



**2026 Calendar**

**HoneyBaked Ham  
Spring Gift Card  
Sale**

Mar. 15 – May 31

**Bingo**

2 possible locations  
Watch for details

**Gorilla Golf**

Time and Place TBD

**GA Gives**

December 1

**Holiday Bazaar**

December 12



Biruté Mary Galdikas

**Biruté Galdikas  
Dead at 79**

By Emily Chung

Biruté Mary Galdikas, a Canadian scientist who dedicated her life to the study and conservation of orangutans, has died. She was 79. Galdikas died in Los Angeles early Tuesday, March 25, 2026, with loved ones by her side after a battle with lung cancer, according to the Orangutan Foundation International, which Galdikas founded in 1986 to support her research in Borneo, Indonesia.

She grew up in Toronto, and at the age of six, she checked out her first

library book, *Curious George* about a man and his monkey, and soon she decided to become an explorer.

She studied psychology and zoology at the University of British Columbia and the University of California at Los Angeles, where she also got her master's degree in anthropology. She began her work on orangutans for her Ph.D. after meeting renowned Kenyan paleoanthropologist Louis Leakey and convincing him to fund the work.

She travelled in 1971 to Tanjung Putting in central Borneo. Nobody had ever been there. The orangutans were shy, and Galdikas said it took some of them many years to get used to her. Nevertheless, her dedication, patience and observation came to paint a vivid picture of the lives of these little known apes – she recorded 400 kinds of food they ate, how they

organized their societies, fought and chose mates, and witnessed how they gave birth. One of her interesting discoveries was that orangutans at Tanjung Putting only have a baby every 7.7 years.

She became the third woman of the “trimates,” – a trio that also included renowned primatologists Jane Goodall, who studied chimpanzees, and Dian Fossey, who studied gorillas. All three were mentored and supported by Leakey, and Galdikas named her research site in Borneo “Camp Leakey” in his honor. Goodall died last year while on a public speaking tour and Fossey was brutally murdered by poachers in Rwanda in 1985.

Ian Redmond, chair of the Ape Alliance, a coalition dedicated to the conservation of apes that Galdikas helped found, wrote “Her legacy is immense, laying the foundation for much of our scientific understanding of orangutan behavior and ecology, the better protection of key orangutan habitat, and public awareness of the red ape and its role as keystone species in the forests of Borneo.” Galdikas is survived by her three children and her grandchildren.

*CBC News,  
March 25, 2026*



## ACE Calendar Reflects Old Favorites

Most of the activities planned for 2026 are the proven-successful fundraisers we have done in the past. Several new ideas were suggested by ACE Board members, but after discussion and a late start (due to snow and ice), we decided to go with the old standbys that have always worked in the past. We might have a couple of new events that we will tell you about as they come together, but mainly we will fundraise with the successful events we have done in the past.

We hope to encourage new members, so Karin is putting together an information card about ACE to hand out to interested people. If you have questions or comments, please see a Board member for more information.



## HoneyBaked Ham Spring Gift Card Sale Helps Save Great Apes

It's That time of year for our annual spring HoneyBaked Ham gift card fundraiser. Purchase your gift cards using the link below and ACE receives 20% of your purchase price. These funds are used to help fulfill our mission in saving the great apes.

[https://www.honeybaked.com/fundraising/ACE\\_Spring\\_Sale](https://www.honeybaked.com/fundraising/ACE_Spring_Sale)

The sale runs from March 15 through May 31. Please let your social media friends know about our sale. The flyer is included at the end of this newsletter. Please share it with friends and family. If you have any questions, contact Susan Smith at [susansmith9008@comcast.net](mailto:susansmith9008@comcast.net).



## A Bonobo's pretend tea party is rewriting what we know about imagination

Imagination may be far older – and more widespread in the animal kingdom – than scientists once believed

In a set of playful experiments modeled after children's tea parties, researchers at Johns Hopkins University have shown for the first time that apes can use imagination and take part in pretend play. This ability was long believed to belong only to humans.

