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International Award for Animal Sanctuary Excellence Presented to Stany Nyandwi, Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary

Ngamba Island, Uganda – On Friday, 9th December 2011, the Carole Noon Award for Sanctuary Excellence will be awarded to Stany Nyandwi and Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, of the Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT). The award was established by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), to memorialize Carole Noon, Ph.D., a courageous and innovative sanctuary pioneer and champion of chimpanzees. The award will be presented on Ngamba Island by GFAS Executive Director, Patty Finch.

“Everyone who has received this award has demonstrated great courage, extreme self-sacrifice, and exceptional determination to help animals in need, and Stany Nyandwi is no exception” says Finch.

“Mr. Nyandwi’s accomplishments started even before he came to Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary,” states Finch. He was nominated by Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA) Executive Director, Anne Warner, who wrote “Stany began as a housekeeper/cook at the Jane Goodall Institute’s (JGI) chimpanzee project in Burundi in 1989. So many confiscated orphan chimpanzees were arriving and in such poor condition that Nyandwi was quickly converted from a cook to a chimpanzee caregiver. He had a particular affinity and connection with the youngest – and often most damaged – chimpanzees, and he quickly developed a specialty in reviving those closest to death.”

Burundi in the mid-1990s was a volatile and dangerous place. Nyandwi and his colleagues had to walk more than six miles each day to get to work by 6am, each morning starting in the dark and walking home way after sunset each evening. In 1994, two staff members were killed on a walk home. They were attacked and murdered yet Nyandwi almost always arrived early for work and stayed late.

By the end of 1995, the JGI made plans to relocate all 20 chimpanzees to the newly created Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary in Kenya. Nyandwi, was taken to Sweetwaters to look after the chimpanzees in their new home. For six weeks, Nyandwi was left alone in Kenya to care for the 10 infants. Away from his family and his countrymen, Nyandwi thought of nothing but the chimpanzees, sometimes walking five kilometers to buy food and medical supplies for the infants with his own salary.

Today, Nyandwi is the Assistant Sanctuary Manager/ Head Caregiver for Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary. "His main role is the welfare of the chimpanzees in his care, and the trainer of all the animal caregivers and veterinarians not only on Ngamba but also those from other sanctuaries who come on staff exchange programme to Ngamba," says CSWCT Executive Director, Lilly Ajarova.

"My heart is with the chimps," Nyandwi states. "I care for them like my own children. People are killing chimps in the forest, the babies are suffering. They need us to take care of them. If not, perhaps they will end up like the rhino in Uganda - gone, extinct and now we are paying a great deal to bring them back."

A \$5000 donation to Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary (CSWCT) accompanies the award, underwritten this year by the Pettus Crowe Foundation, the National Anti-Vivisection Society, The Pegasus Foundation, and individual Board members from PASA, GFAS, and Save the Chimps.

"We are proud to honor this sanctuary, recognized by both PASA and GFAS as an outstanding facility, in which the incredible teamwork demonstrated here is all directed to conservation, protection, and care of the magnificent chimpanzees of Uganda," states Finch.

Special guests of honor at the ceremony include US Embassy in Kampala, Deputy Chief of Mission, Ms. Virginia Blaser and the Ugandan Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage, Professor Ephraim Kamuntu.

About Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) was formed in 2007 by nationally and globally recognized leaders in the animal protection field for the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries worldwide. GFAS has created a rigorous accreditation process to identify rescue facilities/sanctuaries that are providing animals the highest standards of care, conducting a thorough evaluation of sanctuary structure and governance, finances, community outreach, education, staffing, physical facilities, advocacy, security/safety, the veterinary medical program and specific animal care standards. GFAS is the first animal sanctuary accrediting organization to take on this task at an international level. GFAS also educates the public on the causes and conditions of displaced animals and solutions, and the compelling need to actively support accredited sanctuaries.

For more information on GFAS, visit www.sanctuaryfederation.org. Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

About Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary/Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust

CSWCT established Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary in 1998 and continues to manage it in the best possible way. Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary currently cares for the 44 orphan rescued chimpanzees on 98 acres of secondary tropical rain forest on Lake Victoria. The rescued chimpanzees at Ngamba are a result of habitat loss, bush meat and pet trade. The sanctuary provides high quality care facilities that ensure the well-being of rescued and rehabilitated chimpanzees both socially and psychologically. The habitat is also home to other free ranging wildlife species including fruit bats, spiders, over 150 species of birds, fish eagles, otters, and monitor lizards and variety of plants.

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