



OUR BEGINNING

The Center began as an effort to offer lifetime care for a limited number of young apes born at a private breeding facility before they were sold as pets or into the entertainment industry. However, the need for this facility has grown dramatically and to date, the Center has taken in over fifty chimpanzees and orangutans with circus, pet, commercial breeding, and research lab backgrounds.

As these young apes grow too strong and too large for such situations, they often end up as discarded “surplus” apes unable to be absorbed by accredited zoological parks. Great apes can live over 60 years in captivity, and many of these former pets and entertainers end up in inappropriate roadside zoos and backyard cages, forced to live in desperate conditions and often becoming the subject of abuse or neglect.



OUR FAMILY

Currently, the Center houses forty-eight chimpanzees and orangutans that range from adolescent to senior. Several of these apes – an armless adult orangutan, a female chimpanzee with a bullet lodged in her brain, and a young chimpanzee with cerebral palsy – have special challenges. The Center has adapted special modifications to their environments to meet these individuals’ unique needs.



OUR SANCTUARY

The Center for Great Apes, located on 120 acres in Wauchula, Florida, was founded in 1993 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Its primary purpose is to maintain a permanent sanctuary for those orangutans and chimpanzees that have been used in entertainment or kept as pets by private owners.

The sanctuary apes are introduced into social groups with each group living in one of sixteen large four-story tall domed enclosures outfitted with natural oak tree logs for climbing, many ropes and swings for playing, a variety of enrichment toys, and daily fresh browse used for nesting materials. Our residents are free to leave their dome homes to explore the grounds, using a unique feature of our facility—a treetop trailway system, which meanders over a mile through the property. All the apes sleep in attached heated night houses strong enough to withstand Florida hurricanes.

All areas, indoors and out, are monitored through closed circuit security cameras mounted in and around the facilities. The large outdoor enclosures are surrounded by a heavily wooded area with many exotic fruit trees, palm trees, ferns, and a flowing creek which provide a tropical setting very similar to the natural habitat of primates in the wild.

Appropriate Veterinary care is a critical part of providing care for sanctuary animals. Routine health checks, periodic physicals, and when necessary, emergency care are handled in the Arcus Great Ape Health Center and the Sheridan Surgery Center. This facility includes the veterinary clinic, surgery suite, recovery room, and indoor/outdoor quarantine facility for new arrivals.

www.centerforgreatapes.org





OUR 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 from the exotic pet trade; to educate the public about captive great apes and the threats to conservation of great apes in the wild; and to advocate for the end of exploitation of great apes in captivity. The Center provides care with dignity in a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for great apes in need of lifetime care.

In addition to our mission of providing sanctuary to great apes rescued from the exotic pet trade (for use as pets or entertainers), another goal of the Center is to contribute to the end of the exotic pet trade through education and advocacy. Some of the Center's activities in this area include writing and publishing articles about the inappropriateness of using great apes as entertainers; advocating law changes in states that allow great apes as pets; and conducting lectures and educational forums about why apes should not be in the exotic pet trade.

The Center is not open to the public as an attraction, does not receive any type of government funding, and does not (and will not) breed or sell infant great apes. All support for the project comes from individual memberships in the organization, private donor support, and grants from philanthropic and animal protection foundations.



SUPPORT OUR APES

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For more information, or to find out
how you can help, please visit
www.centerforgreatapes.org



www.centerforgreatapes.org

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