Across three carefully designed experiments, a single bonobo interacted with imaginary juice and pretend grapes in a consistent and repeatable way. The results push back against traditional ideas about animal intelligence and suggest that some animals may think more flexibly than previously assumed.

The researchers say the ability to understand pretend objects appears to fall within the cognitive range of at least one enculturated ape, Kanzi, a 43-year-old bonobo living at Ape Initiative. They also suggest this mental skill may have deep evolutionary roots, possibly stretching back

6-9 million years to a shared ancestor of humans and modern apes.

“It really is game-changing that their mental lives go beyond the here and now,” said co-author Christopher Krupenye, a Johns Hopkins assistant professor in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences who studies how animals think.

“Imagination has long been seen as a critical element of what it is to be human but the idea that it may not be exclusive to our species is really transformative.

“Jane Goodall discovered that chimps make tools and that led to a change in the definition of what it means to be human and this, too, really invites us to reconsider what makes us special and what mental life is out there among other creatures.”

Human children typically begin engaging in pretend activities, such as tea parties, by around age two. Even younger infants show early signs of understanding make-believe. At just 15-months-old babies often react with surprise when someone pretends to empty a cup and then acts as if they are drinking it.

Despite these well-documented behaviors in children, no controlled experiments had previously tested whether nonhuman animals could

understand or track pretend situations. This gap existed even though there have been many anecdotal observations from both the wild and captive settings.

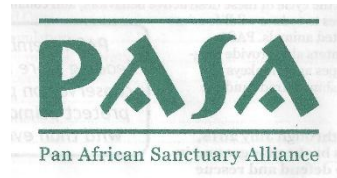
In nature, young female chimpanzees have been seen carrying sticks and treating them like infants. In captivity, at least one chimpanzee appeared to drag imaginary blocks across the floor after playing with real wooden ones.

(Details of how the experiment was performed are included in the source article, but is not repeated in this newsletter.)

“It’s extremely striking and very exciting that the data seem to suggest that apes, in their minds, can conceive of things that are not there,” said Amalia Bastos, co-author. “Kanzi is able to generate an idea of this pretend object and at the same time know it’s not real.”

“Imagination is one of those things that in humans gives us a real mental life. And if some roots or imagination are shared with apes, that should make people question their assumption that other animals are just living robotic lifestyles constrained to the present,” Krupenye said. “We should be compelled by these findings to care for these creatures with rich and beautiful minds and ensure they continue to exist.”

*Article in Science Daily  
March 7, 2026*



## Thank You From PASA

I’m writing to say a tremendous thank you to the Ape Conservation Effort for your generous grant to PASA which we just received via check. We’re so grateful for your support of our mission and these funds will be crucial in helping us to continue our programs to conserve and care for chimpanzees across Africa. We really appreciate your fundraising efforts to protect these wonderful animals and I look forward to sharing updates on the impacts of your grant later in the year.

Thank you again and have a wonderful year ahead.  
Jenny

*Jenny Botting-van Blerk,  
PhD  
Head of Conservation  
Partnerships PASA*

Another Thank you  
from PASA:

Dear Ape Conservation  
Effort Inc.

Thank you so much for your generous support of PASA. Because of you, resaved apes and monkeys receive

lifesaving care – safe shelter, nutritious food, expert vet treatment, and a path to rehabilitation across all of our accredited centers in Africa. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and your compassion for primates! THANK YOU!

Sincerely,  
*The PASA Team*

Background: In January 2026 and on a recommendation from the Board, the membership voted to donate \$4,000 from our General Fund to PASA for chimpanzee support. In an effort to support all four species of great apes, chimpanzees were highlighted because no ACE donations had been donated for chimpanzee support in the past two years.



## Appreciation from Friends of Bonobos

Dear Everyone at Ape  
Conservation Effort,

Your generous giving continues to make a lasting, positive difference in the lives of bonobos – thank you for being part of our team!

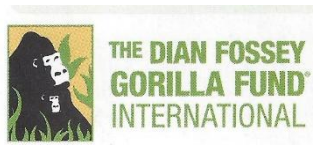
Wishing you a wonderful  
2026.

