

# Giraffe Feeding: Protocols and Messaging

## Mission in Action

When guests visit Giraffe Feeding, they will:

<b>Feel:</b>	<b>Safe</b> while visiting our parks
	A sense of <b>belonging</b> - developing a sense of community
	An <b>emotional connection</b> and <b>empathy</b> for wildlife
<b>Learn:</b>	The stories of individual animals in our care (e.g., name, age, personality, etc.)
	<b>Excellent animal wellbeing</b> is a top priority
<b>Act:</b>	<b>Connect with, and appreciate nature</b> – be a respectful wildlife observer

We will meet these outcomes by:

- Welcoming guests to the Giraffe Feeding (**Belonging**) and setting up expectations using positive language, so guests know what to expect during their visit and what is expected of them (**Safe and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Keeping watch throughout the Giraffe Shamba to ensure guests are behaving appropriately and the giraffe are comfortable (**Safety and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).
- Learning about the guests through observation and asking them questions. Sharing stories of our animals that are likely to be relevant or of interest to them (**Belonging and Empathy**).
- Thank the guests for visiting and for respecting the giraffe and their space (**Belonging and Respectful Wildlife Viewing**).

Meeting these outcomes supports our mission: **Empowering People. Saving Wildlife.**

## Hours of Operation

Intended hours of operation are below and are subject to change.

When open, Giraffe Feeding occurs from 10am to 5pm and is weather dependent.

DATE	ZOO HOURS	SHAMBA VIEWING	GIRAFFE FEEDING
April 17 through May 22	9:00-5:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-5:00
May 23 through August 16	9:00-6:00	9:00-10:00 and 5:00-6:00	10:00-5:00
August 17 through Sept 30	9:00-5:00	9:00-10:00	10:00-5:00
October 1 through Nov 1	10:00-5:00	N/A	10:00-5:00

## **Weather Policy**

For the safety of our team members, the Giraffe Shamba will close if the temperature is 40 degrees or below. If the heat index exceeds 90 degrees, we will only feed in the shade of the Shamba. If the heat index exceeds 100 degrees, we will operate with reduced staffing levels and only feed in the shade of the Shamba. In this instance, team members will be rotated into air-conditioned areas to take breaks.

Giraffe Feeding will be closed or delayed if the temperature does not meet the needs for the wellbeing of the giraffe. The conditions of the Giraffe Feeding yard may prevent the giraffe from having access to the space, which would also cause a cancellation or delay in Giraffe Feeding. The Education Daily Contact will work with the Heart of Africa Animal Care team to ensure those decisions are made in a timely manner. The Education

Daily Contact will communicate closures and delays with the Team Members affected.

## **Procedures and Protocols**

### **General Protocols:**

- Permitted items: strollers, wheelchairs, and other mobility devices
- Items **not** permitted for animal wellbeing: open food or drinks within reach of a giraffe; open umbrellas on the Giraffe Shamba
- Touching the giraffe is not permitted.
- Respectful wildlife viewing should be demonstrated by walking and avoiding loud noises.
- Remain in the designated areas on the Shamba.

### **For Education Volunteers and Staff:**

- Team members should be present on the shamba anytime there are giraffe in the feeding yard. A combination of ZooAides, Adult Volunteers, Docents, Interpreters, an Education Giraffe Lead, and an Animal Care Lead staffing the Giraffe Shamba during both viewing and feeding times of the day. The number of team members scheduled will depend on the needs of the day/time.
- A designated radio and water cooler (on most days) for the Giraffe Shamba should be picked up each morning in the Education Building lobby and should be returned each evening.
- Radio should remain on channel 8. If assistance is needed regarding the animals when an Animal Care Lead is not on the Shamba, call the HOA Animal Care Team on channel 2, then switch back to channel 8.
- All team members will follow the Animal Care Lead's directions to safely feed each giraffe, as they have individual needs that may change at any time.
- All team members will follow the Education Lead's directions to work each job and safely create a positive feeding experience for the guests and giraffe.
- Education Team members should not call out to giraffe or try to entice them back to the Shamba.
- Team members should refrain from taking photos, videos, or creating content while clocked in and working.

