

THE  
DIAN  
FOSSEY

# Gorilla Journal

November 2020

Daily Protection | Scientific Research | Educating Conservationists | Helping Communities

*Inside*

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**Mother Isaro with her newest infant**, who was named Duhuze by Fossey Fund tracker Eric Kabeja at the 2020 Kwita Izina gorilla-naming ceremony in Rwanda.

## Celebrating: Gorilla births brighten a challenging year

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

*When confronted* with challenges and difficulties, as everyone across the world has been this year, sometimes there are also events that allow us to celebrate, to remember that our actions matter, and that hope for the future is always important.

This year we've proven our resilience by adapting to the pandemic in a myriad

of ways, by continuing our on-the-ground gorilla protection every single day, and by moving ahead full speed with our Ellen DeGeneres Campus construction.

And the gorillas have rewarded us by thriving and producing new life throughout the year. So, even in the midst of ongoing pandemic restrictions, we were able to join with Rwanda in celebrating the 16th annual Kwita Izina gorilla infant naming ceremony,

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# Annual infant gorilla naming ceremony held virtually

*Here are the mothers and infants from the groups we protect, and the meanings behind their new names*

**Kwita Izina** is a wonderful ceremony held in Rwanda each year since 2005 to name the mountain gorillas born there during the past year. It is based on a historic Rwandan cultural practice for naming newborns.

Normally, Kwita Izina is a big event with activities around the region, and a ceremony usually held near Volcanoes National Park, home to the mountain gorillas.

In addition to celebrating the births of these infants and providing them with their official names, the event is also an opportunity to highlight the importance of conservation, especially of the gorillas, and to recognize all those who have dedicated themselves to this effort.

“Over the years, Kwita Izina has grown to become more than just giving names to infant gorillas,” says Felix Ndagijimana, the Fossey Fund’s director of programs in Rwanda, including our Karisoke Research Center.

“It is now an international event during which Rwandans and the international community come together to celebrate successes in the conservation

See **Naming**, page 3



**Mother Pasika’s infant, Igitego (above)**

This male infant was born in July 2019 and is the youngest among the 10 gorillas of a group led by silverback Mafunzo. There are five other youngsters in this group, with whom Igitego often plays and explores. His new name means “goal/score” and was chosen to reflect that gorilla conservation is vitally important to Rwanda and to local communities.



**Mother Isaro’s infant, Duhuze (above)**

Isaro’s infant was born in August 2019 into a large group led by silverback Musilikale. There are 10 other youngsters in the group as well as three silverbacks, for a total of 22 gorillas! Duhuze’s new name means “liaison,” and refers to the fact that the gorillas make it possible for Rwandans to connect with people from around the world.

‘A gorilla name is more than just a word, and each has a special meaning to the trackers in the field, who provide suggestions for the names to be given to gorillas.’

— **Felix Ndagijimana**  
Fossey Fund Director,  
Rwanda Programs;  
Director,  
Karisoke Research Center

**Mother Mudakama, infant Murengezi**

Mudakama is 33 years old and had not given birth since 2013, so her infant born this past May was quite a surprise. They live in a small group led by silverback Urugwiro, which he formed in Sept. 2019, so it’s not clear if he is the father. Murengezi’s new name means “rescuer.” Since this group has only one male, the name reflects hope that the new male infant will one day help protect this group.

**Mother Ubufatanye, infant Kororoka**

Mother Ubufatanye gave birth to Kororoka in May of this year, and already has a 3-year-old and 5-year-old in the group! The two older siblings are spending more time together, while mother is busy with her newest youngster. Their group is led by silverback Musilikale. Kororoka’s new name means “prolific,” and was chosen to honor the exceptional mothering skills of mother Ubufatanye as well as her contributions to the mountain gorilla population growth.



**Mother Isangano’s infant, Uwacu (above)**

Mother Isangano was just 9 years old when she gave birth to her first infant, Uwacu, in May. They live in the historic Pablo’s group, a large family of 25 gorillas that has been studied by Fossey Fund staff since 1967! Uwacu’s new name means “one of us.” When mother Isangano gave birth, she was surrounded by many other gorillas in the group, as if they recognized and welcomed the newborn as one of their own.

**Mother Akaramata, infant Kazeneza**

This infant was the first born into a new group led by silverback Mutobo. Unbeknownst to him, however, the infant was actually conceived in mother Akaramata’s previous group, led by Mafunzo. Luckily, Mutobo has not been able to figure this out and is a very caring “father” for the little one. Kazeneza’s new name means “welcome,” and was chosen because mother Akaramata transferred to this family just a few months before Kazeneza’s birth.

