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Bowlers raise nearly \$18,000 to support Great Ape Trust of Iowa conservation initiatives

James Brooks, a fan of bonobos and other great apes, raises \$4,300

Des Moines, Iowa – July 29, 2008 – An 11-year-old from Canada brought \$4,300 to Des Moines July 19 for Great Ape Trust of Iowa's *Third Annual Bowling for Apes*, a fund-raiser to support the world-class scientific research center's conservation initiatives in ape range countries. Nearly \$18,000 was raised at the event, held at AMF Bowling Center, and donations are still being accepted.

The top money raiser, [James Brooks](#) of London, Ontario, Canada, is a self-described "bonobo fan" who has twice visited Great Ape Trust, which collaborates with its bonobo and orangutan residents in research on ape intelligence and behavior. He has raised thousands of dollars for Great Ape Trust conservation projects and has developed a [Web site](#) dedicated to great ape conservation.

One-hundred percent of the proceeds from the bowling event will go to direct conservation aid in Africa, Malaysia and Indonesia, where wild great apes face an uncertain future. Great Ape Trust's conservation program has increasingly focused on Sumatran orangutans and the chimpanzees of Rwanda and Uganda.

Great Ape Trust's flagship conservation projects support the orangutans in the [Ketambe Research Center](#) on the island of Sumatra, managed by scientist [Dr. Serge](#)

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[Wich](#); and the chimpanzees in the Gishwati Forest, part of the [Rwanda National Conservation Park](#) project coordinated by [Dr. Benjamin Beck](#), director of conservation.

“The proceeds of the bowling event will augment our support for the Gishwati and Ketambe programs, and help ensure the continuity of their support,” Beck said. “Threats to these forests and the apes who live in them have declined in both areas since Great Ape Trust’s support began, signaling two conservation success stories.”

Bowling for Apes has raised about \$46,000 in three years to help Great Ape Trust conservation programs. The Trust’s conservation strategy builds on long-term collaborative efforts of Great Ape Trust scientists in primate range countries. According to estimates compiled by The Trust, all great ape species are [endangered](#) in the wild. In the last 100 years, 80 percent to 90 percent of great apes in the wild have disappeared.

Bowling for Apes is one of two major conservation fund-raising events overseen by the orangutan research and caretaker staffs to help Great Ape Trust meet its pledge to assist in the conservation of great apes in the wild. The second, *Apes Helping Apes*, is a gallery exhibit of artworks by the orangutans and bonobos living at Great Ape Trust. Details of the 2008 exhibit at West Glen Town Center in West Des Moines will be announced in a future issue of Great Ape Trust’s monthly e-newsletter.

The amount of money raised at this year’s *Bowling for Apes* was less than organizers originally projected because they were involved in more urgent matters involving ongoing recovery from June flooding and the arrival two weeks ago of two new orangutan residents, Katy and Rocky. [Dr. Rob Shumaker](#), director of orangutan research, praised the work of his staff during a particularly hectic time.

“The *Third Annual Bowling for Apes* was a spectacular success because of their dedication to great ape conservation,” he said. “I’m particularly proud of all the folks who organized and orchestrated the event.”

Of the young Canadian who accounted for about one-fourth of the total raised, Shumaker said: “James Brooks is a remarkable and important young man, and he gives me hope for the future of great apes.”

GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND

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Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to www.GreatApeTrust.org.

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Insights Through Collaborations with Apes