### **Feeding Protocols:**

- The Animal Care Lead will be present just before, during, and just after the designated Feeding times.
- Cooler lettuce is to be used for sale only. Any exceptions are at the discretion of the Education Lead and Animal Care Lead working together to create a positive, fair, and consistent experience for our guests. The Animal Care Lead will designate giraffe food sources (lettuce, pellets, etc.) and animal preferences or allowances.
- VIP Lanyard guests and Gold Members are allowed one serving per person per feeding visit to Giraffe Feeding. Any additional experiences are possible when the guests reenter the line to feed. Allowing more than one serving per person per Shamba visit is not allowed.

### **Emergency Weather Response:**

If potentially dangerous weather conditions are imminent, a Level 2 weather emergency will be announced on all radio channels as a Security Alert and may include the announcement that all Rides are temporarily closed. In this instance, Giraffe Feeding will close until the alert is cleared.

## ZooAides:

- For thunder and lightning: seek shelter inside the HOA bathrooms or under cover at Mapori.
- For tornadoes or severe weather: immediately seek shelter in the HOA bathrooms
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3420 to let the ZooAide Supervisor know your location.

## Adults (Volunteers or Interpreters):

- Clear the Shamba of guests and encourage them to seek shelter, if appropriate.
- Close the entrances/exits to the Shamba by placing the ropes across the openings or moving the stanchions so guests cannot enter the Shamba.
- Seek shelter inside the HOA bathrooms or Mapori for thunder and lightning, or the HOA bathrooms for tornadoes or severe weather.
- Once in a safe space: call or text 614-724-3483 (or radio on channel 8) to alert the Daily Contact of your location and the team members who are with you.

**Emergency Response:** Refer to Safety and Security Training

## **Service Animal Policy:**

- Service animals are permitted anywhere that guests have access to at Giraffe Feeding and on the Giraffe Shamba.
- If you notice a concerning response from the giraffe, contact the Australia Animal Care staff.

## Volunteer and Staff Roles

### **Education Giraffe Lead:**

- The Education Giraffe Lead will check the schedule and take the radio & water cooler up to the Shamba.
- This person will create the schedule, rotations, and set the tone of the culture for the entire team to meet the outcomes of the Shamba.
- They will work closely with the Animal Care Lead to ensure that the experience is positive for guests and team members as well as the wellbeing of the giraffe.

### **Education Team Members:**

- **During Viewing:** Everyone is either engaging the guests or working to prep for, or clean up after, the feeding.
- **During Feeding:** Shifts are rotated based on the direction of the Education Giraffe Lead. The location of each position is determined by the needs at that time. The Education Lead will inform the team members where and how to best perform the duties of each position. All team members are expected to be able to work in all of the positions throughout their shift in Giraffe Feeding.
  - **Greeter:** May stand on the boardwalk or this role may be combined with Lettuce, share information and engagement while guests wait, share instructions with guests.
    - Supplies needed: sample piece of lettuce (optional), laminated greeter card with instructions.
    - Instructions: Keep lettuce whole, hold lettuce up to giraffe's nose, stay about an arm's length away, please don't touch the giraffe, have camera ready.
  - **Director:** Stands in a central area, watches for available giraffe and sends guests to the team member at that giraffe, may be combined with Greeter
  - **Lettuce:** Sorts lettuce to prepare it for the Director to hand to guests
  - **Feeders:** One feeder is assigned to a giraffe (not all giraffe may be assigned a feeder based on

the staffing and discretion of the Education Lead).

