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Center for Great Apes Mourns Loss of Knuckles

Chimpanzee With Cerebral Palsy Exceeded Expectations, Thrived at Florida Sanctuary

WAUCHULA, FLORIDA - November 2021 - The Center for Great Apes, a private, non-profit sanctuary for orangutans and chimpanzees, is sad to announce the death of Knuckles, a “special needs” chimpanzee with cerebral palsy. Knuckles died Thursday morning, November 18, 2021 as a result of a seizure. Knuckles was 22 years old.

“Knuckles had an impact on everyone. Our members, donors, volunteers, and staff devotedly supported him over the past 20 years,” stated Patti Ragan, founder of the Center for Great Apes, “I believe it was because of this love, special attention, and dedication that he lived an unusually long life for a chimpanzee with his condition. Knuckles expressed so much love and affection and will be greatly missed. But he is at peace now and free from his physical limitations. He was the sweetest blessing, and we celebrate *his life* with gratitude that he was in *our lives* for so many years.”

Born at a California entertainment facility, it was immediately clear that Knuckles had serious physical challenges. Doctors at the pediatric unit at UCLA diagnosed his condition as cerebral palsy. Due to the severity of the cerebral palsy, he was not expected to live very long. The Center for Great Apes agreed to take Knuckles when he was two years old and provide sanctuary care for however long he might survive.

Over the years at the Center, physical therapists, occupational therapists, volunteers, and staff worked diligently to help him to learn to walk, feed himself, climb, and even swing on swings. Knuckles made continual progress with this devoted help, and he loved his caregivers and therapists. He also had chimpanzee companions who appeared to sense his limitations and were gentle with him.

With this devotion, love, and support from the CGA staff and volunteers, Knuckles thrived and celebrated his 22 birthday on October 3.

Knuckles is survived by his mother Boma and grandmother Oopsie, who both arrived at the Center for Great Apes a few years after Knuckles. His chimpanzee friends at the Center for Great Apes included Grub, Kenya, Noelle, and Toddy. To learn more about Knuckles and his friends and family at the Center for Great Apes, visit CenterforGreatApes.org.

About The Center for Great Apes

The Center for Great Apes is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit sanctuary for orangutans and chimpanzees founded in 1993 by Patti Ragan. 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. The Center provides care with dignity in a safe, healthy, and enriching environment for great apes in need of lifetime care. It is the only accredited orangutan sanctuary in North America and one of the leading chimpanzee sanctuaries. With more than 70 great ape residents at the sanctuary, expenses total \$2.4million annually. The Center receives no government funding and relies on memberships, donations, private grants, and fundraising efforts to support this vital work. The Center for Great Apes is fully accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries and is a founding member of the North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance. The Center has received the top Four-Star rating from Charity Navigator. For more information, please visit www.CenterforGreatApes.org.