**Mother Ishyaka, infant Nkomezamihigo**

Mother Ishyaka gave birth to Nkomezamihigo on Father’s Day of this year, in a growing group led by silverback Mutobo. Ishyaka belongs to a famous line of females, as the daughter of historic female Poppy. Nkomezamihigo’s new name means “keep it up,” and was chosen to highlight the resolve and dedication of the trackers and anti-poachers who protect the gorillas so well every day.



**Three infants in Kuryama’s group**

This group surprised us when they returned to Rwanda after 10 months on the Congolese side of the Virunga mountains. Upon their return, we were pleased to see three new infants in the group, born to mothers Faida, Mahirwe and Kanama. Faida’s infant received the name Amarembo, which means “gateway,” and refers to gorilla conservation and tourism welcoming the world. Kanama’s infant received the name Ubushobozi, which means “ability,” showing that tourism helps people around the park live better lives. **Mahirwe’s infant (above)** received the name Indiri, which means “habitat,” and reflects that the success of the gorillas depends on the well-being of their forest home in the mountains, which should be protected by everyone as though it were their own home.

**‘I was very grateful to be among the gorilla namers this year. It is a lifetime opportunity and very special for us as trackers, who help drive conservation forward every single day.’**

— *Francois Xavier Ndungutse (Conseiller), Fossey Fund tracker for 19 years, who now coordinates all of the data collected in the field*

**Naming**

*Continued from page 2* of Rwanda’s rich biodiversity, and how our conservation efforts contribute to the development of the country and the well-being of its people.”

This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kwita Izina was held online for the first time, and the gorillas’ names were chosen primarily by the local conservation workers who help protect the well-being of the gorillas every day, including trackers, wardens, guides, park rangers, and veterinarians.

“These are the people who dedicate their lives to ensuring that the gorillas are safe and healthy,” said Belise Kariza, chief tourism officer of the Rwanda Development Board. The date of the event — Sept. 24 — was also special, because it coincided with World Gorilla Day and the start of Dian Fossey’s groundbreaking research, Kariza noted.

Since the first gorilla-naming ceremony in 2005, more than 280 gorilla infants have been named, and this year there were 24 infants ready to receive names. Ten of them were from groups protected by

*See **Naming**, page 8*

## Being green and lo-fab

*In building our* Ellen DeGeneres Campus in Rwanda, we focus on a number of concepts and practices that we believe are important in creating this kind of transformative project.

This involves ensuring that we are eco-friendly, including a substantial percentage of women on our construction team, sourcing products and materials locally, and of course focusing on hiring workers from the local area.

The eco-friendly design of the Campus is especially important, as it reflects our conservation mission, and includes such aspects as reforestation of native plant species, creating green roofs, harvesting rain water and building a natural wastewater treatment center.

### Going green: All about plants

Sourcing and propagating of plants is an ongoing process at the Campus nursery, where we have more than 54,000 plants for landscape usage as of this writing, with a goal of planting 250,000.

We are becoming pioneers in learning the best ways to grow native trees in a nursery environment, which we hope will eventually benefit reforestation efforts even beyond our Campus. Using native plants is important because they help sustain the larger biodiversity of the area, and usually do a better job in reducing climate change as well.

We've even been able to involve local communities in this effort, especially with our focus on the native *Hagenia* tree, which is an important species in gorilla habi-



*Above, propagating native plants and trees will help reforest the Campus and sustain the biodiversity of the area. Below, project architect Theo Uwayezu helps oversee our eco-friendly and people-oriented local fabrication design.*

tat. A Rwandan university student who conducted his senior thesis project with us found that these trees were not regenerating well in the forest, and we then worked with nature clubs in local secondary schools to grow new *Hagenia* shoots. Now we're excited to announce that the students have delivered 300 new *Hagenia* trees to our nursery, for use in re-foresting the Campus land.

### Going lo-fab: All about being local

Lo-fab stands for local fabrication and is an effort that is both eco-friendly and people-oriented. It's a design philosophy that guides us in all aspects of the campus construction process.

Theo Uwayezu, project architect for the Campus, explains it this way: "Lo-fab is a construction philosophy organized around four principles: hiring locally; sourcing regionally; providing training where we can;



and thinking about every design decision as an opportunity to invest in the dignity of the communities we serve."

An example of this is using local volcanic stone to build walls, rather than using cement mortar. Our design firm — the MASS Design group —

now has local masons who have become experts in working with volcanic stone, and some of them have created a master masons volcanic stone cooperative, teaching others about this lo-fab technique.

Lo-fab is not only about using local materials. It also involves working with local people, including artisans and crafters, as we find partners from the community to join us.

