



# **2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



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## COVER PHOTO:

*“Katsabara means ‘stubborn guy’ and this silverback was! He was a very aggressive Grauer's gorilla, very unpredictable when hearing people approach. He was often reported as seen, but with no picture to prove it because he was either charging or running away. Thanks to a consistent habituation process with the dedicated rangers and trackers in the Mt. Tshiabirimu sector of Virunga National Park, we are now able to get close enough to regularly assess his health, the health of his group members and take good images — especially in this case when he was happily feeding up in a tree!”*

—Dr. Eddy Kambale Syaluha, Head Veterinarian, DR Congo



# Gorilla Doctors' Annual Report 2022-2023

*Dedicated to Dr. Mike Cranfield, Executive Director, 1998 – 2019*

We honor the life and legacy of Dr. Mike Cranfield, Gorilla Doctors' executive director from 1998 to 2019, who we lost too soon on August 28, 2023. So much of Gorilla Doctors' contribution to the conservation of eastern gorillas is the result of Dr. Mike's tenacity. He inspired, empowered, and helped build a global community of dedicated conservationists.

Gorilla Doctors began as the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP) in 1986 with a single American veterinarian in Rwanda. Under Dr. Mike's mentorship, dozens of African veterinarians, scientists, and future conservation leaders have been trained by Gorilla Doctors since then. Today, Gorilla Doctors staff is more than 80% African with teams of Rwandan, Ugandan, and Congolese veterinarians and other professionals running on-the-ground operations across the three countries.

Dr. Mike took leadership of MGVP in 1998 and grew the project to include health monitoring of the mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks in Uganda. In 2006, he stewarded MGVP's establishment as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (MGVP, Inc.), and further expanded our mission to include critically endangered Grauer's gorillas in eastern DR Congo whose population has declined more than 70% over the last twenty years.

Early on, Dr. Mike recognized that the health of one impacts the health of all. In 2001, he

launched a preventative health program for employees, park staff, and their families – to help ensure the health of the people coming into near-daily contact with gorillas in the wild. His foresight cemented the One Health approach as a core value of our organization.

In 2009, he led the establishment of a unique partnership between MGVP, Inc. and the Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Center at the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine – *Gorilla Doctors*. We entered a new era of cutting-edge scientific research and expansion of our pioneering One Health approach to conservation medicine.

Dr. Mike's legacy will live on through each gorilla life he saved, each wildlife veterinarian he trained, and every single One Health project he launched in his quest to improve and sustain the health of people, animals, and the environment. Indeed, he changed the world for the better and we honor his (and your) extraordinary impact through our daily dedication to saving a species, one gorilla at a time.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gilardi, DVM, Dipl. ACZM  
Executive Director



**Dr. Mike Cranfield, Executive Director, 1998-2019**  
Photo © Marty Nowak



## John Dick

John was among MGVP, Inc.'s earliest Board members. He was very devoted to the country of Rwanda and its people and wildlife, and a close counsel and friend of President Kagame. In 2003, he was appointed to the diplomatic post of Consul General for the Republic of Rwanda to Great Britain in the Channel Islands. In that post, he assisted in numerous charitable and business initiatives on behalf of Rwanda. John always had the warmest words for Gorilla Doctors and our mission, and it was an honor to have him serve on our Board of Directors.



## Peter Riger

Peter Riger, Houston Zoo's Vice President of Conservation and Education, was uniquely skilled at seeing opportunities for advancing wildlife conservation through the close involvement of people and communities. He was also an ardent advocate for local capacity-strengthening, funding the education, training, and professional development of countless early career conservationists at Gorilla Doctors and around the world. The realization of a long-time dream of Gorilla Doctors to establish a permanent headquarters in Rwanda was made possible through Peter's leadership and Houston Zoo's support. Peter was one of the most quietly effective and humble people any of us knew. His warm demeanor and incredible wit belied a fierce intellect and an unwavering dedication to wildlife conservation and to the people who care for wildlife. He is deeply missed. *Photo courtesy of Houston Zoo.*

IN MEMORIAM



# Gorilla Doctors Annual Summary

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Gorilla Doctors’ is the **only organization in the world** providing life-saving veterinary care to eastern gorillas. Treating “one gorilla at a time” has contributed to one of the greatest wildlife conservation success stories of a critically endangered species in the last century – mountain gorilla numbers have more than doubled since we began in 1986. But threats to eastern gorillas are intensifying and we continue to work tirelessly to ensure their future.



