

Center for Great Apes holding its first gala

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WAUCHULA - The Center for the Great Apes, a nonprofit sanctuary that provides lifetime care for more than 40 orangutans and chimpanzees, will hold its first gala on April 24.

The Twilight Forest Gala will be held from 6-10 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, at the Errol Estate Resort and Country Club in Apopka.

There will be live entertainment, a silent auction, poker tournament and buffet dinner. Proceeds and donations from the gala will benefit the center and its maintenance, food, veterinary care and material to build new homes for future resident apes.

Tickets for the gala are \$75 each or \$700 for a table of 10. Guests are encouraged to wear black and white attire. To purchase tickets or donate, go to www.miracleapes.org.

Patti Ragan, founder and president of the center, said her facility was chosen by Ad2Orlando, a group of advertising and marketing professionals, for a campaign to raise money and awareness. The gala, as well as an ad campaign highlighting some of the apes at the center, are the brainchild of Ad2Orlando.

Ragan said the group redesigned the logo, a brochure and booklet about the center. Billboards, print and TV ads also raise awareness.

The center, located near Wauchula, is not open to the public. Its mission is to provide a quality life to apes that have been in show business, labs or in other settings where they cannot be handled adequately. Many of the apes there have been in movies, TV shows, circuses and roadside attractions for many years. Some have never been with other apes.