Association (AZA) and the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), is internationally known for its success in the protection and propagation of endangered animals and plants, and engages in research and conservation projects worldwide.