This helps inform the design as well, while investing in the local communities and creating facilities that are sustainable and a source of pride for the community. We anticipate that more than 1,200 Rwandans will work on the project. ■

**To learn more about these efforts and to keep up with all the latest on our new Campus, please visit: [gorillafund.org/building-a-future-for-gorillas](http://gorillafund.org/building-a-future-for-gorillas)**



# Legacy donor Adrienne Miller becomes part of a special group

*Donor Adrienne Miller* became fascinated with gorillas about 22 years ago, when a friend mentioned that she'd made a personal connection with one of the silverbacks at Disney's Animal Kingdom.

The friend, who was in a powered wheelchair, said the silverback gorilla there would always come out to see her upon hearing the wheelchair approach.

That intrigued Miller so much that seeing and learning about gorillas became a passion, eventually bringing her to Zoo Atlanta, in 2008, where she learned about the Ape Conservation Effort (ACE), which helps raise funds for the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and other ape conservation groups around the world.

## Off to first gorilla trek

Just a few months later, Miller and her partner, Lisa Dempsey, were off to Rwanda on a trip led by long-time Fossey Fund supporter Jodi Carrigan, to get their first glimpse of gorillas in the wild.

They took two treks to see the gorillas on that trip and helped bring supplies over for the Fossey Fund.

"Our first sighting of gorillas was breathtaking," she says, and then on the second trek they got to see something extra special: the two young twins of the large Susa gorilla group playing together.



**Adrienne Miller** (on right) and Lisa Dempsey have found many ways to help save gorillas, including legacy giving.

Twins are very rare among gorillas and seeing them play together was extra special, Miller says.

Four more trips to see the gorillas in Rwanda and Uganda followed, and on each trip she learned more about gorillas and met more people involved in gorilla conservation, including Fossey Fund trackers, staff at our Karisoke Research Center, our president and CEO Dr. Tara Stoinski, board members, and staff in our Atlanta office. And Miller began helping with ACE's Gorilla Golf tournament, an annual event that raises significant funds for gorilla protection.

After so many years and so much interaction with gorilla conservation, Miller and Dempsey decided to make the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund the only gift request on their wedding registry when they got married in 2014.

## Helping now, planning ahead

The next year Miller's mother died and Miller decided to establish

a legacy fund that includes the Fossey Fund as a beneficiary, thus becoming a member of our Legacy Society, a special group of donors who support gorilla conservation both during their lifetimes and beyond.

This will ensure that Miller's lifelong passion for gorillas will carry on into the future, helping to safeguard the gorillas' survival for generations to come.

"My hope is that the wonderful model the Fossey Fund has developed to help save the mountain gorillas will also help save the critically endangered Grauer's gorillas in Congo and even other endangered species," she says.

When thinking about the future of the gorillas, Miller also emphasizes that it's important to be a part of the solution in any way — every way — you can. "It can be as simple as recycling cell phones, getting the message out, helping people learn about conservation — no effort is too small!" ■

## How to build your own conservation legacy

Many vehicles allow you to provide for your loved ones and also make a planned gift to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund:

- wills and living trusts,
- life insurance policies,
- retirement plan required distributions,
- bank and investment accounts,
- gifts of stock or securities, and
- donor-advised funds.

To learn more, please contact Shari Henning: shenning@gorillafund.org



**Silverback Segasira** is one of the gorillas currently available in our Adopt program.

**Visit** [gorillafund.org/adopt](http://gorillafund.org/adopt) to learn more and choose your own gorillas to adopt.

**Adopt a gorilla**

**Make a personal connection and help save a species**



*Above right, little Urungano is one of the youngsters in the Adopt program this year.*

*The Fossey Fund's symbolic* mountain gorilla adoption program is both unique and effective.

It's unique because we know these gorillas in great detail, since our trackers and scientists have monitored and studied them every day throughout most of the gorillas' lives.

And our adoption program is effective because it has been a significant source of support for this work for many years, thus helping to save this endangered species and provide them a more secure future.

Adopting one of the mountain gorillas we protect also gives you a special, personal connection with these unique animals. The Fossey Fund collects comprehensive information about each gorilla, including their daily activities, their behaviors, personalities and relationships, which

we share with adopters in several ways.

Each adoption comes with a profile of the gorilla, beautiful photographs taken by our field staff, a certificate of adoption, regular updates, and a special video of your gorilla.

You'll definitely feel like you have a new family member!

Adopts make a great difference to gorilla conservation and will add something special to your life as well, and to the lives of others when given as a gift. ■

## Visit our new online store

We have gorilla-themed sweatshirts, T-shirts, hats, face masks and more.