## Our Gorilla Patients

Mountain and Grauer's gorillas combined

**63** Groups

**~800** Habituated Gorillas

**5** National Parks



## Y(our) Impact

Rwanda, Uganda, and DR Congo combined

**366** Health Checks

**41** Clinical Interventions  
(includes 2 snare rescues)

**13** Wild Animals Rescued & Treated  
from Illegal Wildlife Trade  
(10 infant chimpanzees & 3 monkeys)



## Research in Action

**4** Scientific Publications

**3** Major Research  
Projects



## One Health for All

**6** Graduate Degree Trainees  
Gorilla Doctors staff and former staff  
working on Masters or PhD degrees

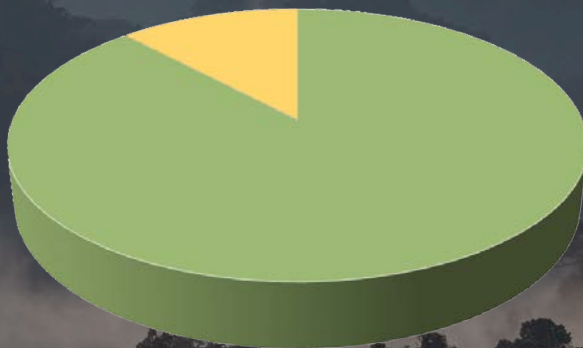
**7** Internships  
for Rwandan and Ugandan Veterinary  
Students or Early Career Professionals

**50** Events, Presentations &  
Meetings around the World



## Gorilla Doctors (\*MGVP, Inc.) Fiscal Health Report

Revenue: \$2,134,640 | Expenditures: \$1,956,560



■ 88% Programs

*Investment in Gorilla Doctors' core program expenses (veterinary care, scientific research, and One Health initiatives)*

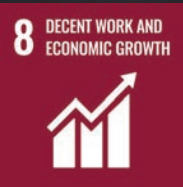
■ 12% Administration

*Includes management, development, communications, and finance functions that support programs and mission*

*\*Gorilla Doctors (MGVP, Inc.) financials are audited annually and the organization is in good standing*

## Global Contribution

Gorilla Doctors is committed to the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. To that end, our mission contributes to three of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs):







*“In 2021, Kwitonda group, one of the largest in Volcanoes National Park, split into two groups which led to the formation of Kwisanga group, while silverback Urwego of the same group left the group as a solitary to form his own family. At one point, Kwitonda and Kwisanga groups had a tough encounter and, as a result silverback Kigoma (of Kwisanga group) fled with the infant Iriza (but not with Iriza's mother!). Kigoma reappeared a few days later but without Iriza and we all thought she was too young to survive on her own. But then miraculously we were surprised to find her several weeks later within the new Urwego group led by Urwego silverback! When I returned to Gorilla Doctors in March 2023, I had to check on Iriza and I found her munching away on bamboo and thriving.”*