- Reinforces expectations with guests.
- Facilitates appropriate interactions between guests and giraffe, answers guest questions.
- Stays with assigned giraffe unless otherwise directed by the Education Lead.
- Thanks guests for coming and directs them to the exit.
- **Floater:** Supports team members, as needed.
  - May include sweeping, filling lettuce buckets, taking photos, and being prepared to help as needed.
- **Exit:** Stands at exit to facilitate guests approaching from either direction on the boardwalk.
  - Thanks guests for coming and points them to the handwash sink.
  - Answers guest questions who aren't participating in feeding, and directs them to viewing areas or the feeding line entrance.
  - May allow guests to join members of their group who are feeding a giraffe. Must share expectations with any guest who is entering the feeding area.
  - This person should stay at the exit at all times and flag the Education Lead if they need assistance.

#### **Animal Care Team Members:**

- Responsible for monitoring guests and giraffe to ensure animal wellbeing is a top priority.
- The Animal Care Seasonal Lead will be the resource for information and questions about the giraffe and savanna animals.

#### **Rides Team Members:**

- The Rides Department will handle the sales of all lettuce used by visitors for the Giraffe Feeding

#### **Team Member Training**

**Education Team Members:** An online training session is required yearly. The operations protocol is discussed in detail during training. Team Members who will be working this area for the first time will be scheduled in First Year Feeder shifts (Volunteers) or Shadow shifts (New Interpreters and ZooAides) and will experience all aspects of Giraffe Feeding in partnership with an experienced team member.

**Animal Care Staff:** Staff receive training on all aspects of the Heart of Africa region and Giraffe Feeding, and husbandry of animals. Animal Care Staff members receive an initial training period upon hire and utilize department-specific training to ensure they have full knowledge of the region and the animals that are in this area.

**Rides Staff:** Rides team members should receive training on how to run the POS system and troubleshoot common issues.

#### **Animal Wellbeing: Choice and Control**

Animals in the Feeding yard and savanna can occupy any area in their habitats. A portion of this habitat is the Shamba that guests use to feed or view animals. Guests are not permitted to touch the giraffe; or feed these animals outside of the organized feeding.

Animals are monitored for stress and always have the choice to move away. This choice and control is integral

to each species well being or welfare. If there are questions regarding the care and health of any animal in Heart of Africa, please defer to the Animal Care Lead if they are present and, if not, use the radio to contact Heart of Africa animal care on Channel 2.

## **Guest Engagement Examples**

### **Community Browse Program**

**Mission-based Outcome:** Learn that anyone can participate in conservation.

- Browse isn't just a snack for giraffes, but a key part of their diet in their native ranges. Offering browse at the Zoo encourages natural foraging behaviors, mental stimulation, and physical exercise. We source our browse from a variety of places within a 50-mile radius of the zoo, always ensuring the trees are pesticide-free. Some of our partners include the Preservation Parks of Delaware County, the City of Westerville, and Green Lawn Cemetery. AEP's Trim to Treat Program provides about 40% of the Zoo's weekly browse!
  - Links to learn more:
    - <https://volunteerportal.columbuszoo.org/our-browse-program>
    - <https://www.columbuszoo.org/news/columbus-zoo-and-aquarium-and-aep-ohio-celebrate-forestry-friday-giraffe-feedings>

### **Plasma Donation Program**

**Mission-based Outcome:** Learn that the CZFP is a conservation organization that is making a difference.

- Our giraffes help save lives! The Columbus Zoo and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo co-founded the giraffe plasma bank, partnering with other zoos to collect life-saving plasma. These plasma transfusions boost the immune systems of young giraffes in need across the country, thanks to the vital antibodies and proteins they contain. This incredible work is possible because our Animal Care and Conservation Medicine teams have trained giraffes to voluntarily donate plasma while fully awake.
  - Lance, one of the reticulated giraffes in the herd at the Zoo, quickly became a leading donor. He is target-trained to allow for donation using the jugular vein in his neck while receiving positive reinforcement: rye crackers.
  - Link to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Po1YcrTbnYE>