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**The Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College Wins Prestigious Animal Exhibit Award of Excellence***National honor highlights Moorpark College’s leadership in animal welfare, education and innovative exhibit design*

**Moorpark, Calif.** (Oct. 10, 2025) — The Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College has received the Animal Exhibit Award of Excellence from the Zoological Association of America (ZAA), a national honor recognizing Annual Awards Banquet, recognizing the zoo’s excellence in new and unique live animal display, exhibit design and construction.

Presented annually at the ZAA Awards Banquet, the Animal Exhibit Award of Excellence places Moorpark College’s Teaching Zoo alongside some of the most respected wildlife facilities in the country. The ZAA, a leading accrediting body in zoological care, awards the recognition to exhibits that demonstrate excellence in enriching animal lives, engaging the public and advancing conservation education.

This year’s award honors the zoo’s creation of “Rajah’s Retreat,” a state-of-the-art natural habitat for tigers. The new exhibit features a sparkling pool, expansive viewing windows and dynamic natural elements that encourage species-specific behaviors while offering guests an up-close, inspiring view of wildlife. The habitat also includes immersive interactive graphics, allowing visitors to explore animal facts, conservation stories and behind-the-scenes training insights — all aimed at deepening connections between people and wildlife.

“This award represents the heart of what the Teaching Zoo stands for,” said Mara Rodriguez, Teaching Zoo Development Coordinator. “Our students and staff worked tirelessly to create a space that reflects the highest standards of animal care and education. It’s a proud moment for the entire Moorpark College community.”

The tiger habitat is part of a 10-year modernization effort transforming the zoo into a more immersive facility. Recent milestones include a redesigned lion habitat and the Alumni Aviary — projects that have reshaped both the landscape and learning environment of the zoo.

Operated by students in the college’s Animal Care and Training program (ANCT) program, the Teaching Zoo continues to serve as a model for experiential learning in animal care and conservation education. This national recognition underscores the zoo’s leadership in providing enriching environments that inspire both animals and people to thrive.

For more information about the Teaching Zoo and upcoming events, visit [zoo.moorparkcollege.edu](https://zoo.moorparkcollege.edu/) or follow @theteachingzoomc on social media.

**About Moorpark College**

*Moorpark College is one of three colleges in the Ventura County Community College District and annually serves more than 14,000 students. Founded in 1967, Moorpark College is fully accredited and has the highest six-year completion rate within the California Community College System. An Aspen Institute Top 10 Finalist for 2023 and 2025, Moorpark College has also been named a 2020 Champion of Higher Education by The Campaign for College Opportunity for the Associate Degree for Transfer Pathway. It is also a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. The college’s signature career/technical programs include nursing, radiologic technology, biotechnology and journalism. The college’s America’s Teaching Zoo is the only associate degree exotic animal training program in the country. To learn more, visit* [*MoorparkCollege.edu*](http://MoorparkCollege.edu) *or follow @MoorparkCollege on social media.*

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