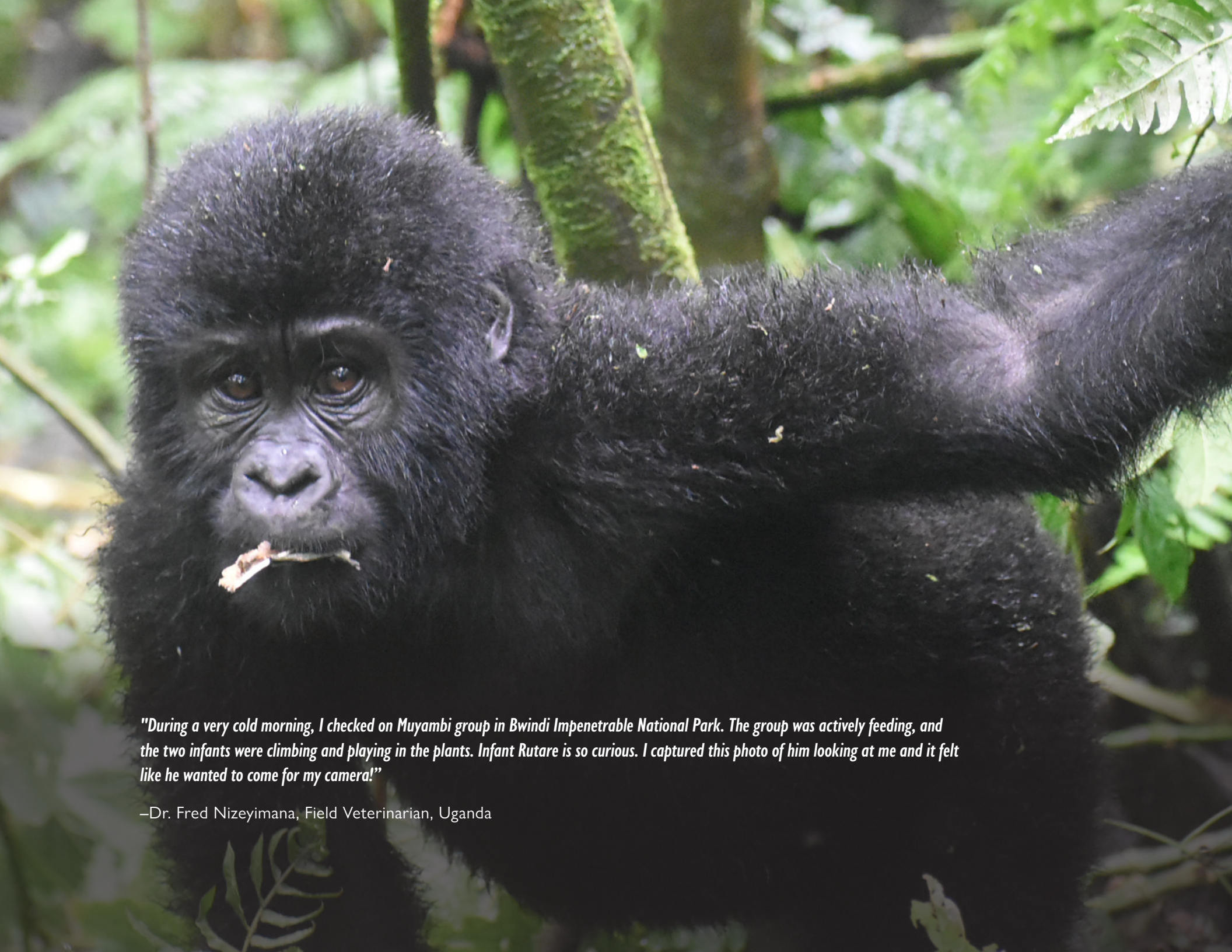
*—Dr. Adrien Emile Ntwari, Field Veterinarian, Rwanda*



*“As silverback Nabanga was building his new group, he became lethargic. He was not eating and appeared to be in pain in his lower back. I mobilized to Kahuzi-Biega National Park to conduct a veterinary monitoring visit just two days later and was pleased to find him fully recovered — no medical treatment required — always the preferred outcome!”*

*—Dr. Fabrice Katembo Malonga, Field Veterinarian, DR Congo*





*"During a very cold morning, I checked on Muyambi group in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The group was actively feeding, and the two infants were climbing and playing in the plants. Infant Rutare is so curious. I captured this photo of him looking at me and it felt like he wanted to come for my camera!"*

—Dr. Fred Nizeyimana, Field Veterinarian, Uganda



*"While this may look like a peaceful moment, Twitabweho was breastfeeding her infant as the group was having a tough encounter with a solitary male wanting to grab females. As I watched this interaction, it highlighted the vulnerability infants face should the family protector get defeated. For me, this picture illustrates the reason behind a silverback's braveness to fight for his family and safeguard what he's got. In this case, the silverback successfully defended his family and Muhoza group remains intact and healthy."*