Now is also a good time to make sure you'll get our 2021 wall calendar, featuring our favorite photos of the year. *Calendars available for donors of \$50 and above.*

Visit our store at: <http://store.gorillafund.org>



## New learning materials online

Our website has a wide variety of unique learning materials, including new items added often.

For example, you can:

- See our new "Conservation for Kids" episodes & hear from our gorilla trackers, scientists & other staff.
- Watch gorillas engaged in various activities.
- Download fact sheets, learn how to draw gorillas, take quizzes & more.

Visit [gorillafund.org/learning-fun](http://gorillafund.org/learning-fun) for these and lots more fun things to do and learn.

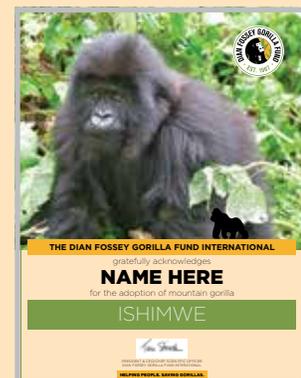


## Adopts make great holiday gifts too

The following gorillas are available for adoption now:

- Silverback: Segasira, son of legendary silverback Titus
- Mother and infant pair: Gutangara and her latest infant Inararibonye
- Father and son pair: Twibuke (son of historic silverback Shinda) and 3-year-old Iyamarere
- Youngsters: 3-year-old Urungano, 5-year-old Ishimwe and 2-year-old Suraurwanda

For more information & to become an Adopter, visit [gorillafund.org/Adopt](http://gorillafund.org/Adopt)



# Celebrating

Continued from page 1

with 24 infant gorillas receiving their official names in this important annual tradition.

Kwita Izina is normally a major event across Rwanda, featuring all kinds of activities from workshops to a big final ceremony and gathering that is attended by more than 10,000 people.

## Naming celebration goes virtual

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the whole event was conducted virtually. But it was extra special, with the infant gorillas receiving their names from those who dedicate their lives to protecting them – the park rangers, trackers, guides, wardens, veterinarians and others who are on the frontlines every day (see details in story on page 2).

Seven of our staff served as namers, and our team was featured in the documentary produced by the Rwandan government.

Kwita Izina was held on Sept. 24, which is a very special day for us because it's the day on which – in 1967 – Dian Fossey

started her groundbreaking work with mountain gorillas, thus launching one of the world's most successful conservation efforts.

It's always a wonderful time to reflect on what we do, and to remember that the kind of sustained, people-centered approach to conservation we carry out really works and that it matters more than ever, as we try to ensure the future for these newest gorilla infants.

So while this has been a challenging year for everyone, we really have much to celebrate.

We also have so much to look forward to in 2021, especially the opening of our Ellen DeGeneres Campus in Rwanda (see *Campus update story on page 4*).

I am so grateful to all of you for helping the gorillas and their critical forests survive and thrive throughout the challenges of 2020.

We say the Fossey Fund never leaves, and just as we are always there for the gorillas, you are always there for the work and mission we all believe in so much.

From all of us here at the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, we send our heartfelt thanks and wish you a wonderful new year. ■

# Naming

Continued from page 3

Fossey Fund trackers, so some of our trackers got to choose final names.

Among them was Jean Damascene Hategekimana ("Fundi") who has been a tracker with us since 1993 and now is our head tracker. He started out as a porter for Dian Fossey, in the early 1980s. "Being allowed to name the baby gorillas was a privilege and acknowledges the work of the trackers and other frontliners in gorilla conservation, who are involved in protection every day."

"I chose the name 'Amarembu' for the infant born to mother Faida, which means 'gateway.' I wanted to say that people should play a big role in gorilla conservation and protection, and that the gorillas are a 'main gate' for people to come to Rwanda," he explained.

Tracker Emmanuel Nzabonimpa has been a Fossey Fund tracker for 18 years and has spent much of his time tracking the large, historic Pablo group, becoming an expert at gorilla identification.

"I was overwhelmed to give a name to a baby gorilla from Pablo's group, which I monitor every day. With the name 'Uwacu,' which means 'one of us,' I wanted to give a message to communities surrounding Rwanda's national parks that they play a crucial role in gorilla conservation." ■



**Tracker Fundi** was one of the gorilla namers.

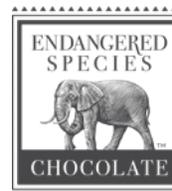
## Donor-advised funds

When you give, you want your charitable donations to be as effective as possible.

Donor-advised funds are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the United States because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to give to charity.

If you have a donor-advised fund you can take advantage of the opportunity and make your annual distribution toward supporting the important work of the Fossey Fund.

Thank you to our Platinum Corporate Sponsors for their extraordinary support in 2020



Celebrating 25 years in Atlanta. Thank you



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