*All of us at Friends of  
Bonobos and  
Amis des Bonobos du  
Congo*

Background: Even though ACE did not have Bingo for Bonobos in 2025, in May 2025 when the severe floods hit Kinshasa and damaged Lola ya Bonobo, ACE members approved sending \$1,200 for emergency recovery.

NEWS:  
Live Cameras at Lola ya Bonobo

We are excited to announce that we now have LIVE cameras at Lola! You can watch one of the groups in the forested enclosure as well as the little ones playing in the nursery – all in real time! This project has taken over two years to complete, and we are excited to share it with you! See the cameras: [explore.org/bonobos](http://explore.org/bonobos)



## Thank You from DFGFI

At the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, meaningful progress begins with your trust and partnership, and your generosity embodies that spirit. By standing with us, you are helping to build a future where gorillas and the communities that share their forests can thrive together.

On behalf of our dedicated team from Atlanta to Africa, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for APE Conservation Effort's recent gift from the proceeds of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Gorilla Golf of \$6,340 received on 12/31/2025 in support of protection and monitoring in Rwanda.

Because of your support, mountain gorilla populations continue to rise, a sign of hope that echoes through the forests of Rwanda. In the areas where our teams work in the Congo, not a single gorilla has been lost to poaching in the past year. That is an extraordinary achievement, one that took dedication, collaboration with local communities and incredible supporters like you.

Beyond the forests, our work is transforming lives. New leaders are emerging, young scientists, educators and community members are redefining what conservation looks like for the next generation. Our community programs,

which once began at the household level, now reach entire villages. Together, we are providing resources, education and opportunities that strengthen people and protect the habitats that the gorillas depend on.

APE Conservation's confidence in our mission gives us the courage to take bold steps, to innovate, and to persist even in the most challenging moments. Together, we will continue to do great things, for gorillas, for people and for our shared planet.

With Gratitude,

*Tara Stoinski, Ph.D.  
President and CEO/Chief Scientific Officer*



## Did you know?

Benny, a male orangutan living at Zoo Atlanta, recently turned 47, making him the oldest Sumatran orangutan living in human care.

\*\*\*

Machi, a Western lowland gorilla living at Zoo Atlanta, recently turned 50, making her the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest female gorilla living in human care. She is the mother to Willie B. Jr. (Kidogo) and the grandmother to Willie B. III.

\*\*\*

## Mission Statement Friends of Bonobos

To save and protect bonobos and their rainforest home – *forever*.

We do this through rescue, sanctuary, and rewilding, by partnering with local communities to tackle root causes or bonobo endangerment and save rainforest, and by raising the profile of bonobos locally and globally.

\*\*\*

Some people bring joy wherever they go, and some bring joy whenever they go.

*Mark Twain*



## 2025 ACE Board

Jane Barron  
Susan Callaway  
Barbara Cebula  
Shelley DeWeese  
Karin Keller  
Jenny Reineck  
Susan Smith

Primary contact:  
[info@apeconservationeffort.org](mailto:info@apeconservationeffort.org)

Gorilla Golf:  
[gorillagolf@apeconservationeffort.org](mailto:gorillagolf@apeconservationeffort.org)



**Just in time for Spring 2026 celebrations**



**ACE is selling  
HoneyBaked Ham gift cards.**

**Gift cards can be purchased in several denominations  
and can be used at any HoneyBaked Ham store and online.**

They never expire and there is  
no limit to the amount you can purchase.



**ON-LINE PROCESS**

Gift cards can be purchased from March 15th thru May 31st  
[https://www.honeybaked.com/fundraising/ACE\\_Spring\\_Sale](https://www.honeybaked.com/fundraising/ACE_Spring_Sale)



**ACE receives 20% of the purchase price.  
You get your party food and  
ACE helps save great apes in the wild. Everyone wins!**

*Ape Conservation Effort is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization  
with a mission to help save great apes in the wild.*