—Dr. Gaspard Nzayisenga, Field Veterinarian, Rwanda



# VETERINARY MEDICINE HIGHLIGHTS



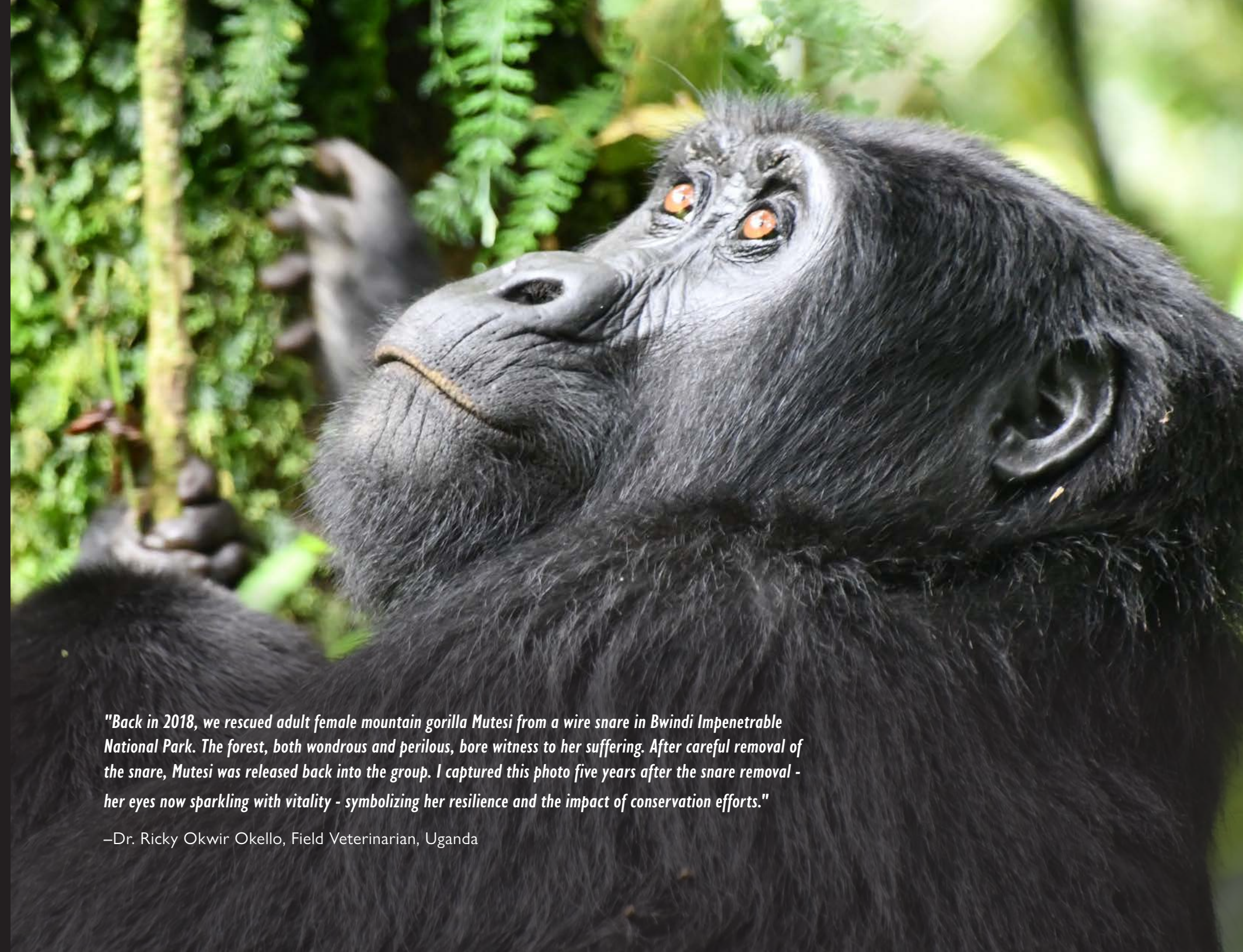
**July 2022:** Mutagamba, a blackback in Nyakagezi group, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Uganda was coughing, listless and lagging behind his group. Dr. Ricky confirmed that Mutagamba was exhibiting signs of a severe respiratory infection as well as gastrointestinal parasites. In order to provide supportive treatment, Dr. Ricky administered medication via dart and Mutagamba made a full recovery.



**February 2023:** In DR Congo, Kahuzi-Biega National Park trackers noticed that the unidentified adult female with silverback Uhuru was suffering from severe wounds on her back. Drs. Eddy, Fabrice and Lina mobilized immediately. Using facial identification cards, the team confirmed that the female was Nabintu who had been out of range for quite some time. The team performed an emergency intervention. Sadly, her wounds were too severe and she succumbed to her injuries. This is a heartbreaking reality of our work, but Nabintu's legacy lives on through her twins born in 2008, now thriving adult Grauer's gorillas.



**May 2023:** Umwari, an adult female mountain gorilla in Susa group, was not feeding or taking care of her infant. She was exhibiting clinical signs of heavy infestation with gastrointestinal parasites. In consultation with Dr. Julius, Drs. Gaspard and Adrien proceeded to administer medication via dart. Umwari made a full recovery. Use this QR code to 'join' the team on this successful intervention in Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda.



