

2017 Grant Recipients

In 2017, we decided to focus on one project, Conservation Heritage –Turambe (Rwanda).

Children in Nature Grant Recipients:

Conservation Heritage – Turambe: The work of Conservation Heritage –Turambe (CHT) continues to successfully bring the importance of conservation to Rwandan students living alongside Volcanoes National Park. This is a region where the protective area of the park is historically seen as a burden to local communities as access to it for pleasure is unattainable due to price, access for resources is outlawed, and wildlife often wander out of the forest to destructively utilize the farmland which encroaches on it's borders. We have been impressed with the work CHT does to instill conservation awareness in the Rwandan youth. As part of the program children learn about gorilla behavior, what they eat, history, their relationship with humans and what actions can be taken to keep them safe. To culminate the program the children are then taken into the forest by professional guides to see the mountain gorillas in person! This is the initiative that Papoose funds, and is an exceptional opportunity not only for the students but also their families which benefit by the information the students share.

Unfortunately and without warning in 2017 the government of Rwanda drastically increased the price for gorilla trekking permits including those for Rwandan citizens to \$1,500. The Rwandan Development Board says the price increase is aimed at strengthening conservation efforts, contributing to community development and improving the livelihood of locales living around national parks. We are saddened by this decision as it not only impacts the children of CHT's ability to visit gorillas but makes it nearly impossible for all but the most wealthy Rwandan nationals to experience their national treasure. Valerie Akuredusenge, CHT Program Director, is in communication with the Rwandan government working towards a resolution to bring pricing down for the CHT student program. However, the 2017 student gorilla trekking visit is on hold until the government response is received. CHT is currently looking at other options to get the students into nature, possibly trekking golden monkeys, should the government response not be in our favor.

While we are disappointed that our support of CHT will not result in a student gorilla trekking trip this year, we also understand that unexpected challenges are part of conservation, especially when working with governmental agencies. We have confidence that CHT will persevere and continue to positively impact Rwandan youth and provide them with valuable nature experiences.