



PRESS RELEASE

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Organizations and Individuals to Express Concern about the Red Ape during Orangutan Caring Week

October 19, 2007 - Santa Monica, CA. Orangutans, the great apes of Indonesia and Malaysia, will be topic of celebration and concern by numerous organizations during Orangutan Caring Week, November 4-10, 2007. It is an opportunity for the public to learn more about this marvelous species, their role in the rainforest environment of Borneo and Sumatra, and their continuing struggle to survive. It is also a time where people can consider how they can help save the species and their forest habitat for future generations.

Orangutan Caring Week (OCW) or Pekan Peduli Orangutan (in the Indonesian language), was originally sponsored by the Orang Utan Republik Education Initiative (OUREI) in 2005, following a petition campaign and efforts by OUREI Ambassador Angelina Sondakh, to obtain official recognition of the event by the Indonesian government. On November 16, 2005, Orangutan Caring Week was first officially declared by the Minister of Forestry, M. S. Kaban in Indonesia. Since that time, OCW has grown internationally and particularly in Indonesia where numerous organizations have taken the opportunity to highlight the orangutan and their own organization's efforts to conserve the species. According to OUREI Chairman Dr. Gary Shapiro, "Orangutan Caring Week is a time where we can all work together, raise awareness, build synergy, and encourage the public to show that they care about the future of one of our closest primate relatives." This year, the theme for OCW is "Expressing Concern for Orangutans through the Arts and Sciences."

Organizations and individuals are encouraged to develop and deliver projects in their schools or at their organizations that use the arts (photography, painting, music, dance, plays, etc.) and the sciences (lectures, poster presentations, passing out literature, etc.).

Numerous orangutan organizations will be participating. For example, in Indonesia, the Sumatran Orangutan Education Consortium, a group of six orangutan and conservation organizations, will be providing education programs and outreach events in and around the city of Medan, Sumatra. In Pangkalan Bun, Central Indonesian Borneo, events will be held in the city community hall during the week. In Ubud, Bali, films on orangutans will be shown to interested tourists and others. Organizations in Indonesia wanting to participate should contact Dr. Barita Manullang, OUREI Indonesia Executive Director to coordinate the event. He can be contacted at barita@orangutanrepublik.org.

Zoological institutions around the world will also be participating as well Indonesian Consulates in the United States. In schools, government offices, and businesses, concerned individuals will raise awareness about orangutans in creative and traditional ways.

Organizations planning to participate in OCW are encouraged to contact OUREI to better publicize their own events. For more information on OCW and a list of events around the world, visit www.OrangutanCaringWeek.org or contact info@orangutanrepublik.org

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Indonesia is home to the largest remaining populations of wild orangutans. Found only on the islands of Borneo and N. Sumatra, their numbers are decreasing rapidly (> 10% annually) due to habitat conversion and destruction (principally from palm oil plantations and illegal logging) and the illicit pet trade in baby orangutans. Fewer than 6,700 are believed to remain on Sumatra.

ABOUT the Orang Utan Republik Education Initiative. In October 2004, OUREI was established by Dr. Gary Shapiro and his Indonesian wife Inggriani in response to the crisis that threaten the **critically endangered** populations of wild orangutans in Sumatra. Based in Santa Monica, their mission is to enroll Indonesian people to care and conserve the species through education and outreach campaigns. Every Sunday morning, they can be reached at the Santa Monica Farmer's Market at Ocean Park and Main St. from 9am till 1pm.

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