*"Back in 2018, we rescued adult female mountain gorilla Mutesi from a wire snare in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The forest, both wondrous and perilous, bore witness to her suffering. After careful removal of the snare, Mutesi was released back into the group. I captured this photo five years after the snare removal - her eyes now sparkling with vitality - symbolizing her resilience and the impact of conservation efforts."*

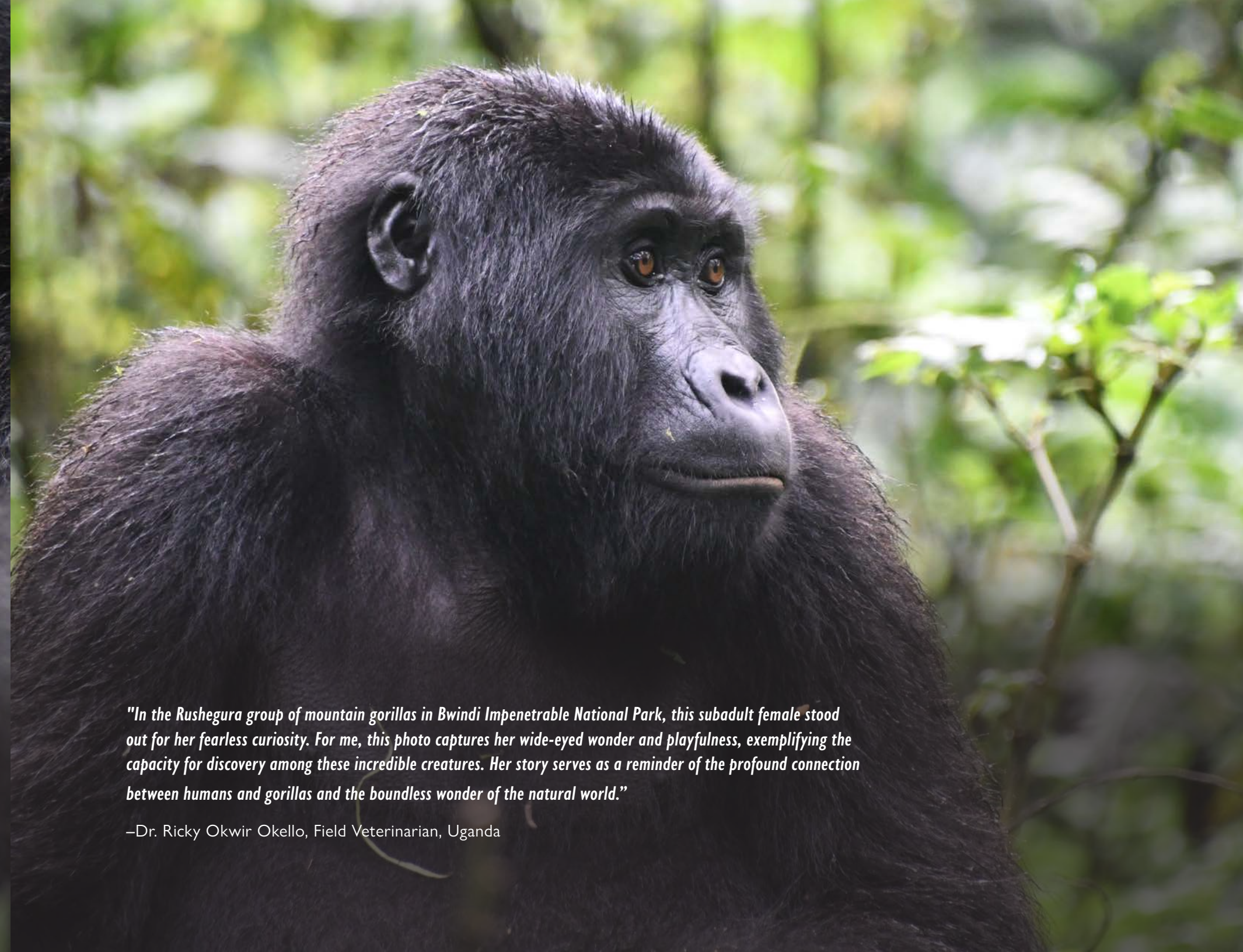
—Dr. Ricky Okwir Okello, Field Veterinarian, Uganda





*"During one of my routine health checks of Bonane group, silverback Bonane was resting, enjoying the sun, and grooming and playing with the babies and juveniles. When I took this picture, he was in deep sleep and his feet were well bent: it was wonderful to observe these little details. Spending time with our close cousins can help us forget the 'noise' of our lives and help us concentrate on the moment right in front of us."*

