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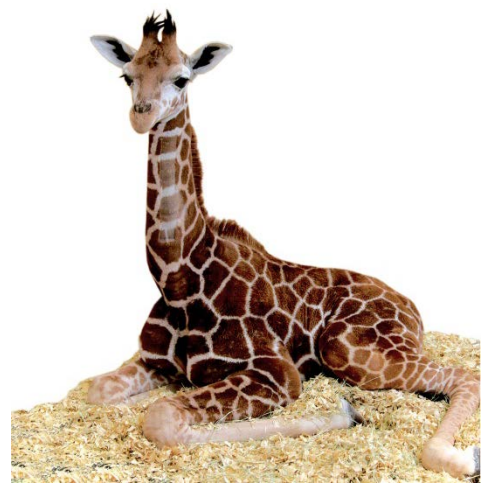
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Voters choose name for giraffe calf

ABILENE, Texas – The voters have spoken, and they're keen on "Kito."

The Swahili name means "precious gem," and it was the top pick by a wide margin in the zoo's recent naming contest for the baby giraffe.

Seven-year-old Parker Miller-Ienatsch from Odessa, Texas, won the contest and will get to meet the young giraffe this weekend as his prize. His name was drawn from all of the ballots submitted for the winning name.



The young male giraffe came to the Abilene Zoo at the end of January from Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, where he was born Dec. 27, 2015. The Abilene Zoo staff has been bottle-feeding the youngster, while one of the females in the herd has been "aunting" the calf.

Guests have already seen Kito running around the new exhibit space as the animals become accustomed to the grounds and learn to be hand-fed from the Giraffe Safari feeding deck.

Giraffe Safari is a multi-species exhibit that will open April 23.

About the Abilene Zoo: The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 1000 animals of 250 different species. The zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085.

Mission Statement: The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.