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## Center for Great Apes Earns Accreditation from Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

**“Center for Great Apes is a shining example of all that a sanctuary should be” says GFAS director**

Wauchula, FL - The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is honored to announce that the Center for Great Apes in Wauchula, Florida, has achieved GFAS Accreditation.

“It is hard to encapsulate in a few words all that is so right with this sanctuary,” states Patty Finch, Executive Director of GFAS. “Patti Ragan, founder of the sanctuary, as well as their chief veterinarian each have over 20 years’ experience in working with great apes, which means that the orangutans and chimpanzees are receiving a level of informed care that is simply unsurpassed. And the facility itself is inspiring with a mile of elevated chutes that allow the great apes to meander throughout the sanctuary and observe other groups of apes, or even walk themselves to the infirmary for health checks.”

The accreditation means Center for Great Apes meets the comprehensive and rigorous definition of a true sanctuary and is providing humane and responsible care of the primates, meeting rigorous and peer-reviewed standards for operations, administration, and veterinary care established by GFAS, which is the only globally recognized organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries. The accreditation status also provides a clear and trusted means for public, donors, and government agencies to recognize Center for Great Apes as an exceptional sanctuary.

Established in 1993, the Center for Great Apes is a 100-acre sanctuary in which more than 40 orangutans and chimpanzees have room to live in safety and in the company of their own species. It is the only sanctuary specifically dedicated to orangutans in the United States.

Ragan says “Most of our primates have either been used in the entertainment industry as circus performers, movie actors, or as props in advertisements where they were worked in these situations as infants and juveniles until they become too strong to be safely handled by trainers. Others came out of the exotic pet trade where they were pulled away from their own

mothers to be sold as pets to private owners. In either case, coming out of these environments, they are rarely accepted by accredited zoos and could never be returned to the wild. So we offer a permanent home to these special great apes where they can live out their lives with dignity in large space, with appropriate nutrition, and companionship with their own species.”

The recent rescue of Clyde, a 44-year-old male chimpanzee who was captured in Africa as an infant and then sold to a family as a pet, is inspiring. Clyde had not seen another chimpanzee during those years and had lived his whole life in a small indoor cage. Due to a lack of sunshine, his skin is very white, and he's extremely thin. But, after only 6 weeks at the Center for Great Apes, Clyde is beginning to move and walk better and is gaining weight. And, he loves napping in the sunlight!

Finch states, “For everyone moved by this rescue: Long after this rescue has taken place, the sanctuary will still have the enormous ongoing costs of caring for these magnificent beings. Please consider even a small donation via an automatic deduction from your credit card each month. Such ongoing funding allows the sanctuary to plan responsibly. These chimpanzees and orangutans deserve our continued support, as dispensation for all the suffering they have endured at human hands.”

For more information on GFAS, please visit [www.sanctuaryfederation.org](http://www.sanctuaryfederation.org). For additional information on the Center for Great Apes visit [www.centerforgreatapes.org](http://www.centerforgreatapes.org).

#### **About Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries**

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries worldwide. The goal of GFAS in working with and assisting sanctuaries is to ensure they are supported, honored, recognized and rewarded for meeting important criteria in providing care to the animals in residence. GFAS was founded in 2007 by animal protection leaders from a number of different organizations in response to virtually unchecked and hidden animal exploitation of animals for human entertainment and financial profit. These founding leaders sit on the GFAS Board of Directors to continue guiding the organization's work in a collaborative manner. They represent top leadership from Born Free USA, The Humane Society of the United States, World Society for the Protection of Animals, American Anti-Vivisection Society, National Anti-Vivisection Society, and International Fund for Animal Welfare. [www.sanctuaryfederation.org](http://www.sanctuaryfederation.org).

#### **The Center for Great Apes Mission**

The Center for Great Apes' mission is to provide a permanent sanctuary for orangutans and chimpanzees who have been rescued or retired from the entertainment industry, from research, or who are no longer wanted as pets. The Center provides care with dignity in a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for great apes in need of lifetime care. The Center for Great Apes is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law. [www.centerforgreatapes.org](http://www.centerforgreatapes.org)