—Dr. Lina Aldophine 'Lina' Nturbika, Field Veterinarian, DR Congo



*"In the Rushegura group of mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, this subadult female stood out for her fearless curiosity. For me, this photo captures her wide-eyed wonder and playfulness, exemplifying the capacity for discovery among these incredible creatures. Her story serves as a reminder of the profound connection between humans and gorillas and the boundless wonder of the natural world."*

—Dr. Ricky Okwir Okello, Field Veterinarian, Uganda





Gorilla Guardians® champion gorilla health by providing reliable, regular funding to our veterinarians who monitor gorilla health every day. We are so grateful to all of our Gorilla Guardians from the 2022-2023 fiscal year, a powerful group dedicated to healthy, thriving gorillas in the wild.

**GORILLA GUARDIANS®**

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# SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



In this photo, Dr. Nelson Bukamba (left), project veterinarian and Dilly Muhumuza (right), field technician with our Uganda team prep a dental chew with fruit juice so they can noninvasively collect fresh saliva from non-human primates. These kinds of samples can then be analyzed in our lab to screen for the presence of pathogens. Use this QR code to read a summary of a Washington Post article featuring the scientific research of our Chief Veterinary and Scientific Officer, Dr. Tierra Smiley Evans. She used saliva collected from chewed plants to rule out the presence of human herpes virus in mountain gorillas.



Dr. Jean Bosco 'Noel' Noheri, one of our field veterinarians from Rwanda, spent most of 2023 in the U.S. studying pathology at the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and Johns Hopkins University in Maryland (left photo). The science of pathology allows us to diagnose disease in tissues, thus helping us to keep gorillas healthy. And now in our state-of-the-art laboratory (right photo) based at our regional headquarters in Musanze, Rwanda, Dr. Methode Bahizi (left), our regional laboratory manager, and Dr. Jean Claude Tumushime (right), our regional laboratory technician, can immediately process samples of body fluids, collected both during interventions and non-invasively, so that we can diagnose causes of illness within 24 hours of a gorilla intervention. Use this QR code to watch a short video of Dr. Noel's time at UC Davis.




In June 2023, Dr. Benard Ssebide, our head veterinarian in Uganda, traveled to the National Institutes of Health to attend the Centers for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases (CREID) Network meeting. He presented on Gorilla Doctors' research and outbreak response work on emerging infectious disease in Uganda (including the Sudan ebolavirus outbreak September 2022 – January 2023). Use this QR code to learn more about the goals of this critically important research.



*"During one of my routine health checks, I found silverback Bonane and his family together in the sun. In the middle is adult female Mukono and on her right juvenile Wilungula and Uwe (one of the twins) are playing. I couldn't believe on my next visit just a few days later Mukono was holding her newborn baby! Their abdomens are always big when their bellies are full so it can be difficult to identify if a female is pregnant. This is the secret of motherhood among the gorillas!"*


—Dr. Adolphine 'Lina' Nturubika, Field Veterinarian, DR Congo





*"I love how calm and relaxed silverback Kanywani is in this photo as his name suggests 'friendly'. He broke away from Rushegura group in 2023 and started his own family. What you can't see is that he is surrounded by his females, a few of whom are still not quite used to humans. On this day, none of the females charged me, they just hid behind Kanywani and kept a close eye on me. The gorillas observe us as well!"*

—Dr. Fred Nizeyimana, Field Veterinarian, Uganda



*"Seeing the twins, Uwe and Ngwabidje, is always such a delight. And since Grauer's gorillas are critically endangered, two is always better than one! I took this photo in April 2023 when we were working with Kahuzi-Biega National Park to create updated photo identification cards of the gorillas. We use the gorilla's nose print and other physical features to help us identify individuals."*

—Dr. Fabrice Katembo Malonga, Field Veterinarian, DR Congo





*"The picture shows Inkundwa, a lone mountain gorilla silverback, grabbing food as he retreats from Muhoza group after another unsuccessful attempt to get females. Despite his name translating to 'the loved one', this picture reminds me of the struggle solitary males often go through to build a family. He has been on his own since 2016 when he left the group he was born into. Over the years, we have monitored him for various health issues, so when I saw him on this occasion, it felt great to see him in good visual health."*

—Dr. Gaspard Nzayisenga, Field Veterinarian, Rwanda

## ONE HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS



Gorilla Doctors One Health approach recognizes that the health of people, animals, and the environment we share is interconnected. The health of one impacts the health of all. To that end, we work with wildlife authorities to assist in the care and treatment of wildlife other than gorillas. This may include snare rescues, wound treatment of infant chimpanzees (photo left) and monkeys confiscated from the illegal wildlife trade, and even investigations of disease outbreaks in hippopotami.



