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Dane County Henry Vilas Zoo: Welcomes new tiger

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Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo has welcomed a new male Amur tiger, "Yuri," thanks to the community's generosity last November on "Giving Tuesday," a global day dedicated to giving back.

"This is a great addition to our Henry Vilas Zoo Family," said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. "Henry Vilas Zoo is an award winning destination for families and continues to see a record number of visitors every year."

Yuri comes from John Ball Zoo in Michigan as part of the Amur Tiger Species Survival Plan (SSP), which helps make recommendations about managing the tiger population in Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos. Yuri's keepers are working to build a positive relationship and give Yuri lots of choices in learning to navigate his new home. Yuri will move at his own pace in venturing out to settle into the big cat area at the zoo. Amur tigers lead primarily solitary lives in the wild, so Yuri and our female tiger Callie will take turns in the exhibit and off-exhibit yards once they both become comfortable moving back and forth between spaces.

"Conservation is integral to all we do here at the zoo, and we are proud to work so closely with the AZA's Amur Tiger SSP to provide a good home to Yuri," said Executive Zoo Director, Ronda Schwetz. "Amur tigers are endangered, with a population number of less than 500 in the wild, so Yuri and Callie will have an important role educating and captivating guests to help build support for preserving this majestic species."

Henry Vilas Zoo is a proud member of the AZA and participates in the Species Survival Plans for the animals in our care. The SSPs provide a framework of

collaboration between zoos and aquariums to ensure that the animal populations are sustainable and genetically healthy, as well as support conservation initiatives.

Last November, the Henry Vilas Zoological Society raised more than $32,000 on Giving Tuesday to support the arrival of a new tiger.

“We are excited to welcome Yuri to the zoo and want to say thank you to our community whose support made his arrival to our zoo possible,” said Alison Prange, Henry Vilas Zoological Society President. “Yuri’s arrival is a powerful example of the zoo’s leadership in conservation, and we are delighted to work with other AZA-accredited organizations to help save these animals from extinction.”