

Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education (GRACE) Center is Accredited by Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries



©Andrew Bernard/GRACE

September 17, 2019 (Kasugho, DRC) – The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), the only globally recognized organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries, has awarded Accredited status to Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education (GRACE) Center in the Democratic Republic of Congo as of September 10, 2019.

Accreditation signifies that GRACE meets GFAS's rigorous and peer-reviewed animal care standards, as well as adherence to standards addressing the sustainability of the organization, ethical principles, finances, staffing, education and outreach, security and safety, and other operational aspects. This

accredited status also provides a clear and trusted means for the public, donors and grantors to recognize GRACE as an exceptional organization.

"We are proud to announce the accreditation of GRACE," said Jackie Bennett, GFAS Program Director-Africa and Asia. "In the midst of a challenging environment, GRACE is dedicated at all levels to providing high quality care to its critically endangered Grauer's gorillas, as well as large forested enclosures that offer the gorillas both freedom and safety. GRACE also places a priority on engaging with local communities through education programs and conservation initiatives, with a focus on working with women's groups."

"We are thrilled and honored to receive GFAS accreditation," said Dr. Sonya Kahlenberg, GRACE Executive Director. "At GRACE, we take great pride in the excellent care we have been providing orphaned Grauer's gorillas for the past 10 years. Accreditation validates our approach, but GFAS's rigorous process also helped us improve as a sanctuary and organization so we are now better positioned to reach our ambitious goals. We are grateful to our dedicated DRC team that works hard every day to ensure the gorillas have the best life possible. We also thank our expert advisors for training and supporting our team, GRACE's board for their leadership, and our many supporters for making our work possible."



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, rescues, and rehabilitation centers worldwide. The goal of GFAS in working with and assisting these animal care facilities 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 often hidden exploitation of animals for human entertainment and financial profit. The GFAS Board of Directors guides the organization's work in a collaborative manner. While the board includes those in top leadership at The Humane Society of the United States, International Fund for Animal Welfare, and American Anti-Vivisection Society, all board members serve as individuals dedicated to animal sanctuaries. For more about GFAS, visit: www.sanctuaryfederation.org.

About GRACE

Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education (GRACE) Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the U.S. that operates the world's only sanctuary for Critically Endangered Grauer's gorillas in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The largest primate in the world, Grauer's gorillas only live in war-torn eastern DRC. Their numbers have dropped by nearly 80% in the past 20 years due to heavy poaching. They are considered one of the 25 most endangered primates in the world with only 3,800 individuals remaining in the wild. GRACE cares for 14 orphaned gorillas rescued from poachers and works to rehabilitate them so they can one day return to the wild. At GRACE, the gorillas live in a single gorilla group that functions as a surrogate family and spend their days in protected forest habitats. GRACE also leads field research and partners with local communities on education and conservation initiatives to protect a critical population of wild gorillas living in Tayna Nature Reserve. For more about GRACE, visit: www.gracegorillas.org.