Keeping the people who work with and live in the communities around the gorilla parks healthy is an important part of our One Health approach. We know the health of gorillas and people are interconnected. This year at Kahuzi-Biega National Park, DR Congo our employee health program manager, Jean-Paul Lukusa (far left) facilitated wellness examinations for 50 wives and 50 children of park ecoguards. The women also volunteered to participate in a parasitology study to monitor the effectiveness of a particular antiparasitic medication – important research for the sustainable protection of both humans and gorillas.



Our Supporters: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

<b>\$50,000+</b>	Jay & Eileen Kerr Gary Kilbourn Dr. Joyce Murphy Pavilion Foundation David B. Posner The Gorilla Organisation	<b>\$2,500-\$4,999</b>	Anja Brandt Mary Brockman Joan Bruno Buffalo Zoo Tara Burke Elizabeth Cadwalader & Eugene Baron Ann Clapp Cristina Colissimo Mr. & Mrs. George Conant Isabella Draper Christine Ekman Irwin Eve, Occhiali Fine Eyewear Rob Fuller & Cathryn Gabor, Africa 360 Travel Eric & Abigail Geller Gary & Jeanne Gigante Laura Gleeson Amy Gooding Liz Green Bob Greenawalt & Beth Brock Judy & Pete Haggard Robert & Janet Hanson Kelly & Sandy Harcourt David Harder & Deborah Greenwald Jed Harris Doris Hausser Jan Herr Stephen A. Hill Michelle Hollander Karen & Abhinandan Jain James Johnson Patricia Pollard Kinnett	Dr. Linda Lowenstine Doug MacKie Nic Mader Jeff & Shay Morris Chloe O'Gara Padnos/Sarosik Fund of Grand Rapids Community Foundation Ellendee Pepper Jason Robbins Joan & Barry Rosenthal Safari West Linda Sandman Kerry Ann Sarnoski Rick Sevin James & Suzette Smith Thomas Smith Barbara Sobelman Jerry & Wendy Spivak Judy Stampler Marcy Stein Steward Hartmann Charitable Trust Joseph Sweeney Jim Lenard Thompson Soren Thomsen Ariana Tuggle Bruce & Yvette Van Dalsem Edward Van Slyke Roland Vet Ann & Joe von Kugelgen Carol Walton Douglas Warde Tom Yorath Zoos Victoria
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		<b>Matching Gifts</b>  Apple Best Buy Charles Schwab Chevron	<b>Gifts In-Kind</b>  Jocelyn Allen Skyler Bishop Richelle Carey Cunningham Engineering DLAPiper Dolbey Jamison Kathleen & Ed Gabrielson Global Histology Consulting, LLC Gravity Free Studios Houston Zoo Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney	

Every gift helps Gorilla Doctors achieve its mission. In FY 22-23, hundreds of donors gave gifts from \$1 - \$499.

Gorilla Doctors is a partnership between Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project, Inc. (MGVP, Inc.) and the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine's Karen C. Drayer Wildlife Health Center (94-6036494). MGVP, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (06-1752363).



# Meet the Gorilla Doctors

Gorilla Doctors protect the health of mountain and Grauer's gorillas in five national parks across Rwanda, Uganda, and DR Congo.

## DR Congo



**Dr. EDDY  
KAMBELE SYALUHA**  
Head Veterinarian



**JEAN-PAUL  
LUKUSA**  
Employee Health Manager



**Dr. FABRICE  
KATEMBO MALONGA**  
Field Veterinarian



**JACKSON  
MWENGE**  
Administrator



**Dr. LINA  
NTURUBIKA**  
Field Veterinarian

## Uganda



**Dr. BENARD  
SSEBIDE**  
Head Veterinarian



**Dr. NELSON  
BUKAMBA**  
Project Veterinarian



**DILLY  
MUHUMUZA**  
Project Field Technician



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Field Veterinarian



**Dr. RICKY  
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## Rwanda



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**Dr. METHODE  
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**CLEMENTINE  
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